

**Whither State, Private or Public Service Broadcasting? An Analysis of the Construction of News on
ZBC TV during the 2002 Presidential Election Campaign in Zimbabwe**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for a Master of Arts Degree in
Journalism and Media Studies (*ad eundem gradum*)**

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BY

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Dedication

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Tula Dlamini (March 28, 2003, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa)

‘Umkhulo lo Umsebenzi’

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIPPA – Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BAZ – Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BSA - Broadcasting Services Act
DRC – Democratic Republic Of Congo
ESAP – Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
GMBS – Gender and Media Baseline Study
GMB - Grain Marketing Board
IFJ – International Federation of Journalists
IJAZ – Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe
IMF – International Monetary Fund
MABC – Munhumutapa African Broadcasting Corporation
MDC – Movement for Democratic Change
MIC – Media and Information Commission
MISA – Media Institute for Southern Africa
MMPZ – Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
NAGG – National Alliance of Good Governance
POSA – Public Order and Security Act
SABC – South Africa Broadcasting Corporation
UN – United Nations
VOP – Voice of the People
ZAMPS – Zimbabwe All Media Products Survey
ZANLA – Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU-Ndonga – Zimbabwe African National Union Ndonga
ZANU PF - Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU – Zimbabwe African People’s Union
ZAPU PF – Zimbabwe African People’s Union Patriotic Front
ZBC TV – Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television
ZIPRA – Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army
ZMMT – Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust
ZNA - Zimbabwe National Army
ZUM – Zimbabwe Unity Movement

ABSTRACT

The study sets out to examine the television coverage of the 2002 presidential campaign in Zimbabwe by examining the extent to which the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation fulfilled the mandate of public service broadcasting. The primary objective of this study is to assess how ZBC television newscasts mediated pluralistic politics in the coverage of the country's presidential election campaign, in line with the normative public sphere principles. The thesis comprises seven chapters organized, first, with an introductory chapter, which provides the general background of the study. The chapter offers the rationale for the focus on TV rather than other media forms. There are two theoretical and contextual chapters in which the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods is explained and findings are presented. Finally, the conclusion offers recommendations about the form broadcasting might take to fulfil a public service mandate and these include the strengthening of the public service broadcasting model along normative public sphere principles. The findings of the analysed election newscasts confirm that ZBC television election news was constructed in favour of ZANU PF at the expense of voices from other social and political constituencies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. 0. Introduction

This chapter presents the general background, assumptions and objectives of the study. It situates the study in a Zimbabwean context. It offers the rationale for the focus on TV rather than other media forms, presents the relevant research issues, the significance of the study and the structure of the thesis.

1. 1. General Background

This study examines the construction of election news by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) during the 2002 presidential election campaign. Several scholars have argued that ZBC is a mouthpiece of the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union–Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party and a tool in a hegemonic project (Maja-Pearce 1995: Zaffiro 1984). According to Moyo (1992), the presumption of even-handed access to the mass media, including ZBC, was seriously flawed during the 1990 presidential election campaign, especially since there was no agency with executive powers to ensure that all contestants and voices in the elections had access to the media. In June 2000, the Supreme Court issued a provisional order stating that the ZBC fulfil its functions to carry on radio and TV broadcasting services impartially, without discrimination on the basis of political opinion and without hindering persons in their right to impart and receive ideas. Statistics provided by Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) indicate that the ruling party received over four-fifths of airtime during the 2000 election campaign, at the expense of other contenders for political office (MMPZ 2000). At the time of writing this thesis, the MMPZ findings for the 2002 presidential election were still pending.

In line with the public sphere argument (see chapter two), ZBC has a key role to play in the fostering of democratic citizenship and in the mediation of pluralistic politics. During an election, ZBC is expected to guarantee more or less equitable coverage to all social and political constituencies, especially contesting political parties and candidates and to promote a fair reconstruction of political issues in election news coverage. However,

since 1980, studies have called into question ZBC's editorial and creative independence from state interference (Zaffiro 1984; Zaffiro 2002; Mano 1987; Orgeret 1998). By exposing the interface between broadcasting and the wider processes of political change, Zaffiro (1984) reveals how the governments of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe (colonial and post-colonial eras respectively) used broadcasting as a tool for legitimacy construction. Since inception in 1941, professional broadcasting has essentially functioned as a one-way, top-down communication channel with no direct competition (Rasmussen 1979; Zaffiro 1984; Zaffiro 2002). This arrangement was officially consolidated by Section 27 of the Broadcasting Act of 1957, which prohibited any person other than the ZBC (then Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation – RBC) from owning or performing broadcasting services in the country. While the RBC was ostensibly constituted as a public service broadcaster, broadcasting remained tightly under the control of government (Saunders 1999). At independence, the new Zimbabwe government opted to retain the existing set-up including its legal and policy framework (Zaffiro 1984; Zaffiro 2002). This thesis is premised on the hypothesis that although ZBC, like its predecessor, RBC, is legally constituted as a public institution. ZBC's public service status is undermined by a slanted coverage of sectional interests in society, primarily those of politicians and civil servants seeking to gain support for the governing ZANU PF party.

1. 2. Objectives of the study

The primary object of this research is to assess how ZBC TV mediated pluralistic politics during the 2002 presidential election, in line with the normative public sphere principles.

1. 2. 2. Specific Objectives

1. To determine the range of actors in news coverage during the election campaign and to see where they are located socially or politically.
2. To determine the frequency of actors in coverage and what they are seen to be talking about (story types)
3. To determine the gender composition of the actors in coverage.
4. To establish the geographic representativeness of ZBC news coverage

5. To establish the proportion of airtime allocated to the actors in coverage or news story.

1. 2. 3. General Objectives

Part of the challenge is not only to discover whether or not there was a deficit in the construction of news, but also to develop, at least at a basic level, an understanding of the factors inside and outside the newsroom, which had the effect of influencing the output of ZBC TV election news. My study seeks to answer the following questions regarding ZBC news reporting of the 2002 presidential election campaign:

1. How did ZBC TV's actual performance relate to the normative principles of public service broadcasting that is linked to the public sphere concept?
2. How did the ZBC television news cover various social and political constituencies and in particular contending political parties and candidates?
3. What is the status of editorial independence at the ZBC newsroom? Were there any factors that restricted the autonomy of the newsroom?
4. At a basic level, how did ZBC frame the story types in coverage?

The notion of 'news' as social construct of journalists and not a reflection of reality constitutes this study's assumptions about the construction of news. This study looks at ZBC in the light of Hall et al's (1998) notion that news is unavoidably influenced by regulatory mechanisms, ownership and control, organisational routines and journalistic values and conventions within the newsroom. In the case of ZBCTV, the study seeks to identify the manner in which the above factors shaped the construction of election campaign news.

1. 3. Research Assumptions

This study assumes that a genuine public broadcasting service has the potential to embrace the notion of a 'public sphere', wherein the views and opinions of all interested citizens and their various constituencies can be represented in a representative manner (Keane 1991; Anderson 1984; Mano 1997). The terms 'impartial' and

'representativeness' are explained in detail in my second chapter that focuses on the theoretical framework of this study. In a nutshell, the study is premised on the notion that a genuine public service broadcaster is expected to facilitate 'collective conversation' between the citizenry by ensuring more or less equitable representation of competing policies of rivals for public office, and by supplying accurate information during elections, including voter education (Camay and Gordon 1997; Article 19 1994)

1. 4. Why Television?

Broadcasting on ZBC encompasses both radio and television. The study acknowledges that radio is probably one of the fastest and most cost-effective of the modern mass media. In some instances, radio reaches remote places before roads have been built (Mytton 1983). In Zimbabwe, radio reaches approximately 95% of the population, while television reaches just over 50% of mainly urban dwellers (www.zbc.co.zw/about.htm). However, television is perceived to be the most influential mass medium in Zimbabwe due to its 'real time' approach that potentially allows viewers a sense of simultaneous presence through image and sound, connecting them to the 'imagined community' called the 'nation' (Orgeret 1998). According to Berger cited in Nicholas (1981), film images, as in television, appear to move in time. He notes that this impossibility, the sense of magical *voici*, still compels us to believe that we are in two places at the same time. Anderson as cited in Orgeret (1998) describes television viewing as a 'mass ritual' of engaging in a 'joint public ritual' with significant though absent 'others'.

This is not true of the print media, which has little reach due to circulation constraints. Zimbabwe's newspapers are all morning editions, which are often sold out early on the day of publication and do not reach the rural areas until the next day, if at all (Manyarara 1996). In addition, Manyarara (1996) notes that newspaper prices are beyond the reach of the urban wage earner or village dweller and by contrast, the price of a listener's license per annum is cheaper. All this, then, explains the choice of focus on ZBC television news.

1. 5. Background studies

Literature focusing on textual content, production process and the normative expectations for public service television news in Zimbabwe is limited. However, there exist a number of reports, which are relevant, even though they are not specifically concerned with the construction of public service television news during elections.

Saunders (1999) provides empirical information relating to constraints on media freedom in Zimbabwe before and after Independence. The booklet accompanies a film produced by Edwina Spicer (1999). Both the film and the booklet attempt to examine the history of journalism in Zimbabwe, and the debates and developments involving freedom of the press and democratisation. Both efforts conclude that media freedom in Zimbabwe has always been an ideal to be pursued but severely constrained by state interference through various mechanisms including a restrictive regulatory framework.

In the aftermath of the 2000 parliamentary elections, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) conducted a survey on election coverage in Zimbabwe. The survey, 'Media War: Election 2000', highlights a lack of evenhandedness in the manner in which ZBC news bulletins covered the contesting political parties. Although the survey does not identify any specified theoretical framework, it however notes that democracy was undermined by the performance of the national broadcaster.

Unpublished works on broadcasting include Mano's (1997) dissertation titled 'The Plight of Public Service Television in Zimbabwe'. The author notes that contrary to its public service posturing, public service television in Zimbabwe is narrow in scope and its overall democratic potential is threatened by financial restraints, which have reduced programming decisions to the whims of advertisers, and political interference that is anchored in the legal and informal links between the institution of public broadcasting in Zimbabwe and the state, particularly the Ministry of Information and Publicity in the President's Office. Mano (1997) concludes that adverse economic and political factors combine to undermine public service television. ZBC election programming, as shown in

the news bulletins considered in Mano's study, reflects a serious failure to promote basic citizenship rights, especially those relating to political coverage during an election:

When there are two candidates vying for the same seat or office, and only one of them is allowed to make public speeches on television, then she or he is effectively the only candidate recognised by those who rely on television for information (1997:120).

Government's use of broadcasting as a tool for hegemonic construction is highlighted in Zaffiro's (1984) unpublished contribution titled 'Broadcasting and Political Change in Zimbabwe: 1931-1984' and his published follow-up 2002 study titled 'Media and Democracy in Zimbabwe, 1931-2002'. Both works explore and reveal official claims of broadcast independence by both the colonial and post-colonial governments of Rhodesia and Zimbabwe respectively and reveal how broadcasting has always been linked to the political developments in the larger society.

The perception that television broadcasting is implicated in the process of political change currently unfolding in Zimbabwe is shared by Orgeret's discourse analysis of ZBC's news at eight in 1998. This study argues that the considerable rise in civic actions in Zimbabwe has resulted not only in a new and different context for the ZBC to operate in but also in pronouncements by the ruling ZANU PF elite that entail lip-service to genuine respect for the public service broadcasting ideal. Orgeret (1998) concludes that the democratic role of television news in Zimbabwe is threatened by political and economical factors, which effectively undermine the potential for democratic citizenship in the public sphere.

References to economic and political control of broadcasting in Zimbabwe include Ronning (2000), in which he argues that Western normative theories and principles should take into account the different contexts existing in Zimbabwe and indeed in Southern Africa wherein media is largely constrained by government and commercial control.

Amongst the most extensive reports looking into the affairs of ZBC is the 1996 British Council commissioned report by media consultant, Peter Ibbotson, which recommends

among other things the opening up of opportunities for commercial companies that would ostensibly offer a competitive broadcasting service, while calling for a rationalisation of the work-force by way of retrenchments. In short, the Ibbotson report (1996), advocates commercialisation of the broadcast market through liberalisation and later privatisation of ZBC. The positive aspect of this report is that it identified a number of administrative and managerial problems faced by ZBC, which included lack of general managerial competence, over-staffing and a general lack of morale in the work force. The massive retrenchments of over 400 hundred staff members in June 2002, and the restructuring of ZBC operations into business units, can be seen as a sequel to some of the recommendations of the Ibbotson report. However, the report does not address the potentially negative impact of commercial media, especially on the ideals of pluralism and diversity, neither does it consider the potential neglect of the public interest.

Moyo's (1999) thesis, 'Public Service Television and Corporate interests: Advertising and Programming on ZTV' successfully established a relationship between advertising and ZTV's editorial output. Moyo (1999) argues that such a situation has the potential to transform ZBC into a public sphere or public broadcaster of a few private individuals or institutions who pose as an embodiment of public concerns and interests.

Equally skeptical of a market-driven ZBC is the 1996 'UNESCO Report on ZBC Commercialisation' by former Supreme Court Judge of Appeal, Justice John Manyarara. The report argues that Zimbabweans need a genuine public service broadcasting system if they are to participate meaningfully in the democratic process of governing the country. Manyarara (1996) envisages a three-tier broadcasting system comprised of commercial, community and public service broadcasting in which the editorial independence from the market and the state is guaranteed by legislation.

1. 6. Significance of the study

While studies (Mano 1997; Orgeret 1998; Saunders 1999; MMPZ 2000; Zaffiro 1984; Zaffiro 2002; Manyarara 1996; Moyo 1999) reveal to some extent the 'slant' on ZBC programming in favour of the ruling party, and the potential for market forces, through

advertising, to influence editorial and programming content, my study adds to existing literature by providing empirical information on how the news text was specifically structured and manufactured during the 2002 presidential election campaign. I hope my findings will contribute to existing literature on public service broadcasting in Zimbabwe and in particular on the significance of public service television news reporting that is tied to the public sphere concept.

1. 7. Methods of study

Content analysis starts with the selection and narrowing down of the type of coverage to be analysed for conceptual and practical reasons (Hansen et al 1998). I have selected the national news segment of the evening 8 o'clock main news bulletins¹ for analysis from the period beginning on 8 February to 8 March 2002.

By counting how often particular topics, themes or actors are mentioned, how much space and prominence they command, quantitative content analysis provides an overview of patterns of attention, revealing what is highlighted and what is ignored (Deacon et al 1997). For instance, by probing the range of actors in coverage, my study establishes which political party received more coverage on ZTV news during the presidential campaign. Further, it establishes whether it is true that other social constituencies, including voices that do not necessarily agree with the ruling party and its policies, have been unfairly covered in the newscasts. This exercise is very significant in understanding how power is expressed by ZBC TV news in the Zimbabwe.

Bryman (1988) argues that quantitative and qualitative research methods represent different ways of conducting research, and that the choice between them should be made in terms of their appropriateness in answering particular research questions. However, in some cases, the use of multiple methods or what Jensen and Jankowski (1991) call 'triangulation' can assist in evolving a more comprehensive view on specific analysis². Studies working broadly with communication content have used both qualitative and

¹ See justification of the 8 pm news bulletin as a research sample on chapter four which looks at the research methods and procedures employed in this study.

² See discussion in chapter four on this study's application of the term 'triangulation'.

quantitative content analysis techniques to show how public issues are defined in mass media and for public consumption, overwhelmingly by representatives of powerful institutions, agencies and interests in society, and that 'alternative' voices critical of the status quo are often denied access to the mainstream media (Hansen et al 1998:108).

My analysis of coverage relating to the frequency or lack of alternative voices includes a textual analysis of how the available news texts are presented in relation to the overall narrative of the story. In this regard, a basic qualitative textual analysis is used in order to infer how actors in coverage are used, elaborated and framed on ZTV news during the 2002 presidential election campaign.

Further, qualitative analysis through interviews is used to gain literal perspectives on the major mechanisms for controlling production at the newsroom level, the editorial structure inside the newsroom as well as analysing political themes, topics and issues covered by the ZBC news narrative during the election campaign. In this regard, interviews were conducted with individual reporters and newsroom managers at the ZBC who are implicated in the process of news production.

Reference to documents is used as a basis of enriching the study. These documents include archive ZBC radio and television programmes, MISA-Zimbabwe media advocacy reports and articles from newspapers and magazines.

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter has provided the objectives and general background to the study. It has outlined the key research issues and assumptions and described the significance of the study. The key objective of the study is the analysis of the construction of news on ZBC TV during the 2002 presidential election campaign. The study employs a public service broadcasting perspective tied to the notion of a public sphere. The next chapter looks at the theoretical and conceptual framework on which this study is premised.

1. 9. Thesis Outline

The thesis comprises seven chapters:

The introductory first chapter provided the objective and general background of my study. It offers a rationale for the focus on TV rather than other media forms. Further, the chapter outlines the related research issues and assumptions. The chapter is titled **'Introduction'**.

The second chapter titled **'Theoretical Framework'**, looks at the theoretical perspectives employed in my study by considering the role of media in liberal democracies and looks at the tensions between the social democratic ideal and the interests of the free market economy. The chapter critiques the latter and considers the difference between the liberal democracies and the prevailing context, also critiquing the view - that the involvement of corporate / commercial interests necessarily improve diversity of voices. The ensuing discussion draws on Habermas's public sphere concept. The chapter considers public service broadcasting (PSB) and its role in the public sphere, and introduces issues of gender. The focus is on representativeness, herein referring to the dialogue between interpreting communities. The argument is structured by considering mechanisms that ensure equitable access. Public service broadcasting (PSB) is further discussed in terms of organization, finance and programming policies. The chapter notes that PSB in an African context is frequently associated with government control because of funding. While discussing forms of funding, the chapter identifies the problems of government grants on critical discourse and importance of control structures and statutory guarantee for editorial independence. An overview of 'ethical reporting' within this normative frame is provided. In short, the chapter presents the theoretical framework for the study.

The third chapter, titled **'Politics and the media in Zimbabwe'**, looks at the interface between the economic and political environment and media. I outline briefly the general political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. The chapter also examines the history of the media in Zimbabwe, including the electronic media, and the unfolding legal and policy developments in the country.

The fourth chapter focuses on the methods, procedures and techniques employed in the research. It shows how data was collected and analysed and justifies my use of 'triangulation' or multi-methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter is titled '**Research Methods and Procedures**'. The chapter offers a discussion on sampling, motivation for the choice of programming and coding.

The fifth chapter titled '**Analysis**' presents a quantitative report and a basic textual analysis of data emanating from the analysed bulletins.

The sixth chapter is titled '**Interviews, Interpretation and Discussion**'. It offers an analysis from interviews with staff at the ZBC TV newsroom.

The seventh and final chapter titled '**Conclusions and Recommendations**' makes recommendations in view of the study's outcome.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2. 0. Introduction

This chapter looks at the theoretical and conceptual concerns of this study with a focus on some of the principles and obligations that constitute public service television. It outlines the normative role of public service broadcasting during an election and attempts to explain the public sphere concept. During an election, public service broadcasting is normally expected to facilitate more or less equitable access to all social and political constituencies, including opposition political parties and to give to viewers the broadest range of information, interpretation and debate on areas that involve public political choices (Murdock 1992). News is viewed in this study as a socially constructed process and not a reflection of an objective reality. Cultural studies and political economy perspectives are employed to address news production issues such as those relating to the editorial independence of broadcasters, and whether or not journalists are constrained in their choice and interpretation of news stories.

2. 1. Media and Democracy

In liberal democracies, particularly Western Europe, media in general and public service broadcasting in particular are seen as a pillar of the parliamentary system of political decision making and apportioning of power (Keane 1991). The concept of parliamentary democracy is understood to mean a multiparty system with periodic elections and in this regard, the media is seen as essential in facilitating the functioning of this multiparty system by promoting pluralism (McNair 1995; Andersen 1994; Keane 1991). It has a responsibility to provide information through which citizens can make informed choices regarding electoral issues, and to participate in debates that concern current political issues (McNair 1995; Andersen 1994). This means that media must provide a plurality of actors, including oppositional voices, and interpretations that contribute to citizens' debate and public conversation (Andersen 1994). In this conception, the media is viewed as an essential instrument for the maintenance of a system of representative government in which reasonable, informed public opinion is expected to play a mediating role between citizens, public office bearers and the state institutions (Keane 1991). In sum, the public media, including public service radio and television, is seen as facilitating

democratic citizenship when it gives primacy to the collective needs of society rather than the state or market forces (Scannell 1990).

2. 2. Consumerism, Citizenship and Political Control

Public service broadcasting is caught between two interrelated ideological paradigms; namely the social democratic ideal that is based on universal suffrage; and the free-market economy in which people are encouraged to seek private solutions to public problems (Murdock 1995).

The ideology of free-market economy posits that broadcasting is a commodity - a marketable good like any other - provided for consumers and that consumers should be the best judges of their own welfare (Scannell 1990).

Public broadcasting has a different role, principally conceiving its audience as a public rather than a market (Raboy 1996). In Western Europe, public service broadcasting was for more than a generation seen as having an obligation to address the audience as rational citizens oriented towards collective interests, unlike commercial media that address its viewers as individual consumers, merely following personal interests (McQuail 2000; Scannell 1990).

Commercial broadcasting may entail news production, sports or whatever it takes to generate mass audience for advertisers. However, even as the consumer marketplace offers an array of competing products, it does not confer the unconditional right for all citizens to enter the market in the first place. The profit motive can sometimes result in programming that is aimed at only the most profitable audiences, that is niche audiences that have the capacity to pay, at the expense of economically marginalised communities. This filtering of who enters the public sphere produces a situation in which society runs the risk of polarisation into the information rich and information poor communities. This is precisely what Keane (1991) terms 'the privatisation of the public sphere'. The public sphere is re-feudalised in the sense that a caste system determining who participates in broadcasting develops as those with capital overshadow those without capital. This is

partly the argument behind a public broadcasting service that looks upon its audiences as consisting of citizens rather than consumers. Raboy (1998) argues that it is only the public service broadcasting model, tied to public sphere concept, which puts a social agenda before a market agenda.

This study, however, notes the complexities arising from the application of this free-market economy thinking, particularly in situations where it is a feature that media are directly linked to the state apparatus and are often used to promote personality cults of the head of state and other prominent politicians (Ronning 2000). According to Ronning (2000), this takes the form of endless news reports of occasions where the president is present, regardless of how insignificant they are. However, other scholars have cautiously appraised this view. For example, Berger (2000) argues that in the African context, corporate and commercial involvement has the potential to actually dilute monopoly of media otherwise held by governments.

This involvement could increase competition and provide counter tendencies to political logics. This can in turn open up more space for journalists in the private media to pursue a watchdog role, and for those in the state-owned media to struggle towards a social democratic role that is not hijacked for political ends (2000:91).

Berger (2000) is not suggesting that the public service broadcasting claim to democratic citizenship is not possible in African conditions but rather that commercial media, where it is permitted and regulated in the public interest, has the potential to promote democracy by highlighting alternative voices and viewpoints in society (Berger 2000; MISA 2000).

2. 3. The Public Sphere

The notion of a public sphere as first described by Habermas (2001) refers to a platform in which everyone in spite of race, class, income, creed and ethnicity come together and share ideas through reasoned discourse, in socio-economic and political issues of public interest and public concern:

By the 'public sphere' we mean first of all a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens. A portion of the public sphere comes into being in every conversation in which private

individuals assemble to form a public body. They then behave neither like business or professional people transacting private affairs, nor like members of a constitutional order subject to the legal constraints of state bureaucracy (2001:102).

The first version of the public sphere or space is found in Habermas's account of the rise of democracy in Europe, represented by the 18th century coffee house or debating society, where active participants in political life, mostly 'bourgeois' met, discussed and formed political projects. The concept grew out of a specific phase of a male-dominated bourgeois society and owed much of its development to the decline of feudalism and the subsequent development of capitalism and individualism (Habermas 2001), hence it was described as the 'bourgeois' public sphere.

However, the conception of a public sphere as a 'bourgeois' realm of politics has now expanded to include a multiplicity of publics that include the communicative institutions of society through which facts and opinions freely circulate (McNair 1994). In general, the mediums of newspapers and magazines, radio and television fit into the wider and also current notion of a public sphere by providing an arena of public debate and by reconstituting private citizens as a public body in the form of public opinion (Curran 1996; Habermas 2001).

Whereas the public sphere was first thought of as constituted by individual citizens, the concept has been expanded to include a wide variety of civil society groups (Keane 1991; McNair 1994; Curran 1996). According to Keane (1991), the coffee house, town level meeting, and literary circle, in which early modern public spheres developed, today feature a range of 'spaces' in which citizens enter into disputes about who does what and who ought to get what, when and how.

In a nutshell, the public sphere represents that 'notional space' in society outside the immediate circle of private life, institutions and organisations pursuing their own goals, regardless of whether these goals are public or not. In this space, the possibility exists for public association and debate leading to the formation of public opinion (McQuail 2000).

2. 3. 1. Public Service Broadcasting and the Public Sphere

In the light of the discussion above, the role of public service broadcasting is seen as particularly crucial during elections. According to McNair (1995), the increased awareness of the central importance of media coverage has convinced many political parties and other interest groups to seek the media to articulate their aims. In this view, whatever ideological differences exist between political parties in modern democracies, often they all share a commitment to convincing the electorate about their political goals (McNair 1993). It is assumed in this study that public service broadcasting, one which is linked to the public sphere notion, has the potential to provide the structures and processes through which political parties can communicate to potential voters.

2. 3. 2. Public Service Broadcasting, the Public Sphere and Gender

Harbermas' original notion of a public sphere is now challenged by the feminist critique for what is seen as its patriarchal limitations to access and participation. This criticism is relevant in the African context where public service broadcasting, purporting links to the public sphere concept, is often unrepresentative of women in particular. The Gender and Media Baseline study (GMBS) monitored 25,110 newspaper, television, and radio news items in twelve Southern African countries in September 2002. The findings indicate that women constituted only 17 % of news sources, 1 % less than the global average of 18 % (GMBS 2002 as cited in www.misa.org: 2003). It is assumed in this study that the development of a genuine public service broadcasting model, which is discussed in detail in chapter 2 section 5, can help construct a more inclusive public sphere in which every citizen can participate and be represented, regardless of gender.

2. 4. Normative Roles of Public Service Television

2. 4. 1. Agency of Representation

The conception of media as an agency of representation comes out of the perception in which society is viewed as an aggregation of individual and group opinions. Representation in this sense enables dialogue between different interpretive communities, organised groupings, and different subcultures seeking agreement or compromise about the direction society should take (Schudson 1995). Public service television is especially obliged to play this representational role by giving due publicity to the activities, programmes and thinking of organised groups in addition to the formal processes of government and party opposition (Curran 1991). Public service television in this sense is essential because as Mano (1997) puts it:

It potentially creates in public service television, a citizens' channel that allows them to be heard and to receive essential information on citizenship issues (Mano 1997:26).

A fundamentally revised public service broadcasting model should aim to act as agency of representation through allocation of equitable access that allows diverse political parties, interest groups, local communities and individuals, regardless of gender, to express their viewpoints, mobilise support and in this way help to reach potential voters (Curran 1991). The next section looks at mechanisms that can be employed to ensure a more or less equitable access to public service broadcasting to all contesting political parties in an election.

2. 4. 1. 2. Distributing Access on Public Television

All social and political constituencies, including opposition political parties, must be afforded more or less equitable access to campaign, particularly on public service television and their issues must be impartially represented in news bulletins. In circumstances where there are many contending parties, some type of quantification threshold and/ or allocation method is usually employed to provide broadcast access to political parties. In national elections, qualification thresholds may take into account the parties' geographic strength in a sufficient number of locations or may be based on past electoral performances, including the number of seats held in the legislature. The 1991 election in Bangladesh provides an example of using the geographically based method of

allocation (Article 19: 1994). A similar model of a 'media constructed public sphere' is contained in Blumer and Gurevitch (1995) in which each political party is allocated to receive that share of attention that is merited by its strength in the country, as defined by a mixed formula of votes cast in the previous election and seats contested in the current one. Article 19 (1994) notes, however, that in most African countries, the allocation of airtime on anything other than an equal access basis poses great difficulty because of the absence of two most objective indicators of support - the political party's performance in past elections and the number of seats held in parliament. In some instances, parties are allocated airtime based on a political agreement among the contending forces. In Bulgaria's 1990 elections, for example, round-table negotiations led to an agreement on the qualification thresholds. Such a system may be seen as favouring parties involved in the round-table negotiations. In Nicaragua's 1990 election, contending parties reached a political agreement to change the formula from one based on performance at the previous elections to one which provided equal access to all registered parties and alliances (Article 19:1994).

It is the assumption of this study that during an election, public service broadcasting has an obligation to allow a more or less equitable access to political parties so as to enable them to operate as representative vehicles for the views of their supporters. In terms of my understanding, there should not be undue preference given in terms of gender, geographic areas represented, duration of representation and framing of content. By 'undue', I mean that no stakeholder should be disadvantaged in relation to others.

2. 4. 2. Agency of Information and Debate

This study assumes that public service broadcasting that is tied to the public sphere concept has the potential to enable all citizens to participate in 'collective debates' on political issues since they provide the structures and materials necessary to exercise the virtues associated with deliberation and participation in public debate (Dahlgren 1995; Schudson 1995). This role is not only crucial but critical during elections wherein every citizen has the political right not only to receive information on legitimate issues of governance and but also to participate in discussions on laws and policies by which one

consents to be governed (Keane 1991; Curran 1991; Schudson 1995). This study is premised on the notion that a functioning democracy requires a range of citizens, constituted either as individuals or social groups, who are informed and who have a continuing opportunity to be heard in the market place of ideas; regardless of one's socio-economic status, social or political affiliation.

2. 4. 3. The Informed Citizen

Public service television, like all media, is a significant stakeholder in election processes, with the obligation to inform and educate the electorate (Camay and Gordon 1999). People need 'adequate understanding' of issues so as to discover their own preferences. As such, citizens must be informed in order for them to discover their own preferences (Schudson 1995; Curran 1991). This is particularly important during election campaigns when news reports about records and policy positions of candidates can result in citizens choosing one candidate or party instead of another because of access to alternative perspectives (Curran 1991). Equally important is making available information, advice, and analysis regarding the practical aspects of voting. Public service television can enable citizens to know their personal rights. The MMPZ (2000) outlines some of the key information that ought to be conveyed through the news media during an election:

- How and where to register as a voter
- Where to inspect the voters' roll
- How to make a complaint about the voters' roll.
- What are the constituency boundaries
- Where to vote
- That the vote is a secret
- What is the election for and who are the candidates
- What are the policies and goals of contesting candidates

Generally, the media, including public service television can facilitate informed citizenship by: first, providing information and education to the public regarding election processes and procedures; and second, acting as analyst and distiller of topical issues, policies and goals of contesting political parties and interest groups (Camay and Gordon

1996; Article 19 1994). This conception is particularly crucial during election campaigns in that it can ensure briefing of the electorate about the political choices involved in elections and, in this way help to constitute elections as defining moments for collective decision-making (Mano 1997).

2. 5. Definition of Public Service Broadcasting

In this present study, public service broadcasting, as already mentioned in the research assumptions (chapter 1.3.), is defined in terms of its organisation, finance and programming policies. It is perceived as a publicly owned establishment, which usually suggests that it is partly financed by the state, partly by the viewers through a compulsory license fee and in some cases through other means of financing such as advertising and sponsorship (Keane 1991; Mano 1997). In the American discussion represented by McChesney (2000), public service broadcasting refers to a system that does not apply commercial principles as the primary means of determining public service television programming:

Public service broadcasting relates to a system that is nonprofit and noncommercial, supported by public funds, ultimately accountable in some legally defined way to the citizenry and aimed at providing a service to the entire population. (2000:226)

A genuine public broadcasting service has an obligation in its entertainment provision to show not only high culture but popular culture as well. This impartiality must also be reflected in the news delivery. In other words, news must be accurate, indicate pluralism and diversity, including accommodation of dissident views. In short, public service broadcasting programming is expected to represent the generality of the public by addressing the broadest possible range of views and topics. It must also ensure a more or less equitable distribution of voices or actors in coverage, including institutional sources such as corporate organisations, educational bodies, trade unions, residents associations, and not least, the unorganised public (McChesney 2000; Mano 1997; Keane 1991; Scannell 1990; Reith 1924).

However, the notion of public service broadcasting is a complex and ambiguous one, and different national variants have somewhat different versions of the rationale and logic of

its operation (McQuail 2000). Its meaning and significance will vary somewhat with the circumstances (Dahlgren 1988). In parts of Africa, Zimbabwe included, public service broadcasting is associated with not only public ownership, but also government control, often expressed through mechanisms such as funding. The next section looks at some funding mechanisms associated with public service broadcasting.

2. 6. Public Service Broadcasting Funding

License fees, taxes and government treasury constitute the dominant forms of funding for public service broadcasting, but this does not necessarily exclude advertising. However, each of these funding mechanisms has implications on the role and performance of public service broadcasting. Four common funding methods used by most public service broadcasters are outlined in a paper by Mano (1999) as cited by Moyo (1999). The following section is a review and critique of each of those methods.

2. 6. 1. License Fees

Mano (1999) argues that compulsory license fees are effective where there is a broad based audience that is financially able to own television sets and pay license fees. He points out that the viability of the license system depends, mainly on the demographic structure of the audience, the level of availability and accessibility of service, quality of programming and related factors:

The license fee system works well when the programming is sufficiently popular and well liked by all potential license holders (Mano 1999)

Mano (1999) notes, however, that reliance on the license fee can also be problematic during political disturbances when people may decide not to pay as a way of protesting against the government of the day:

The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was a victim of this tendency especially during the apartheid era and the legacy of such attitudes still remain a problem long after the official demise of apartheid in South Africa. (Mano 1999).

2. 6. 2. Government Grants

In most southern African countries, only the state has the resources to adequately fund public service broadcasting. In such cases, public service television is susceptible to political interference, since broadcasting budgets can be reduced or manipulated in

retaliation for programming decisions with which government disagrees (Barker 2000). Further, the inextricability of politics from economics also means that government may fail to issue subventions to public media because of dwindling state revenue levels caused by negative political conditions and poor economic performance (Moyo 1999).

2. 6. 3. Advertising and Sponsorship

McChesney (2000) has shown that dependence on advertising and corporate sponsorship often results in commercial journalism, and consequently a decline in informational quality of news due to reliance on sensationalism, political scandal as attention-drawers, and a loss of institutional autonomy and editorial independence in the media. However, there exists an argument in favour of 'dual character' broadcasting; a situation whereby public service broadcasters utilise the advantages of advertising and sponsorship but within a regulatory framework that ensures the maintenance of public service values.

2. 6. 4. Sale of Programmes

Broadcasting stations have the potential to generate revenue through production and marketing of good quality programmes. However, very efficient distribution networks are important for these products to sell (Mano 1999 as cited by Moyo 1999).

Of the above-mentioned funding mechanisms, government funding is the most problematic, especially in environments where there are no legal guarantees of editorial and operational independence. It is common for governments to fund public service broadcasting in order to limit critical discourse and to restrict the influence of dissident opinions, particularly when television is perceived as setting the agenda for political debate and as having influence on the profile of political parties (Mpofu 1996). However, government control or broadcaster giving unfair advantage to the ruling party does not have to depend on state funding, as this thesis will show. The next section focuses on the control structure of public service broadcasting institutions.

2. 7. Control Structure

Public service broadcasting institutions are normatively construed as self-governing and autonomous in their affairs. In many instances, a publicly appointed Board of Directors, a Chairman and a Director General, all ensure that there is autonomy in the management of public service broadcasting institutions (Mano 1997). Public servants, Members of Parliament and political party office bearers are normally not eligible to serve on the governing board (Barker 2000).

Keeping the public service broadcaster as a public domain that is free from undue interference from both political and economic power holders requires that independent regulatory bodies are set up to monitor whether allocative and operational decisions meet the public service criteria (Blumer and Gurevitch 1995). In South Africa, the Independent Communications Authority (ICASA) is the sole broadcasting authority and its members are selected through an open public process. It is parliament that appoints members of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC)'s Board of Governors (Broadcasting Act: 1999). This measure suggests, at least at a normative level, attempts at securing the editorial independence for public service broadcasters.

2. 7. 1. Editorial Independence

Editorial policy and decision making in all broadcasting institutions should be free from interference from both the state and the market forces (Keane 1991; McChesney 2000).

Barker (2000) defines editorial independence as the right of journalists and editors to make decisions on the basis of professional criteria, consistent with international standards, such as the newsworthiness of an event or its relevance to the public right to know and in accordance with international codes of ethics of journalism.

There is need for a statutory guarantee of editorial independence and a clear prohibition of government interference in any respect of operation (Barker 2000; Manyarara 1996). In South Africa, for example, editorial independence as well as that of broadcasting regulators is guaranteed by the country's constitution. For instance, one of the stated goals of the South African Broadcasting Act (see Broadcasting Act No. 4 of 1999) is to

establish and develop a broadcasting policy in the public interest by ensuring ‘plurality of news, views and information’. The media and in this case, public service broadcasting must convince the public of the importance of their votes, and that their views and those of each contending political party, are part of the democratic processes that enable a just outcome in an election.

2. 7. 2. Different Roles in the Newsroom

News production on television is a group activity in which the team members play different roles. It is this acknowledgement of the various roles and levels that explains the reason for my interviews with a range of ZBC TV staff in chapter six.

Basically, the reporter’s job is to collect and report on the story, while the role of newsroom managers or editors is to assist the reporter in conveying messages with clarity, style and accuracy. Thus, the editor must not try to rewrite a story but instead cope with material by recasting, striking out non-essential words, substituting active or colourful words for dead ones, or perhaps expressing a phrase in a word. The Center for Foreign Journalists (CFJ) notes three important roles for a newsroom manager or editor and these are:

- The newsroom editor ensures that the story is discernible and interesting to viewers in the case of television.
- The editor looks for problems – inconsistencies, and imbalance in the story.
- Finally, the newsroom editor looks for content that could cause legal problems such as libellous (untrue) statements, which potentially could injure the reputation of a person, organisation, profession or trade (1990:26).

The varying roles indicated above in part explain my choice of interviews with a range of ZBCTV staff in chapter six. The next section looks at proposed guidelines on election reporting that relate to the construction of news coverage in a way that accommodates a range of interests and points of view without evaluative commitment to any.

2. 7. 3. Guidelines on Election Reporting

There are several journalistic guidelines, which if promoted and respected, can enhance the democratic role of news reporting, particularly during an election. For instance, there is a set of ethical guidelines agreed to by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). For reasons of space and focus, this section will not reproduce the entire ethical code of the IFJ. However, core to these guidelines is the belief that journalists, especially those in the public media have a responsibility, among other codes of practice, to be impartial, to separate fact from opinion and to make media accessible a wide range of topics and interpretations thereof. These assumptions are related to this specific study, and elaborated below.

2. 7. 3. 1. Separating Fact from Opinion

Definitions, even within the newsroom, of what constitutes 'fact' are elusive. One major factor determining 'fact' is the proven reliability of the source (Glasgow Media Group 1976). 'Fact' obtained from direct observation, other human sources and documents is one of the elements that distinguish a news story from any other authored text. Most news is not witnessed first-hand by those who report it. In many cases, reporters are 'told' about stories by witnesses, experts, government officials, participants in events and press agencies (CFJ 1990). That information may be reinforced by – or checked against, reports, documents, library references and public records. According to McQuail (1987), factuality refers, first of all, to a form of reporting which deals in events and statements that are verified against sources and are presented free from comment, or at least clearly separated from any comment. The Glasgow Media Group (1976) notes, however, that in everyday practices, the inherited wisdom of the profession makes journalists less critical of certain sources.

2. 7. 3. 2. News Reports and Impartiality

In this study, impartiality in news coverage is viewed as a particular form of media practice and also as a particular attitude to the task of information collection, processing and dissemination (McQuail 1987). In his view, the main features of impartial reporting are:

Adopting a position of detachment and neutrality towards the object of reporting (thus an absence of subjectivity or personal involvement); lack of partisanship (not taking sides in matters of dispute or showing bias); attachment to accuracy and other truth criteria (such as relevance and completeness); and lack of ulterior motive or service to third party (1987:145).

McQuail (1987) argues that partisan reporting should not be allowed to contaminate the process of newsgathering and dissemination, nor should it interfere with the reality being reported on. During election campaigns, the public media in particular has a greater responsibility to be impartial instead of partisan and should not permit abuse by politicians standing for re-election or by civil servants seeking to gain power for the governing party (Gordon and Camay 1997; Curran 1979 as cited by Golding 1994)). It is the public broadcaster's role to win public interest in public issues and in this regard; such broadcasters have a responsibility to provide a rationally based and balanced news service that potentially enables citizens to make basic judgements about public policy in their capacity as the electorate in a democracy (Curran 1979 as cited in Golding 1994).

2. 7. 3. 3. News Reports and Representativeness

Representativeness in news coverage relates to the diversity principle and in as much as it has a wider currency in most discussions on media theory, it does become more specific in its normative requirements. McQuail (1987) outlines the following main elements:

- Media should reflect in their structure and content the various social, economic and cultural realities of societies (and communities) in which they operate, in a more or less proportional way.
- Media should offer more or less equal chances of access to the voices of various social and cultural minorities that make up the society.
- Media should serve as a forum for different interests and points of view in a society or community
- Media should offer relevant choices of content at one time and also variety over time of a kind that corresponds to the needs and interests of their audiences (1987:144).

While diversity is sometimes viewed as a goal in itself, it is also often perceived as a means to other benefits that include giving access to new, powerless or marginal voices; limiting social conflicts by increasing the chances of understanding between potentially opposed groups and interests; adding generally to the richness and variety of cultural and

social life (McQuail 1987). During an election, public service broadcasting which uses monies collected from citizens has a responsibility to be even-handed in its coverage of candidates, parties and issues (Golding 1994).

It is noted in this study that direct interference, political and otherwise can influence what stresses there shall be on a news item. However, according to Hoggart (1976) as cited in the Glasgow Media Group (1976), pressures of this kind are neither as frequent nor as important as some would like to think:

News is determined by a variety of hidden forces, which include the process of recruitment into the profession itself (so that those not in agreement with the prevailing concept of 'news' do not get in) and by the unspoken firm transmission of the knowledge that this is how you tackle issues. It is the whole ideological atmosphere of our society, which tells us that some things can be said and others cannot be said. (1976: ix)

Hoggart (1976) does not deny that in situations where there is extreme polarisation of social and political forces, journalists can be under pressure to take sides and that this can result in slanted coverage. However, he argues that such pressure is only but one variable, among many, in the process of news selection and production. As will be shown in chapter six, it is certainly part of the complex of factors explaining the construction of ZBC news.

2. 8. News Production Theory

Tuchman (1976) offers a sociological perspective in which news is considered as a 'social construction of reality'. According to Tuchman:

To say that a news report is a story, no more, but no less, is not to demean the news, not to accuse it of being fictitious. Rather, it alerts us that news, like all public documents, is a constructed reality possessing its own internal validity (1976:97).

In this conception, media texts, including news are viewed not as reality itself but as a representation of reality. Key to this argument is that media texts are a social construct of reality, even if media producers and readers or audiences may sometimes be tempted to judge media output otherwise (Croteau and Hoynes 1997):

Representations - even those that attempt to reproduce reality such as the documentary film - are the result of processes of selection that invariably mean that certain aspects of reality are highlighted and others neglected. Even though we use the 'realness' of the images as a basis for evaluating whether we like or dislike particular representations, all

representations “re-present” the social world in ways that are both incomplete and narrow. (1997:134)

It is important to consider the pressures that influence journalists to follow certain patterns of news making (Herman and Chomsky 1988). For Schlesinger (1978) the news production is perceived as a non-predictable exercise timed to meet the needs of a production system, but is in many respects bureaucratically organised. In this regard, Hall et al (1978) maintain that news organisations become pre-directed towards certain types of sources and events or topics in terms of institutional and organisational routines that encompass conventions within the newsroom and the news values of individual journalists. According to Golding and Elliott (1979), television news production involves the routine gathering, selection and assembling of raw footage and is by no means a random reaction to random events. It is a highly regulated and routine process of manufacturing a cultural product on an electronic production line:

The news is made, and like any other product it carries the marks of the technical and organisational structure from which it emerges (1979:137)

Hall et al (1978) note that media do not themselves autonomously create news items but rather they are ‘cued into’ specific topics by regular and reliable institutional sources:

This means constantly turning to accredited representatives of major institutions- Members of Parliament for political topics, employers and trade union leaders and so on. These representatives are ‘accredited’ because of their institutional power (1978:58).

Hall et al (1978) argue that this aspect of news production works to produce a systematic, and structured over-accessing of the media by those in powerful and privileged institutional positions:

The result of this structured preference is that these ‘spokespersons’ become the ‘primary definers’ of topics. Their interpretation then commands the field in all subsequent treatment and sets the terms of reference within which all further coverage takes place (1978:58).

This is not to suggest that journalists fabricate stories or lie, but rather to explain that journalists reconstruct, among other things, significant parts of reality through the routine gathering and assembling of certain constituent elements which are then fashioned to construct or fabricate an account of the particular news events (Chomsky and Herman 1988).

2. 9. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the normative role of media in a democracy and outlined the theoretical perspectives on public service television as part of a public sphere. The chapter has omitted for reasons of space and focus, other normative roles and obligations that are linked to public service broadcasting such as the associated privileges and entertainment provision. Finally, the chapter discussed the social construction of news and highlighted some of the social and organisational factors that influence news content. Without rejecting the insights inherent in the mainstream conceptions of public service broadcasting, the chapter has noted some of the inconsistencies that arise from the casual application of these concepts to African environments. The next chapter focuses on the research methods and procedures applied in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

3. 0. Introduction

This chapter attempts to show the interface between politics and the media in Zimbabwe. It traces the political history of Zimbabwe before and after independence in 1980 and links it with growth of the electronic media and to the current broadcasting, legal and policy developments in the country. The chapter also gives a brief analysis of the political situation before the 2002 presidential elections.

3. 1. Political Situation in Zimbabwe

3. 1.1. Independence

For 90 years Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia) was ruled by a succession of white regimes. Ian Smith, the last colonial prime minister, unilaterally declared independence from Britain in 1965. The subsequent military uprising by the nationalist movement led by the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and the Zimbabwe African People’s Union – Patriotic Front (ZAPU PF), and the United Nations (UN) condemnation of Ian Smith’s government policies, led to the Lancaster House Conference in 1979. ZANU PF was declared winner of the first general elections with a substantive national support base. ZANU PF won the majority vote by 57 seats and its leader Robert Mugabe became the first black prime minister.

A total of nine parties contested for political office in February 1980 as the drama of the first Zimbabwe ‘one person, one vote’ parliamentary election unfolded. These parties included the ‘all-white Rhodesia Front (RF), Muzorewa’s United African National Council (UANC), others who represented pockets of power at the margins of the nationalist movement and the strongholds of power from the guerrilla war, ZANU PF and ZAPU PF (Sylvester 1991).

On April 18, 1980, the British flag was officially lowered and in its place a new Zimbabwean flag was hoisted. The significance of the 1980 general election is that Zimbabwean polity started on multi-party footing and to this day, a number of political

parties have participated in periodic parliamentary and presidential elections, all of which have officially been won by ZANU PF.

3. 2. Party Politics in Zimbabwe

3. 2. 1. The One-Party System

Faced with the challenge of reconciling the various social groups and interests in the country and defending state power and political independence, the government opted for the use of state power in its attempts to force the opposition either into an alliance with ZANU PF, or into silence (Raftopoulos 1992). Attempts to eliminate political opposition between 1980-1987 led to a series of clashes between ZANU PF and ZAPU PF and between their respective armies - the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) and the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). According to Chiumbu (1997):

These clashes provided the first large-scale defection from the army and created an atmosphere of conflict that resulted in the government sending the Fifth Brigade, a unit of the national army, to Matebeleland to deal with the crisis (1997:88).

The Matebeleland crisis coupled with pressure arising from a population that was increasingly becoming disillusioned with ZANU PF's mode of politics accounts for some of the reasons that triggered the authoritarian process that led to the achievement of a de facto one-party rule in the 1980s and appeared to be culminating in a formal one-party presidentialist state (Raftopoulos 1992: Chiumbu 1997). In an interview with *Moto*, as cited by Chiumbu (1997), President Mugabe defended the one-party system:

We believe it is a better system for the purpose of uniting people than the multi-party state. I don't believe the multi-party state is the best way of going about a democratic system. We must recognise that we are one society, and one country with one government...The best way of doing it is to have one political umbrella under which all shades of opinion can be accommodated and this can take place only under a one-party state (*Moto*, October 1984).

As the first decade of independence drew to a close, there were increasing indications, particularly in urban areas, of growing disillusionment with ZANU PF's quest for a one-party system (Raftopoulos 1992). This study postulates that given the mounting opposition to ZANU PF policies, ZBC represented a national communications network in which the authority and voice of central power could be greatly enhanced. Since the

1980s, ZBC has become increasingly caught up in the political struggles over the control of the political sphere, the state, and civil society (Zaffiro 1984; Moyo 1992; Saunders 1999; Raftopoulos 2001).

3. 2. 2. Multi-Party Politics in Zimbabwe

On November 7, 1990, much to the surprise of many observers, the *Parade Magazine* revealed a decision by the ZANU PF Central Committee to officially abandon its dream of transforming Zimbabwe into a one-party system. The report stated that consensus on the issue was so overwhelming to the extent that there was no need to vote on the issue. It may be argued that this turn towards multi-party politics was not entirely a result ZANU PF's benevolence. In addition to overwhelming pressure from international finance institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the two institutions that engineered Zimbabwe's Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) in the 1990s, Moyo (1992) contends that it was the unpopularity of the one-party system among many Zimbabweans that compelled a change of heart in the ZANU PF leadership:

To the extent that the ZANU PF leadership was aware of these sentiments, and there is every reason to believe they were, it is not surprising that the party later abandoned its commitment to a one-party state (1992:141).

By 1990, most of the registered voters (59.6 %) included in Moyo's (1992) research were opposed to the establishment of a one-party state. The thwarted aspirations of the African petty-bourgeoisie in the private sector, the growing problems of unemployment, decreased earnings, and the housing and transport crisis of working people, together provided ground for the formation of another party - the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). The new party campaigned effectively on two issues - the one-party state and corruption in the state, and the 1990 elections proved an extremely worrying event for government (Raftopoulos 1992). ZANU PF felt besieged and tightened its grip on the state-owned ZBC and this was reflected in the coverage of the elections. Whereas a majority of ZANU PF supporters were among those most likely to have judged election reporting as fair, ZUM supporters were amongst those most likely to have judged it to be unfair (Moyo 1992). During the 1990 elections, the ruling party conducted its election campaign in violation not only of the provisions of the Electoral Act but also of ethical

provisions of advertising standards regarding the publication and transmission of objectionable messages (Moyo 1992). Examples proffered relate to advertisements on ZTV:

One featured the screech of tyres and the crushing of glass and metal in a motor accident, followed by a voice warning coldly: "This is one way to die. Another is to vote ZUM. Don't commit suicide, vote ZANU PF." Another advertisement showed a coffin being lowered into a grave followed by a stern warning: "Aids kills. So does ZUM. Vote ZANU PF" (1992:75).

Since the demise of ZUM, several other political parties have contested for parliamentary seats and for the presidency but none, except for the newly formed Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), has come close to usurping power from ZANU PF through the democratic process of periodic elections. Of the five political parties that contested the parliamentary elections in 2000, MDC narrowly lost by a margin of three seats, while in the 2002 presidential race, less than 400 000 people from a population of about 2.5 million who cast their votes placed Mugabe ahead of MDC's candidate Morgan Tsvangirai (ESC 2002).

3. 3. Political and Economic Situation and the 2002 Presidential Elections

As Zimbabwe entered its third decade of political independence, it also entered a netherworld of unfulfilled expectations arising from the economic and political realities of the previous decades. Against a backdrop of drought years in the early nineties, three subsequent good rainy seasons in succession from 1994 should have laid the foundation for sustained economic growth. Ironically, economic conditions began to deteriorate for the youth, workers and sections of the middle class around late 1997 due to unemployment, low wages and unparalleled increases in prices of basic commodities, a situation that led to civil strife in urban centers (Edwards and Flemmings Stock Market Report 1998). The food riots of 1998 and the series of worker boycotts that followed were quite expected as the country slid into economic doldrums. Zimbabwe currency was devalued by almost 50 % and inflation rose from 17 % to over 36 %, whilst the cost of borrowing increased from 26 % to 37 % (Barclays Bank Report 1998). The general escalation in the cost of living and the soaring unemployment levels added to the challenges facing the government of Zimbabwe. The commercial production and the

retail sector whose fortunes are closely tied to the consumer spending cycle suffered as a result of changed economic fundamentals (Edgars Stores 1998). The deployment of about twelve thousand Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) put an end to any hope of revitalising the already stressed economy due to costs associated with the maintenance of this military exercise, which sources say stood at approximately US\$3 million per day (Wamba 1999 as cited in the pawlo@imul.com circular). The Zimbabwean economy continues under siege from among other factors, a spiraling inflation rate of 136 %, lack of foreign currency (Reserve Bank Report, 2002) and the decline of investor confidence caused by the international community's perceived lack of pluralistic politics in the country and to a great measure by the negative reports of politically motivated violence, particularly on the designated 'white' farmlands. It can be concluded from the foregoing analysis that the media in Zimbabwe occupies a key role as a mediator between the Zimbabwean citizenry and government policy makers. It is the media that has the potential to represent public opinion that government policy makers require for feedback on their performance while learning about issues that matter to the generality of the population (Yanovitzky 2002). On the other hand, the media can equally be seen by a beleaguered government as a 'tool' to counter opposition

3. 4. The Press

Ronning (2000) notes that solutions to the crises of power and ownership have in a number of instances been sought through the establishment of various organs that represent a form of compromise between direct state control and ownership. An example of one of the most elaborate structures of this kind is the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT), which controls the majority of shares in the country's largest newspaper group, Zimpapers. The group owns the weekly and daily newspapers, *Chronicle* and the *Sunday News* published from Zimbabwe's second capital city Bulawayo, the *Herald* and the *Sunday Mail* published from the capital city Harare and a host of rural based papers. ZMMT also owns a significant amount of shares in Kingstones Books, the largest chain of bookstores in Zimbabwe (Article 19: 1996; Ronning 2000; Ronning and Kupe 2000). Originally, to enable the autonomy of ZMMT, a multi-racial board representing a range of interests was set up. According to the ZMMT Deed, once the first board was put in

place by the then Minister of Information Nathan Shamuyarira, it became 'self-perpetuating' (Saunders 1999; Ronning and Kupe 2000). In other words, from then on the government would have no right to appoint or dismiss ZMMT trustees. In practice, however, Saunders (1999) notes that the political protection provided to Zimpapers by the ZMMT was weak since it was controlled by the Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President (Saunders 1999; Ronning 2000; Ronning and Kupe 2000). From the early 1980s, for instance, Ministry of Information officials has met with Zimpapers editors and senior journalists to discuss editorial content. Elias Rusike as cited in Saunders (1999) recalls:

Quite often, the editors would seek the Minister's advice on ticklish and sensitive stories, especially those to do with national security matters. (1999:18)

Government's determination to control the ZMMT was fuelled by rising political tensions in the country and this escalated rapidly in 1983 when security forces, including the Fifth Brigade, were sent into Matebeleland and the Midlands in an operation purportedly aimed at crushing 'dissidents'. According to Saunders (1999), Zimbabweans were not told the truth by their national media about this violent conflict. As a consequence of this brutal campaign and other similar episodes, several editors and reporters, including veteran journalist and editor Willie Musarurwa were fired for allegedly portraying government in a bad light. Saunders (1999) chronicles the list and circumstances under which journalists were arbitrarily fired from the government-owned newspapers through direct intervention by successive regimes of government ministers responsible for information.

However, Saunders (1999) argues that what was once a white minority-dominated and narrowly focused private press in Rhodesia has slowly transformed to reflect more closely Zimbabwe's diversity. To an extent Saunders is right. In Zimbabwe there exists a relatively substantial degree of press freedom in which regular debates and criticisms of government can be found. While government has tightened its hold on the public press, there are private newspapers such as *The Daily News*, *The Daily Mirror* and *The Weekly Mirror*, *The Tribune*, *The Independent*, *The Financial Gazette*, as well as private magazines such as *Moto*, *Parade* and others. By 1998, the private press included about

140 publications and also a broad range of civic media publications (Orgeret 1998). However, for the challenge it poses to the government-owned media, the private press has come under increasing attack and pressure. It has struggled since 1980 to survive within a volatile space characterised by government hostility and restrictive media laws ranging from outright censorship and oppression to more subtle means which often combine ownership with a system of economic awards to those in the media who tow the line (Ronning 2000; Saunders 1999).

3. 4. 2. Political Significance of the Press for the Zimbabwe Public Sphere

In the run-up to the 2002 presidential election, the press was polarised in terms of portrayal of events and issues between the private and the state-owned press. The general observation is that while the state-owned press was closely linked to the ZANU PF's patriotic agenda, the private press provided an alternative to the state-owned media. It is assumed in this study that this polarisation provided the Zimbabwean political public sphere with a broader choice regarding sources of news on the election campaign and the election that preceded it.

Much of press attention in Zimbabwe is focused on two national daily newspapers published locally. On the one hand, there is the watchdog-oriented *Daily News*, set up with local institutional, corporate, private and foreign investment from companies and individuals with publishing interests in the United Kingdom, New Zealand and South Africa (Ronning 2000). On the other, is the *Herald* that is one of the newspapers owned by the government of Zimbabwe through a public company known as the Zimbabwe Newspapers (1980) Limited-Zimpapers (Article 19 1998).

The role of providing an alternative to the output of the government-owned press objectified in the *Daily News* coverage was important in broadening the choice that previously only existed in the highbrow privately owned weekly press. However, there has been a high price for this 'watch-dog' journalism. In January 2001, just as the nation geared itself for 2002 presidential election campaign, unidentified assailants bombed the *Daily News* printing press. This was the second attack following an earlier bomb blast at

the *Daily News* offices in Harare (MISA-Zimbabwe Alert 2002). To date, government law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe, including the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) have not made any arrests for these criminal acts. It must be noted that government has been particularly critical of the role of the private press, and has accused senior journalists and editors of what it characterises as 'acting in the interest of white financiers by painting a bad image of the country and underplaying its achievements since independence' (Moyo, ZBC Radio Interview, 2001). In this context, ZBC coverage proved unable to lift itself above the fray (see chapters five and six)

3. 5. The Land Issue

As observed in my findings (chapter five), land reform was a major issue in the coverage of the 2002 presidential election. Among the most popularly contested issues was the land re-distribution exercise. ZANU PF claimed that land re-distribution was aimed at redressing the colonial legacy. The 1930 Land Apportionment Act and subsequent legislation specifying racially distinct areas led to a massive occupation of land by white settler farmers and at the same time created many, discrete pockets of African reserves, often referred to as the Tribal Trust Lands. President Mugabe and his government were barred by the 1979 Lancaster House agreement from tampering in anyway with the land issue within the first 10 years of independence. At the Lancaster Conference, the liberation movement represented by the Patriotic Front (PF) is on record for having argued for 'the right to acquire any land in the public interest' (Sylvester 1991). Joshua Nkomo later explained this position:

We knew vast acreages in the areas formerly reserved for white ownership were lying idle, unused and therefore without a market price. To buy areas adequate for resettling the many land-hungry African farmers who had been confined within former TTLs would be beyond the financial ability of the new state. What we wanted was an arrangement like the one made for Kenya at independence, whereby the British government itself would compensate farmers whose land was taken over in the interest of efficiency and food production (in Sylvester 1985:21).

The British agenda carried the day as the PF delegation capitulated to the stipulation that whatever land had to change hands, mainly between white commercial farmers and the government, had to be acquired on a willing seller-willing buyer basis (Sylvester 1991). A programme aimed at resettling 162, 000 landless black families managed to relocate

52, 000 families as a result of the Lancaster constitution property-rights clause, which directed that owners of nationalised land had to be paid promptly and in foreign currency (Moyo 1995).

Moyo (1995) examines how the land issue has been addressed by the state and society and agrees with the fundamental economic and political rationale of land reform. However, citing the need for an orderly and transparent resolution to the land issue, Moyo (1995) also argues that government's handling of this complex issue has been problematic:

The limited consultations and lack of transparency in the government's approach in implementing its land policy and redistribution plans tends to reinforce a distorted picture of Zimbabwe's land problem (1995:78).

There was and still exists an acrimonious policy debate on land reform at various levels of society following the adoption in 1992 of the Land Acquisition Act. According to Moyo (1995), the Act gave government the legal right not only to earmark those farms it desired for the resettlement of more than 110 000 black families who were herded into crowded and arid communal areas by the former Rhodesian government, but also to use its own assessment to determine the amount to be paid for compensation. No recourse to the courts was provided for anyone who considered the compensation rate inadequate. The land situation has since degenerated to unprecedented levels much as a result of violent invasions of mostly white-owned commercial farms. Led by veterans of Zimbabwe's war for independence, these farm invasions partly account for the orgy of violence that has attracted international condemnation of the Zimbabwe government.

3. 5. 1. The Land Issue on ZBC TV Newscasts

The land issue as embodied on ZBC TV news bulletins was used during the 2000 parliamentary election campaign to rally support for the ruling ZANU PF political rhetoric on land distribution, in which it was argued that anyone critical towards government policies on land was therefore against distribution of land to the landless black Zimbabweans and thus against peace and development. According to the MMPZ's (2000) analysis of the news coverage of farm invasions, ZBC TV highlighted only the

government and ruling party claims that these were 'peaceful demonstrations' by land-hungry war veterans and never connected these activities with the nationwide political violence that was taking place at these farms. Some of the debate on land reform in Zimbabwe reflected competitive politics among a variety of political interest groups (Moyo 1995). In retrospect it seems justifiable to question ZBC TV's autonomy in the conduct of this debate, not least because the government chose the issue as its central campaign issue during the 2000 parliamentary election and repeated the same during the 2002 presidential elections. "Land is the economy and the economy is land" was ZANU PF's slogan during these elections. In the ZBC coverage of both the 2000 and 2002 elections, ruling party officials and candidates commented extensively on the issue at campaign rallies. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that government, concerned that information about its land exercise and general development intentions was not getting out to the public, appropriated the public media, including broadcasting, to counter adverse publicity emanating from what ZANU PF officials described as 'an attempt by Britain to rule Zimbabwe by remote control, through white commercial farmers who are opposed to the government's land reform exercise' (ZBC TV 2002³).

3. 6. Broadcasting in Zimbabwe

Published works on broadcasting in Zimbabwe (then Southern Rhodesia) include Zaffiro's (2002)'s Media and Democracy in Zimbabwe: 1931-2002, which looks at the historical development of the mass medium. According Zaffiro's account, radio broadcasting started at an amateur level in 1933 with professional broadcasting following in 1941, while television began as a private commercial operation in 1960 owned by the Rhodesian Television Company.

Technically, broadcasting was constituted as an autonomous authority, free from government control. In practice, however, broadcasting was used as a hegemonic tool to control and advance the views of the colonial government (Zaffiro 2002; Saunders 1999). The setting up of the Ministry of Information, run by staunch ruling Rhodesian Front (RF) loyalists consolidated this broadcasting practice (Saunders 1999). The replacement by the

³ See Appendix 1 – Full description of story 4 (February 12, 2002)

Rhodesia Front of the corporation's board members and news service personnel with RF supporters willing to practice self-censorship resonated with the then Prime Minister's stated aim of using the broadcast media to counter 'unfavourable' criticism leveled by the country's private press (Saunders 1999).

At Independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwe government inherited Rhodesia's experience of a uniform, propagandistic, state-run broadcasting system, which was entirely at the service of the white settlers and foreign colonial interests. The government retained the existing colonial bureaucratic structures, appointing several of its own people as managers - many of them veterans of the Voice of Zimbabwe, the ZANU PF propaganda radio in exile (Article 19 1998). At the take-over of RBC, the Director General of the new ZBC stated:

We had to penetrate and transform RBC...to serve the people of Zimbabwe as a whole. Comrades were attached to RBC, to assist in preparations for our independence celebrations. After independence they became regular employees. Along with this physical penetration there was also the political and ideological penetration (Zaffiro 1984:12).

Indeed, the Rhodesian state structure was to a measurable extent indigenised after Independence. The cabinet consisted mainly of a mixture of ZANU PF activists of differing pedigrees, and almost all public companies in which government was invested underwent radical restructuring of management personnel (Herbst 1990). It came as no surprise when the same transformation took place in the media. Previously it was very difficult for young black men and women to even work in the mainstream media such as the ZBC or the Herald (Saunders 1999). Today Zimbabwe has quite a number of practicing black journalists as a result of this kind of transformation that was linked to the liberation struggle (Moyo, Interview ZBC Radio 2001). It can be said therefore that independence brought encouraging signs of change in the national media.

However, many of the changes required for a diverse and pluralistic media did not happen. Instead, the new media system had to be built upon a colonial legacy inherited at independence. In the same way that the state structure had been imposed from above by external forces during colonial rule, and was not rooted in civil society (Orgeret 1998), manipulation and domination of media by government and its ruling elite, to the

exclusion of voices that were critical of government policy, increasingly became the norm. Television and other media were expected to highlight and promote the national transformation and to show a positive face of this newly elected government (Mano 1997). This is how Orgeret (1998) put it:

ZANU PF has been using ZBC as a mouthpiece of the ruling elite through the agenda of protectionism journalism toward government policy and especially through its television news' legitimising role (1998:19).

In 1992, Professor Jonathan Moyo (once an outstanding critic of ZANU PF and government policies but now Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of President Mugabe), noted the same scenario with respect to state-owned media in Zimbabwe:

This is where the government-controlled media fails the nation. Their brief is to report ZANU PF affairs as if the ruling party is greater than the nation. This docility sometimes takes on the disgusting proportions, as when the media reports whatever Mr. Mugabe says and wherever he says it without analyzing its contents. Presumably, this is in keeping with the ZANU PF doctrine of presidential infallibility (Financial Gazette 1992).

The result has been a broadcasting service, which in its coverage of events, is subservient to ZANU PF policies as the political party in power (Mano 1997; Orgeret 1998; Manyarara 1996; MISA 2001; MMPZ 2000). Despite ZANU PF's rhetoric towards a genuine 'multi-party system', the media has not been considered a proper partner of this system of political decision making in which 'reasonable, informed public opinion is assumed to play a mediating role between citizens and their state institutions (MISA 2001; Orgeret 1998). It is argued in this study that pressure from the economy, and social and political constituencies, who have forged their identities in opposition to government, has resulted in a situation in which the besieged ZANU PF party has tightened its grip on ZBC, particularly its newscasts. The ZBC newscast is seen as an essential instrument of combating negative sentiment emanating from a decline in socio-economic standards and perhaps more crucially, of national control through issues government wants stressed, as well as others it wants ignored or downplayed (Orgeret 1998).

3. 6. 1. Zimbabwe – A New Era of Broadcasting

With the collapse of the communist Soviet Union and the subsequent emergence of capitalism as the dominant global system, many nation states including Zimbabwe chose to open up their markets to ‘free trade’. By 1991, the Zimbabwe government introduced the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank sponsored reforms under the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP). The reforms encompassed a fiscal and monetary plan as well as legal and institutional reforms meant to promote investment and employment creation. The government introduced another five-year economic policy in 1996 called Zimbabwe Programme For Economic and Social Transformation (ZIMPREST).

The reforms were accompanied by an array of assumptions, particularly in the debate over the role of media in the democratic process in Zimbabwe. Commercialisation and privatisation of the broadcasting sector was viewed as the solution to state control and the removal of official constraints as a panacea for an independent, diverse and pluralistic media (Mano 1997; Moyo 1999; Moyo 2001).

The discourse on ZBC commercialisation and privatisation gathered momentum as measures to ‘open up the airwaves’ started with the leasing of ZBC’s TV 2 to private operators who included Flame Lily Broadcasting Limited, trading as Joy TV, Oscar Kubara’s Munhumutapa African Broadcasting (MABC) and Dexter Mushaka’s LDM Broadcasting Systems (Moyo 2001). ZBC signed an agreement with Joy TV, which started broadcasting on July 22nd 1997. A few months later, in October 1997, MABC and LDM followed Joy TV (Orgeret 1998).

This was followed by the enactment into law in April 2001 of a new policy framework: the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA). This stipulated that the Broadcast Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) must license all broadcasters before going on air. It must be noted that since the enactment of the BSA, no private broadcasters have been licensed, even though BAZ has been set up. On the contrary, the Voice of the People Communications Trust (VOP) had its offices bombed and Joy TV was abruptly switched off-air on May 31, 2002

(MISA-Zimbabwe Alert 2001), amidst allegations of political intrigue. The Information Minister, Professor Jonathan Moyo described the VOP as a 'pirate radio station' and suggested that there was a sinister motive behind the VOP bombing. Speaking on ZBC TV, on the morning of the bombing, Moyo alleged that:

This 'pirate radio station' may well be a front for planned 'terrorists' activities by its foreign sponsors. Who knows if these people are not involved in the manufacture of dangerous weapons? Something may have just gone wrong (ZBC Interview, Moyo 2002).

To date, the police have not made any arrests in connection with the VOP bombings, while on the other hand, Joy TV has been closed, ironically, at a time when its per capita viewing had surpassed that of ZBC TV. The government insists that JOY TV's removal from air was prompted by the station's failure to comply with the new regulatory requirements contained in the BSA; a position strongly contested in the September 2002 issue of the *Parade Magazine*:

Investigations revealed that as the station reputation grew, so did the animosity... The understanding was that Joy TV would not produce its own news. This forced Joy to resort to re-broadcasting BBC news, but this was not well received taking into consideration Zimbabwe's relations with Britain. Eventually the station... dropped the bulletin and when the relations with Britain deteriorated, the station was pressured into taking out all stories on Zimbabwe, before completely doing away with the whole bulletin (2002:13).

Private broadcasting players in the country have never been allowed the necessary leeway to operate as autonomous private broadcasters (MISA-Zimbabwe 2002). This situation is compounded by government's general disillusionment with the liberal policies of the past decade and the increased concern over critical information from oppositional voices in the media, particularly those emanating from the private press. As will be shown later in the thesis, Government has responded by tightening its political control of the public media, including broadcasting. To date, no one else has permission to provide radio and television services in the country, apart from ZBC. This situation effectively consolidates the former monopoly status of ZBC as the only broadcasting set up solely entrusted with the radio and television needs of all listeners and viewers in Zimbabwe. The corporation receives substantial revenue from statutory license fees paid by the public and, in some cases, through advertising and sponsorship (Mano 1997; Orgeret 1998; Moyo 1999). In the year ending 2001, ZBC put the figure of money collected from license fees at a

significant Z\$43 million, while the sum received by way of both advertising and sponsorship was Z\$65 million (Personal interview, Khumalo: 2001). However, in the same year, government was unable to grant any subventions to ZBC, including huge amounts it owes the institution for services rendered. Nonetheless, the fact that ZBC is currently the only broadcaster operating legally in Zimbabwe also highlights the huge public responsibility that ZBC should fulfill, given the absence of alternative broadcasts for most Zimbabweans.

3. 7. Legal Developments

Control of media varies between countries, depending on the established legal framework in each country and on this score, Zimbabwe offers a series of legal paradoxes. Since independence in 1980, Zimbabwe has ostensibly been a multi-party state; but one in which the ruling ZANU PF party has until the recent emergence of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), had an almost total political monopoly (Article 19 1997; Saunders 1999).

The country has a vigorous Supreme Court, which, on many occasions, has found laws and actions of government unconstitutional. Yet, the government can use its parliamentary majority and the presidential emergency powers to amend the constitution in order to sidestep hostile judicial decisions (Manyarara 1996; Article 19 1997; Hondora 2002).

In a legal challenge by the privately owned Capital Radio on September 22, 2000, the Supreme Court was asked to determine whether or not the broadcasting monopoly enjoyed by the ZBC was constitutional. The government conceded that sections 14 (1) and (2) of the Radio Communication Act and Section 27 of the Broadcasting Act were *ultra vires* Section 20 (1) of the constitution (Hondora 2002). According to Section 27 of the 1957 Broadcasting Act, no person other than ZBC could own or carry out broadcasting services in the country:

Having thus declared the legislation invalid, there is at the present time...nothing to prevent the applicant (Capital Radio) from proceeding with immediate effect to operate and provide a broadcasting service from within Zimbabwe (Capital Radio (Pvt) Ltd (Supra) SC/99/2000).

The nullification of Section 27 created a vacuum with respect to regulating the frequency spectrum and the general broadcasting environment in Zimbabwe. For instance, there was no regulatory framework specifying who gives licenses, qualifies to broadcast and how. Indeed there was no legislation preventing those who were ready to broadcast, a situation that resulted in Capital Radio allocating itself a frequency spectrum and subsequently broadcasting on FM 90:

The result was both theatrical and melodramatic. We saw the dismantling and seizure of Capital Radio's equipment, and the speedy creation of temporary regulations (Moyo, MISA 'Open the Airwaves Workshop' Harare, March 2001).

It is worth noting that the removal of Capital Radio off air had the effect of curbing any competition that could compel ZBC to be more even-handed in its coverage. However, government explained its action against Capital Radio in terms of spectrum scarcity - that national airwaves, allocated by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), are a finite resource - and that making it a 'free for-all-sector' would unleash 'chaos' and create a 'broadcasting jungle'. Government justified its heavy-handedness regarding the Capital Radio issue by insisting that the Supreme Court had compromised national security by making it possible for anybody, including 'people who were against Zimbabwe's interests' to allocate themselves frequencies. As Information Minister, Moyo declared:

We use frequencies for aviation and other critical services. The airspace would be dangerous without regulation. FM90 which was appropriated by Capital Radio is not even available for narrow casting in terms of a regional convention that we are signatory to (Interview, ZBC Radio, 2000).

The obligation to broadcast in the public interest carries both positive and negative implications. Notable among the negative implications is the requirement for broadcasters to refrain from transmitting anything that might threaten the social order or national security. This is particularly problematic in a situation of crises where public interest could be taken to mean subordination to state-power or restraint from exposing wrong-doing by government officials (Scannell 1990), and as a consequence limit the 'watch dog' role of media in general and public service broadcasting in particular.

On the 4th of October 2000, government promulgated temporary regulations under the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act, which allow the President to unilaterally come up with laws that can be enforced for six months before being taken to Parliament for debate and ratification. The temporary regulations specified among other aspects, the conditions for setting up a broadcasting initiative, the identity of the licensing authority and the functions of that authority.

Media commentators were quick to appraise the new regulations as yet another indication of government's propensity to control broadcasting in Zimbabwe and in particular as a desperate attempt to stop Capital Radio and any would-be broadcaster from broadcasting in Zimbabwe (MISA 2000; MMPZ 2000; Capital Radio 2000; Radio Dialogue 2000).

On the 4th of April 2001, the Presidential Powers (Temporary Measures) Act was replaced by the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) following the latter's adoption by the parliament of Zimbabwe. Under the new regulations, public service television is compelled to provide an impartial, pluralistic and diverse service, particularly during elections. For instance, Part V111 of the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) states the public service obligations of all licensees:

Every licensee shall, when providing any service, provide a fair, balanced, accurate and complete service.

The same Act 2(1) states:

If, during an election period, a broadcaster broadcasts election matter, the broadcaster shall give reasonable and equal opportunities for the broadcasting of election matter to all parties contesting the election.

A partially democratic promise is implicit in the above regulatory provisions. However, according to McChesney (2000), public service broadcasting can either be democratic or bureaucratic, benevolent or banal, depending on the level of democracy in the larger society and the degree to which the regulatory framework is the product of informed public debate. Media stakeholders argue that the development of a broadcasting policy framework in Zimbabwe was not sufficiently consultative and that ZBC newscasts have continued to serve only the interests of the ruling elite in ZANU PF (MISA 2001; MMPZ

2000). This position was epitomised in the submission made by MISA (2001), to the Parliamentary Portfolio Sub-committee, which recommends a broadcasting regulating body in Zimbabwe that is independent of political influence and control:

A licensing Authority controls the exercise of the freedom of expression, in that it determines the nature of persons who obtain licenses and the type of programming...It is suggested that the licensing Authority should be the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) and not the Minister (2001:5).

Raftopoulos (2001) argues that if Zimbabweans are going to have ownership of the media policy formulation process, then it is imperative that government consults widely in order to get varied views on the issue:

What is happening now is that the process is largely dictated from the ruling party ZANU PF without much consultation and where there has been consultation; it has been very superficial (Raftopoulos, Interview, Bulawayo, November 2001)

Justifying the enactment of the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), Moyo argues that it is the government's mandate to govern, to develop whatever structures and legislation may be necessary in the national interest.

It is unreasonable for any government not to exercise some involvement in media issues...Government should intervene through legislation to protect the interests of other citizens and in some cases, to defend the national interest (Radio One 2001).

But it is precisely the definition of what is in the national interest that is being contested. According to Scannell (1990), it is common for government to claim the right to define the national interest and to expect broadcasters, particularly in a crisis, to uphold their definition of it. However, Scannell adds:

Sometimes, to defend the public interest may mean challenging the government of the day - a risky thing for institutions that derive authority to broadcast from the government (1990:24).

In the Zimbabwe case, Zaffiro (1984) has shown that government's proclivity to control broadcasting before and after independence has never given any sense of openness, particularly in terms of alternative views in current affairs and news programming and the capacity of other media players to participate in broadcasting:

In both cases, broadcasting was employed as a tool for legitimacy construction, specifically to: 1) build or reinforce value consensus among key support groups; 2) promote institutionalisation of key state institutions in service of regime interests and policy goals; 3) promote regime policies and encourage state-wide compliance; 4) mobilise, symbolically reassure or opposition groups to habituate support or opposition groups to quiescence, as political conditions change (1984:5)

The use of public media, including ZBC, as a government mouthpiece is directly linked to the post independence development aspirations of the liberation movement and political challenges facing the ZANU PF party (Orgeret 1998; Interview, Raftopolous 2001). Orgeret (1998) posits that the considerable rise of civic actions has been a key contributory factor. Government has responded to these challenges by attempting to regulate the flow of information and imposing through media legislation, a narrow definition of what is in the national interest. A case in point was the enactment into law in 2001 of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which makes it a criminal offence to publish information that may be perceived as likely to cause 'alarm and despondency'. Under POSA, one can be sentenced to jail up to five years or pay a fine of up \$100 000. At the time of writing this thesis, the Zimbabwe courts were still deliberating a legal challenge by the Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe (IJAZ), in which the journalists association argued that some of the provisions provided for under POSA were in contravention of citizens' rights to communicate, receive and impart information freely without being harassed, arrested and stopped as long as one does not infringe on the right of others (MISA-Zimbabwe 2003).

3. 8. The '10 Golden Rules'

Control of broadcasting became even more glaring as the dates for the 2002 presidential election drew close and this was epitomised by ZBC's issuing of what the then Chief Executive Officer, Alum Mpfu termed the 10 'Golden Rules'. The rules appear to give access to the airwaves to all political parties contesting in the election. However, some of the provisions have the potential to infringe on freedom of expression. For instance, Rule (1) reads:

Each party's presidential candidate or representative will be allocated time specified by the ZBC who will remain responsible for the publication of the broadcast material (ZBCTV 2002).

The implication of the above provision is that once time has been allocated, ZBC will be obliged to broadcast the views of the concerned political party or interest group. However, if one considers that according to the same rules, the material will have to comply with the laws of Zimbabwe, including laws of defamation, public order and

security, protection of public office and the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), the potential to infringe on freedom of expression becomes clear.

The threat to freedom of expression is reinforced in Rule number 5:

Name-calling and insulting offices of figures protected by the Zimbabwean law, national heroes and or any member of the public will not be accepted (ZBCTV 2002).

This provision is problematic in the sense that it could be applied along partisan lines. For instance, as shown in the research findings in the chapter 5, insults directed at opposition candidates were constantly featured in the analysed newscasts.

Freedom of expression is particularly curtailed by Rule number (7), in which criticism of past actions of the incumbent are disallowed. It reads:

Parties and their candidates will be required to restrict themselves to policy matters and what they seek to offer to the Zimbabwean public (ZBCTV 2002).

Finally, in Rule number (10), it is stated that ZBC reserves the right to drop and edit out offensive material in any campaign programme. This is problematic given the perceived lack of editorial independence on ZBC and the lack of definition of the term 'offensive'.

In a nutshell, my basic analysis of the '10 Golden Rules' is that they were designed to restrict freedom expression as opposed to facilitating it.

3.9.

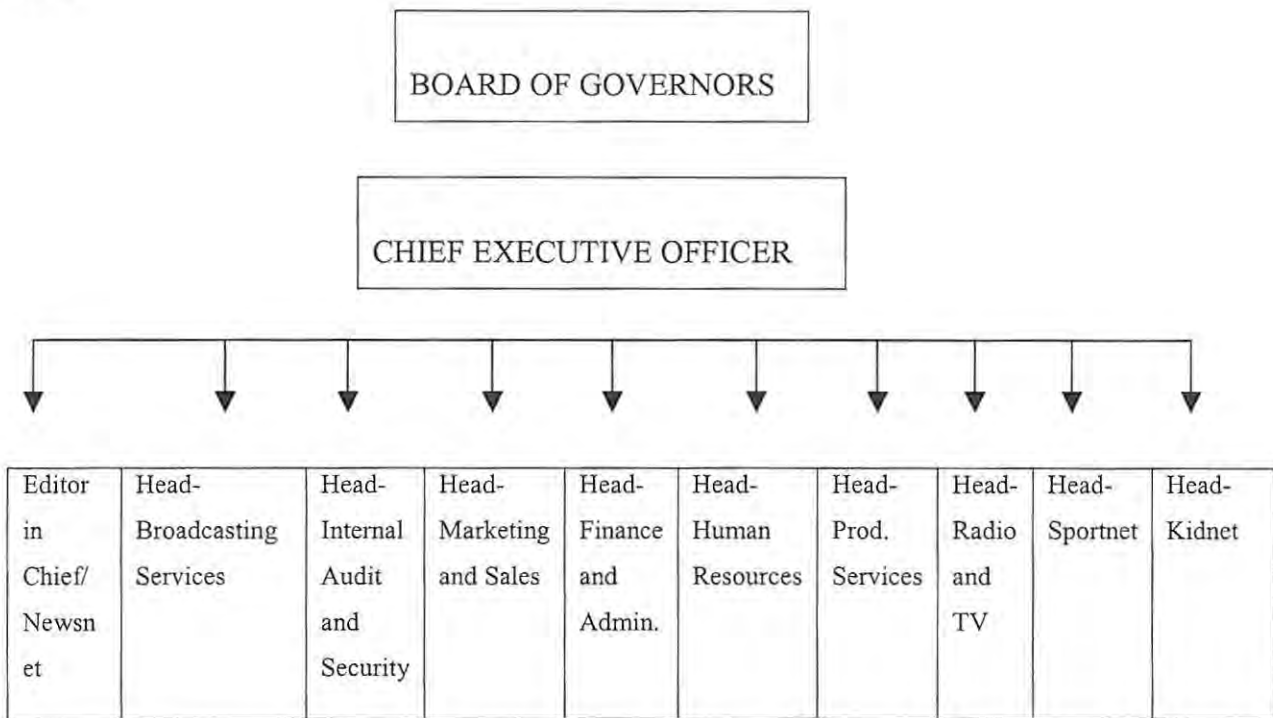


Fig. 1: Current ZBC Control Structure

The above organogram was taken from the ZBC Website (www.zbc.co.zw/structure.htm: 2002). According to information provided, the overall policies of ZBC are laid down and supervised by a Board of Governors who are in turn appointed by the Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet. The day-to-day running of the organisation is the responsibility of the Chief Executive Officer who also heads the Legal and Corporate Office. 10 units perform the main business of ZBC and these are indicated above in Fig 1.

In Zimbabwe, the Minister of Information and Publicity in the President’s Office who is also the sole Broadcasting Authority appoints both the Board of Governors and its Chairman (Orgeret 1998). These direct appointments by the minister create suspicion as to the editorial independence or institutional autonomy of the public service broadcaster

(MISA-Zimbabwe 2000). The current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at ZBC, Mr. Munyaradzi Hwengwere, who was the Head of ZBC TV news during the 2002 presidential election, is a former employee of the Department of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet where he was Principal Press Secretary (www.zbc.co.zw/director_profiles/ceo.htm:2002). Hwengwere is also a former University of Zimbabwe Political Science student of the current Minister of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President and Cabinet (Khumalo, Personal Interview, June 2002). Similarly, the News Editor-In-Chief, Ms Christina Taruvinga is a former Harare College of Mass Communication student of Dr. Tichaona Mahoso, who is the current Chairperson of the Media and Information Commission (MIC) responsible for the accreditation of all journalists and media houses operating in Zimbabwe (www.zbc.co.zw/newsnet_profiles/eic.htm:2002; Khumalo, Personal Interview, 2002). As shown by Zaffiro (2002), such formal connections provide a useful road map for the investigation of actual day-to-day workings at the ZBC. They clearly point to close ties between the government structures and the ZBC leadership.

3. 9. 0. Conclusion

This chapter has shown some of the current key political and economic issues and how these have interfaced with the media, particularly public service broadcasting. Further, it outlines the evolution of broadcasting in Zimbabwe and discusses the related legal and policy developments currently unfolding in the country. What is evident from all this, in regard to the public broadcasting service and public sphere principles, is that ZBC is constrained by the following factors:

- Restrictive legal and policy framework
- Lack of institutional autonomy
- Potential for unethical conduct by news producers

In the light of this, it becomes an interesting project to study how this bigger picture plays itself out in the particular practice of a national presidential election as took place in 2002. The next chapter presents the methodological framework employed in this study.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

4. 0. Introduction

This chapter presents the research methods and procedures used in this study. It offers a discussion on sampling, motivation for the choice of programming and coding of relevant newscasts. The chapter employs both quantitative content analysis and qualitative analysis of the sampled news texts. Further, it offers a basic qualitative investigation of producers through in-depth individual interviews. Supplementary information in the form of radio and television programmes, archive material and documents available in the public domain are used to enrich the study and as a basis of gaining new knowledge. In addition, the chapter brings to the fore the discussion on the validity of content analysis as a research technique and outlines the textual categories in the ZBC TV news reports that the study has identified for analysis. In line with assumptions espoused in the earlier chapters, public service news is seen as important for the fostering of democratic citizenship and for investigating the nature of public service television from a point of view of plurality and representativeness. In sum, news is perceived in this study as one of the basic tools for the vocalising of the different opinions within society. This study is aware of the numerous complaints and criticisms levelled at the ZBC TV regarding its role as a public service broadcaster (MISA 2002; MMPZ 2000), and as such seeks to produce empirical data from which an assessment can be made regarding the public service status of ZBC television news.

4. 1. Methodology

The study examines the construction of election campaign news on ZBC TV during the 2002 presidential election campaign in Zimbabwe. It employs both quantitative and qualitative methods of inquiry. Quantitative content analysis is used to come up with empirical data on the selected ZBC TV newscasts of the sampled period. A basic qualitative analysis by means of individual interviews is used to generate interpretations and discussions of a qualitative nature.

This study is cognisant of the discussions regarding the underlying use of the term 'triangulation' in social sciences⁴. Mescht (2002) notes that, conceptually, triangulation has its roots in surveying, military strategy and navigation. It is a technique whereby known landmarks or reference points are used to define the position of a third (Arksey and Knight 1999 as cited in Mescht 2002). But what does it mean to triangulate in the social sciences? Mescht (2002) argues that for most researchers in the social sciences, 'triangulation' means no more than drawing on different data collection methods in order to generate a more comprehensive picture and there is rarely any attempt to validate one set of findings through systematic reference to another:

Thus the problematic concept of triangulation remains little more than an empty promise: It becomes a case of saying the right things and hoping for the best (2002:49).

Mescht (2002) suggests that the term is often misapplied in the social sciences and that the argument should be for 'completeness' and not 'confirmation' or 'validation'. This argument is relevant to this study in that the complementary mix of quantitative and qualitative data gathering methods is only expected to result in a picture that is relatively comprehensive. There is no claim or attempt whatsoever in this study to generate a confirmatory or validating picture on the research issues and assumptions highlighted in the introductory chapter.

4. 2. Sampling Rationale

There are two local language television news bulletins on in every evening broadcast and these are in Shona and Ndebele languages. These bulletins are broadcast earlier in the evening (18:00 hours and 18:15 hours respectively). Coincidentally, this precisely when most adult viewers are either on their way home from work or pursuing domestic chores such as cooking supper and so on. However, it is usual that the same stories are recast in the main bulletin at 20:00 hours. Although the main bulletin is conducted in English, which is the first language of only 2% of the population (Orgeret 1998), it has a much bigger audience (ZAMPS 2000). This perhaps is explained by the fact that television is essentially an urban phenomenon in Zimbabwe owing to structural limitations such as transmission reach and the cost per television unit.

⁴ See Education as Change Vol. 6 No. 1 (2002)

The unit of analysis for this study is the individual news items featured in the first segment on the hourly ZBC television news at 20:00 hours for the period between February 8, 2002 and March 8, 2002 (i.e. one month before the election). This is the formal campaign period from the nomination of the election candidates, culminating on the day before the polling started. A sampling strategy used for obtaining a reasonably representative sample is that of the first two days of the first week - Monday the 12th to Tuesday the 13th - followed by a selection of two consecutive days every week, that is Wednesday the 20th and Thursday the 21st, Friday the 1st and finally the entire last week starting Monday the 4th and ending on Friday the 8th of March, 2002 (the day before polling started), so a total of research of 10 days was selected as a research sample. The reliability of a sample with content proportions representing a month's news is noted in Hansen et al (1998), wherein a sample consisting of the entire first week is recommended, followed by a 'rolling' or composite week, that is Monday of one week, Tuesday of the following week, Wednesday of the following week, and so on. However, unlike Hansen et al (1998), this study considered it more important to do a final week in its entirety, rather than the first week, given that the last week was the final build-up to the polling day, and likely to be more influential and to attract more viewership. I have omitted the 2nd of March 2002, because there was no bulletin at 20:00 hours owing to a technical breakdown in transmission.

4. 3. Content Analysis of ZBC Television News

Content analysis techniques are employed in this study primarily to produce quantifiable data with which the construction of the 2002 presidential election campaign news can be analysed. The study has selected election news on ZBC television primarily because of the widespread discussion about how this publicly funded national broadcaster and the laws that regulate it might be reformed to ensure freedom of expression, to guarantee space for different opinions and to allow greater and open dialogue (Saunders 1999; MISA 2000; MMPZ 2002).

In the 2002 presidential election, five candidates from five different political parties, namely, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), National Alliance for Good Governance (NAGG), Zimbabwe African National Union-Ndonga (ZANU-Ndonga) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) were competing for the Zimbabwean state presidency. As will be explained later, the study found it most important to consider who were the actors in news coverage, as well as the frequency of news reports on each contesting political party and the duration of the story within the bulletin. Similarly, it was important to consider the story type and the format employed to present the main actors in coverage. The basis for analysing the portrayal of election issues on ZBC TV news is linked to the liberal normative expectation that public service television news must facilitate democratic citizenship by ensuring among other factors that it is diverse, equal, balanced and universalistic in its approach (Scannell 1990; Mano 1997; Orgeret 1998).

The ZBC TV news bulletin comprises four distinct segments and these are: national news, regional and international news, art news, business news and finally, sports news. The study considered only the national news for content analysis because it was in this segment that all news relating to the electoral process featured. Although it is quite probable that segments other than the national news segment contain inter-textual relationships with the analysed news segment, this study has omitted these for reasons of space and focus. This study has specifically excluded entertainment news, in this case, art and sports news, not because it is assumed that entertainment is unimportant to the public service and public sphere notions. On the contrary, entertainment is an important aspect of the public service television mandate that is necessary for the overall democratic well being of the society (Scannell 1990; Keane 1993; Mano 1997; Orgeret 1998). Entertainment is seen as one of the means by which people engage at an intuitive and expressive level in a public dialogue about social values and identities that are potentially key in determining voting behavior (Curran 2000; Dahlgren 1995). The study also recognises that in terms of duration, entertainment news accounts for a large portion of the ZBC television news bulletin (almost 30% of the entire bulletin). However, for

reasons of space and the specific role of election news in the conception of rational discourse and information in the public sphere, this study does not tackle entertainment news.

4. 4. What is Content Analysis?

Before discussing the methodology further, attention is given to content analysis and what knowledge it can enable. Content analysis is essentially a quantitative method used generically to refer to any method that involves analysing communication content (Deacon et al 1997). It is also used to describe a specific method for the systematic analysis of communications content (Berelson 1952 as cited by Moyo 1999). Holsti (1969) outlines characteristics or requirements that distinguish content analysis from any careful reading of a document or text; noting at least three common characteristics on which there is broad agreement, namely, objectivity, system and generality:

Content analysis is a technique used for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specified characteristics of messages so that generalizations can be made from them in relation to categories that are of interest to the researcher (1968: 99)

Holsti (1969:22) offers an interpretation of the three common characteristics as follows:

1) Objectivity

This implies that the analysis must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules that will enable two or more persons to obtain the same results from the same document or text.

2) System

In a systematic analysis the inclusion and exclusion of content or categories is done according to consistently applied criteria of selection. This requirement eliminates analysis in which only materials supporting the researcher's hypothesis are examined.

3) Generality

By generality it is meant that the findings must have theoretical relevance: purely descriptive information about content, unrelated to other attributes of content or to the characteristics of the sender or recipient of message, is of little scientific value.

According to Holsti (1969), the above-mentioned characteristics combine to make content analysis a rigorous application that enables analysis of communication content and the linking of the resulting analysis to a wider social significance.

4. 4. 1. Justifying Content Analysis

Content analysis has not been without its controversies. Much of it has focused on the notion that it must be 'objective'. Scholars have argued that while the potential benefits of using content analysis seem extensive, the method is quite susceptible to the effects and biases of the researcher and this can affect decisions made in the collection, analysis and interpretation of data (Hansen et al 1998; McQuail 2000). Following on from this argument, McQuail (2000) contends that the very construction of dimensions before applying content analysis reflects preconceived notions of what is and what is not important:

The result is a limiting category system that reflects the researcher's reality and a set of results that likewise reflect the pre-defined category (2000:44).

This is perhaps the reason why Holsti (1969) limited his definition of 'objectivity' in content analysis to the fact that it must be carried out on the basis of explicitly formulated rules that enable two or more persons to obtain the same results from the same document or text. Other definitions have omitted references to 'objectivity' (Hansen et al 1998), requiring instead that content analysis be 'systematic' (Holsti 1969) or replicable (Krippendorff 1980).

Nonetheless, even as we account for the reservations and arguments, the fact that the inclusion and exclusion of content and the definition of categories for analysis, is done in a systematic way according to consistently applied criteria of selection makes content analysis a credible investigative method (Holsti 1968).

4. 5. Quantitative Content Analysis of ZBC TV Main News Bulletin

This thesis considers the deployment of election news during the 2002 presidential election campaign on ZBC television. The focus is restricted to analysing the extent to

which ZBC TV news mediates pluralistic politics in line with the normative public sphere arguments.

A useful way of exploring quantitative content analysis in practice is to identify the textual dimensions to be coded for analytical focus (Holsti 1969). As will be elaborated later, each unit of analysis or news item is coded according to pre-defined textual categories. To operationalise the question of whether election news coverage on ZBC TV fulfilled the public service mandate, the study looks at which social constituencies, especially political parties contesting in the presidential elections, are represented, the importance they are given, and what they are seen to be talking about. Quantitative content analysis proceeds to establish the occurrences of these specified categories and to further analyse their implications for the notion of public service broadcasting. In this way, quantitative content analysis is expected to provide an overview of patterns of attention, revealing who and what was highlighted or ignored (Deacon et al 1997).

4. 5. 1. Specific Categories for Analysis - ZBC TV News Reports

To be able to conduct a relatively in-depth focus on the news, each unit of analysis or news item is classified according to the following specific categories: **Actor(s) in Coverage, Gender, Social and Political Constituency, Story Type, News Dateline and Duration**. These categories are selected based on the researcher's initial assessment of the news material under review and their relevance to the conception of public service broadcasting that is tied to the public sphere concept. They are elaborated as follows:

1. Actors in Coverage

This category presents the leading individual actors in the report by name where possible.

2. Gender

In this category, actors in coverage are broken into male and female.

3. Social and Political Constituency

This category refers to the social location of the range of actors in coverage. Social and political constituencies are broken down as follows: members of the contesting political

parties i.e. ZANU PF, MDC, NAGG, ZAPU, and ZANU-Ndonga, foreign officials, local monitors (including local journalists), civil servants speaking on routine professional duties, and the unknowns, i.e. those whose social location cannot be ascertained by this study.

These three categories are relevant to the question of who is represented in the ZBC newscasts, in what proportions, and to assessing how the broadcaster matched up to its public service obligations during the elections.

4. Story Type

The news items are sub-divided according to each item's main theme or topic. **Election news:** This category includes any story that relates to the presidential election such as pre-election surveys, accreditation of journalists and observers, voters' roll, assurances regarding the conduct of elections, or makes reference to any political party or social constituency that is implicated in the electoral process. This category is expanded to include topics or themes such as those relating to land reform, black empowerment, national unity, and promises relating to public works programmes or any social development. **Social development:** includes development oriented stories articulated not in the context of campaign rallies or public political platforms relating to matters of health, education, food security, land reform and human rights. **Political disturbance:** all reports about political demonstrations, about strikes or plans for strikes and politically related violence, including reports on alleged plots to assassinate opponents, destruction of crops in the 'white-owned' farms. A sub-category has been added focusing at who is blamed for any violent activity. **Sanctions:** all stories about proposed sanctions on Zimbabwe.

The rationale for identifying and choosing these categories is that the mix of the type of stories covered can have implications for the fairness of coverage. Although the qualitative framing of the stories is also very important (see next chapter), the quantitative mix can play an agenda-setting role with repercussions for the construction of news along partisan interests.

5. Dateline

In the description of the news reports, this category will show 'the location of a news event, that is the place from where the news is reported' (Mano 1997), whether the story originates from ZBC's main news department in Harare or from the regional crews located in Bulawayo, Chinhoyi, Gweru, Gwanda, Hwange, Masvingo, and Mutare or from a ZBC reporter abroad. This is significant in the Zimbabwean context due to what can be perceived as the widening of the urban/ rural divide. With regards to Matebeleland, representativeness or lack of it has serious political implications arising from post-independence political disturbances, which the study alludes to in chapter three, section 3.2. There are 10 geographic provinces in Zimbabwe.

6. Duration of Story

This category refers to the airtime taken on each story. The assumption of the study is that the longer the news item the more the exposure and consequently the higher the opportunity to represent extended meaning.

4. 6. Qualitative Analysis

There are of course qualitative considerations in the definition of content analysis. Rather than stressing the alleged epistemological and philosophical incompatibilities of quantitative content analysis with the more qualitative approaches, content analysis should be enriched by the theoretical framework offered by approaches of a qualitative nature such as textual analysis and interviews (see Hansen et al 1998). While quantitative content analysis can help provide empirical data indicating relative prominences and absences of key characteristics in media texts, equally important is the generation of 'meaning' on the 'wider social significance' that is attached to the quantitative indicators.

Hansen et al (1998) put it more succinctly:

A content analysis that confines itself to counting the occurrence of specified characteristics or dimensions of text will fail singularly to capture the meaning and significance of the text analysed for the simple reason that content analysis has no theory of meaning. (1988:98)

In doing a level of qualitative content analysis (see next chapter) and in conducting interviews with respondents from ZBC, the study seeks to generate a comprehensive picture on the workings of the ZBC newsroom in relation the public broadcasting ideal

and to appreciate the ‘significance’ of the empirical data collected through quantitative content analysis. The interviews cover themes such as how the institution is organised, editorial independence, news values, factors influencing choice of topics and whether there exists in the newsroom variables like resource constraints and direct interference from those wielding state power.

4. 6. 1. Qualitative Textual Analysis

The study employs textual analysis as a means of generating a more comprehensive understanding of the quantified news texts. In other words, qualitative textual analysis is used to infer how actors in coverage, their gender and story types are used, and framed on ZTV news during the 2002 presidential election campaign.

4. 6. 2. Interviews

Lindlof (1995) posits that interviews are important in order to learn about things that cannot be observed directly or by other means. In this study, interviews sought to gain a deeper understanding of how reporters and their managers perceive their roles as media workers in relation to election coverage and the normative public service broadcasting role and to establish the extent to which journalists were constrained in the process of doing their work. This approach enabled this study to generate perspectives on the major mechanisms for controlling production at the newsroom level such as the editorial structure and conventions inside the newsroom and the news values of individual journalists, how they perceive issues of pluralism and diversity in the media, and also to explore political themes, topics and issues that were preferred in the ZBC TV news narrative during the campaign period. This was useful in drawing inferences on whether the frequency or over-representation of certain themes and actors was a case of deliberate misrepresentation, or was a result of active political controls – and if so, how? Was it through self-censorship or ideological/ political commitment? Was it through lack of skills or resources? Or was it a mix of these factors?

The format of the interviews was topic-focused and the questions were semi-structured. This approach was used to encourage key informants to articulate personal interests and

experiences more freely than in a survey interview (Lindlof 1995). The criteria for selecting interviews was restricted only to respondents with an input in the production process of ZBC TV news, particularly from those directly and indirectly linked to the newsroom. All formal interviews were recorded either on video or micro cassette, except for one whereby the respondent requested not to be recorded for fear of victimisation. Follow-up interviews were conducted via telephone. The ZBC staff interviewed can be placed in two categories: news reporters and newsroom managers. The news reporters are the ones that go and fetch and package the stories, while the newsroom administrators are essentially gate-keepers responsible for what stories may be covered, how these stories are presented and who goes for what assignment.

4. 6. 3. List of Interviews

The four ZBC TV staff members who were interviewed in this study are referred to using their generalised job titles as opposed to their specific names. This was done in order to protect the interviewees from possible reprimand by ZBC authorities. Fear of victimisation is rife at the ZBC following a massive retrenchment exercise that saw scores of experienced journalists leave the corporation in June 2002. The bulk of these retrenched journalists were replaced with former students from the government-sponsored College of Mass Communication in Harare (Personal Interview, Madziwa: 2002). The college is headed by Dr. Tachaona Mahoso, who as mentioned earlier in the previous chapter, is also the chairperson of the Zimbabwe Media and Information Commission (MIC), responsible for the registration and accreditation of all journalists and media houses in Zimbabwe (Personal Interview, Madziwa, December 2002).

1) News Reporters

Two of the interviewees were drawn from the ZBC TV newsroom. The number was limited to two because of the constraints mentioned below in section 4.8. Several visits (between September and October 2002) were made to the newsrooms and offices of ZBC reporters in Harare, Bulawayo and Gweru to ask questions and to hold informal discussions with them.

2) Newsroom Managers

This refers to two of the staff responsible for the operation of the newsroom and for authoring the news diary:

- Station Manager
- Assignment Editor

The assignment editors at ZBC regulate the final output of the news items but do not participate in the actual video editing.

4. 7. Supplementary Information

Interview remarks cannot transparently reproduce an event, process, concept or object, but have a 'referential' function that can be verified by other sources (Lindlof 1995). Other sources could include supplementary information and commentary in the public domain. In this study, supplementary sources take the form of radio and television programmes, press releases and other such archival material. A range of agencies and organisations such as MISA-Zimbabwe, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) and other local media advocacy groups regularly produce materials that are useful either in illustrating a point, supporting an argument or gaining new knowledge. These documents include consultancy reports and files from the ZBC, press statements from the Ministry of Information and Publicity in the Office of the President, files from MISA-Zimbabwe, reports and articles from newspapers and magazines.

4. 8. Limitations to this Study

A primary limitation of this study is the inadequate representation of other categories of interviewees such as those responsible for the overall operations and policy at ZBC. I had problems with securing information from ZBC and also interviewing the staff. This was compounded by the fact that whereas I was an employee of ZBC at the start of my research, I was later retrenched following a restructuring exercise as noted earlier. However, it is worth highlighting that my retrenchment was carried out in violation of an earlier contractual undertaking that would have guaranteed my return to ZBC after completing my research. The result was that some of the people I had planned to

interview became sceptical of my research and I could not secure some of the interviews, nor gain access to much of the archive material that could have enriched my study. However, personal relations paid off, as I was still able to secure some of the critical interviews, audio and visual tapes of key interviews. The study was also limited by reasons of space and focus. Chapter six of this study elaborates on recommendations for further research into areas outside the scope of this research.

4. 9. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research methods and procedures used in this study as both quantitative content analysis, and qualitative research in the form of in-depth individual interviews. It highlighted the use of supplementary information in the form of radio and television programmes, archive material and documents available in the public domain as a basis of gaining new knowledge. Further, the chapter attempted to justify the use of content analysis and it outlined the textual categories in the ZBC TV news that were identified for analysis. The next chapter presents the findings from the quantitative content analysis of the analysed news items in line with the research issues and assumptions mentioned in the first chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSIS

5. 0. Introduction

This chapter presents the graphs and charts indicating the findings from the analysed newscasts⁵. Data cited in this chapter are situated within the theoretical framework of public service broadcasting that is linked to the public sphere concept. This study aimed to analyse the construction of public television news during the 2002 presidential election in order to assess the public service status of ZBC with regards to the mediation of pluralistic politics.

5. 1. Findings

5. 1. 1. Content Analysis of the Main News

The main news bulletin broadcast every day at 20:00 hours from February 8, 2002 to March 8, 2002 is selected for content analysis. The sample covers 10 days from the formal campaign period of one month (four weeks), culminating on the day before the poll starts. In this study, the content analysis of each news story is limited to the following categories:

- Actors in coverage
- Gender
- Social and political constituency
- Story type
- Dateline
- Duration of the story

The study analyses and quantifies the actors in coverage, and traces where they are located socially in relation to the electoral process. From this, the study generates pointers as to how the news text was constructed by ZBC TV. Interpretive categories such as what the story was seen to be about (story type) are necessary in order to

⁵ see details of analysed newscasts in Appendix 1.

establish if certain themes may be taken as indicating a dominant discourse. The news dateline provides an indication as to the origin of the story and this is used to infer the degree of geographic representativeness in television news reporting on ZBC TV. Finally, the time that was allocated to each news item is used to assess the relative prominence of the actors in coverage. The distribution of all the above-mentioned is a quantitative measure of representativeness and impartiality in the presentation of news. Representativeness and impartiality are not taken to mean absolute equity, but reasonable opportunities in which social and political constituencies concerned could have access to the electorate to put across their ideas. The types of categories outlined above are selected in accordance with the research goals and assumptions of this study that are elaborated in the introductory first chapter and chapter two. More categories could have been included for analysis but due to reasons of space and focus, the above were considered adequate for the purpose of this study. In the next section are graphs, charts and tables showing findings of each category.

5. 2.

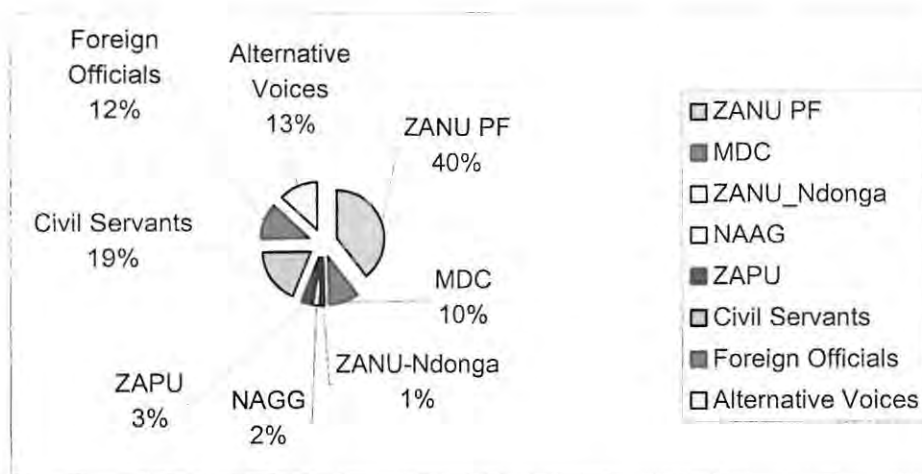


Fig. 2: Frequency of Actors in Coverage - Social and Political Constituencies.

In the ZBC TV election news, ZANU PF actors were dominant, demonstrating a slant towards actors or sources from the ruling party. ZANU PF voices were featured 36 times constituting 40% of the voices covered, while MDC was featured nine times (10%), ZAPU three times (3%), NAGG twice (2%) and ZANU Ndonga once (1%). Other constituencies such as foreign officials were covered 11 times (12%), Civil Servants 17

times (19%) and alternative voices who included War Veterans, Trade Unions, Commercial Farmers and the Unknown were covered 12 times, which translated to 13%

5.3.

ACTORS IN COVERAGE	MINUTES ALLOCATED	%AGE
ZANU PF	102.36	48.36%
MDC	15.03	7.10%
NAGG	1.53	0.72%
ZANU	0.25	0.12%
ZAPU	3.56	1.68%
CIVIL SERVANTS	36.05	17.03%
FOREIGN OFFICIALS	25.27	11.94%
WAR VETS	2.17	1.03%
AAG	0.44	0.21%
COMMERCIAL FARMERS	2.02	0.95%
TRADE UNIONS	1.24	0.59%
ANALYSTS	6.11	2.89%
JUDICIARY	1.21	0.57%
UNKNOWNNS	13.41	6.34%
ZBC Reporter	1.02	0.48%
TOTAL	211.67	100%

Fig. 3: Time Allocated to Actors in Coverage

We observe from Figure 3 that ZANU PF was allocated 102.36 minutes, which translates to 48.36 % of the overall time for all the analysed bulletins. MDC was allocated 15.03 minutes, and that equals 7.10 %. Next to the MDC was ZAPU, with 3.56 minutes, constituting 1.68 % of the overall time allocated. The remaining opposition parties, NAGG and ZANU Ndonga received 1.53 minutes (0.72%) and 0.25 minutes (0.12 %) respectively. Civil servants ranked second to ZANU PF with 36.05 minutes, constituting 17.03 % and foreign officials followed with 25.27 minutes, equivalent to 11.94 %. As indicated earlier, the assumption of the study is that the longer the news item the more the exposure and consequently the higher the opportunity to be heard. This category can be compared with the analysis on frequency of actors and topics. The findings from both categories appear to co-occur, to the extent that we are able to conclude that not only does the frequency of stories featuring ZANU PF actors and pro-government topics

dominate the analysed newscasts, but that the same can be observed regarding the time allocated. Again, this points to inequity in coverage.

5. 4.

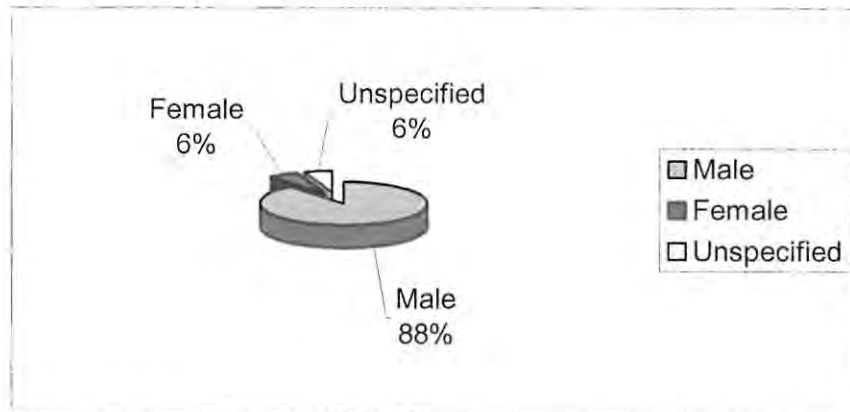


Fig. 4: Gender Distribution

Actors are also broken down into male or female in order to quantify patterns of gender distribution or representativeness in the 2002 presidential election campaign news coverage. Of the analysed news bulletins, male actors were featured 78 times constituting 88 % of all actors covered, while females were featured five times, which translated to 6%. The remaining 6% is attributed to actors referred to but whose gender was not specified. Such gender discrepancies in the ZBC TV election news coverage showed an inclination towards male actors at the expense of female actors who constitute more than 50 % of the population in Zimbabwe.

5. 5.

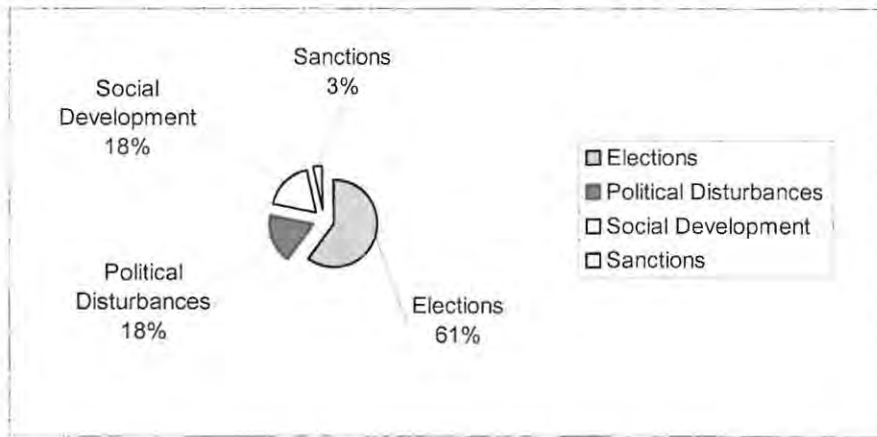


Fig. 5: Story Type

There are a total of 87 stories covered in the analysed bulletins. Of the selected categories, 52 stories are about elections, translating to 61 %. The fact that ZBC focused extensively on election news meets one criterion of public service broadcasting. However, this is undermined by the uneven distribution of actors in coverage in favour of ZANU PF and this is further compounded by the sub-category findings below. Stories focusing on political disturbances and social development were carried 16 times each, which constitutes 18 % per category. Even leaving aside qualitative analysis of these story types, both categories may also be seen as favouring ZANU PF. For instance, stories focusing on social development are, by the nature of the category, likely to highlight the development achievements of the ZANU PF government, while stories on political disturbances are intrinsically likely to project the MDC as a disruptive, and even violent party. This contention is given further support by the qualitative analysis of story treatment later in this chapter. There are three stories about sanctions, which translates to 3 %. This indicates an attempt by ZBC to locate the electoral process in the international context, but may also be viewed as consistent with the ZANU PF's election campaign strategy, which argued that the country's sovereignty is under threat from foreign countries such as Britain and America.

5. 5. 1. Story Type – Sub-category

5. 5. 1. 1. Elections

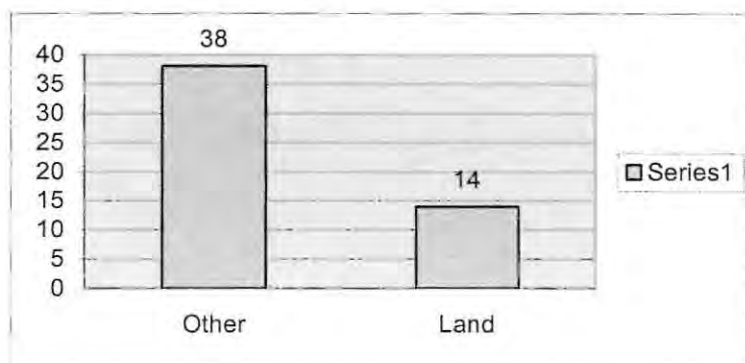


Fig. 6: Story Type

Of the 52 stories that focused on the election, 14 stories made reference to the land issue and this translates to 27 %. The study has singled out the land issue because it constituted the major component in ZANU PF’s election strategy. The land issue is likely to indicate a positive concern by the ruling party over the historical inequities in land distribution.

5. 6.

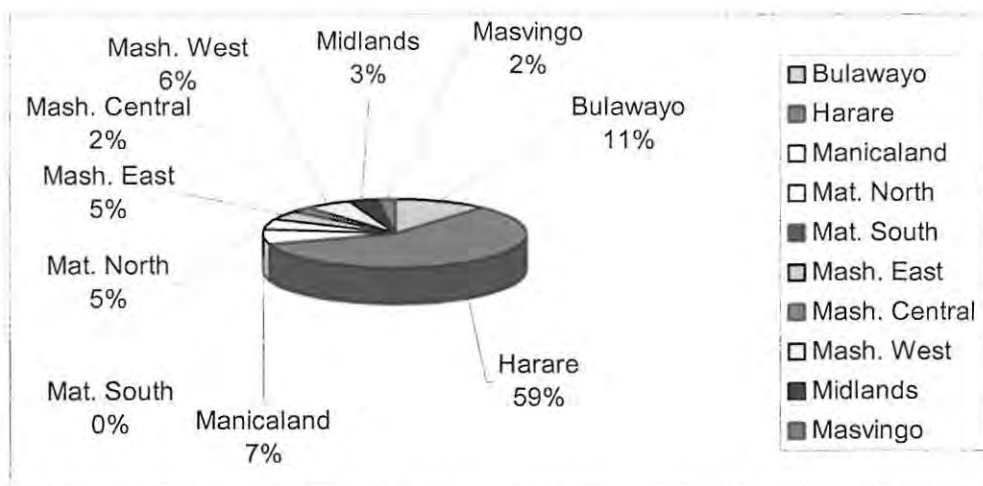


Fig.7: Dateline

There are 10 geographic provinces in Zimbabwe, out of which 51 stories (59 %) originated from Harare, while Bulawayo ranked second with 10 stories (11 %). Harare and Bulawayo are the two major urban centres in Zimbabwe. Notable is the fact that no story originated from the Matebeleland South. As indicated in chapter 3.2, Matebeleland

South Province suffered severe political disturbances in the 1980s. Failure to represent the province in the ZBCTV newscasts could be viewed as undermining inclusiveness in the political public sphere.

Quantitatively considered, the balance of urban stories, which is 62 % and peri-urban/rural stories, which is 48 % respectively, contrasts with real population figures, which show 22.18 % as residing in the urban centres and 77.82 % in peri-urban and rural areas. This shows failure to reflect the major urban centres and peri-urban/rural areas in fair proportions.

5. 7. Summary of the Quantitative Content Analysis Findings

The findings reveal that ZBC TV failed to mediate pluralistic politics by allocating more entitlement on election news to voices of ZANU PF leaders at the expense of other social and political constituencies. The findings show that ZANU PF voices were covered 36 times, which translates to 40 % of all analysed news bulletins, whilst opposition parties were covered 15 times (16 %). There are 17 stories (19 %) featuring Civil servants, two stories (2 %) focusing on War Veterans, whose patron is President Mugabe, bringing the total of potentially pro-ZANU PF voices to 55 times (61 %). Foreign observers account for 11 stories (12 %). Other constituencies, who included one story on trade unions, one story on commercial farmers and one story on the judiciary, together accounted for the remaining 27 %.

There was a significant discrepancy with regards to gender distribution of voices. Males were covered 79 times, which amounts to 91 %, while females were featured only 5 times (3 %). The other 6 % is attributed to actors who were central in the analysed stories but were not featured directly and their gender was not specified. Of the 52 stories classified under the election category, 14 stories (27 %) made reference to the land issue. Another factor was that most of the stories originated from Harare (11%) and Bulawayo (59%) - both urban centres, while stories from rural and peri-urban areas accounted for the remaining 30%. Notable, none of the stories originated from Matebeleland South, a province that has experienced severe repression by the ZANU PF government.

These figures show a significant deficit in representing the full spectrum of stakeholders in the election in an equitable manner. In other words, the totality of the analysed bulletins does not reflect any sense of reaching out to a wider array of social and political constituencies in Zimbabwe such as women' groups, churches, burial societies and other organised and unorganised interest groups and individuals. The next section presents a qualitative textual analysis of the analysed bulletin.

5. 8. Qualitative Textual Analysis of ZBC TV News Bulletins

Public service broadcasting has an obligation to act as an agency of representation, offering a platform for people to participate in national policy discourses such as those relating to politics, economics or development (Garnham 1992). This role is particularly important in the coverage of election news because it encourages wider participation of the voting public, potentially creating, in public service television, a citizens' channel that allows 'everyone' to be heard (Mano 1997). However, judging by the quantitative results of this study, the situation that prevailed at the ZBC during the 2002 presidential election was very much at variance with the notion of a 'citizens channel'.

A basic qualitative assessment of the treatment of election campaign news also indicates very little attempt at mediating pluralist politics. As noted, whereas stories featuring the ZANU PF electoral campaign accounted for 40 % of the entire analysed bulletin, a total of 16 % focused on reports on how the different opposition parties conducted their campaign. Looking at these qualitatively, most of the ZANU PF stories featured government officials, who are either cited promoting the ruling party, government and the president or castigating the opposition, especially the MDC. In the stories that feature opposition politicians, most projected the opposition as having internal organisational problems. On March 1st 2002, ZBC TV reported that the High Court postponed judgment in the case of ZAPU candidate, Paul Siwela who was contesting the use of his party logo. The story highlighted the internal squabbles within ZAPU over the use of the logo and presidential candidacy. The same is observed on March 6th 2002, in the coverage of ZANU-Ndonga candidate, Mr. Wilson Khumbula. The story was about how the party's

presidential candidate was continuing with his campaign despite the High Court order barring him from using the ZANU-Ndonga logo. There was very little in the ZBC TV coverage indicating what positively the opposition has to offer.

Other social and political constituencies account for the remaining 46 % of the analysed newscasts. These include stories featuring foreign officials, which constituted 12 % of the analysed bulletins. European Union (EU) observers who are known to be critical of ZANU PF are visibly absent in the sampled news stories, except for Mr. John Sheppard who is shown on February 20, 2002, confirming that he has been accredited and that 33 other members of his staff are on their way to Zimbabwe. Even then, the story carries a two-pronged attack - one directed at the EU and Mr. Sheppard for coming into the country ahead of their invitation, and the other being an attack on journalists from the private press for allegedly trying to create an impression that the Zimbabwe authorities are not yet ready for the polls.

Other social and political constituencies account for 13 % of the analysed newscasts, all of which when analysed qualitatively can be seen as directly supporting ZANU PF. Among these is a story featured on February 21, 2002, about a 'white commercial farmer'. The farmer is accused of destroying 60 tonnes of food cereals in order to foil an exercise by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), which is aimed at seizing undeclared food cereals. The farmer in question is not contacted for comment. The reporter concludes by echoing the ZANU PF campaign line: 'For many, this is an act of sabotage aimed at starving Zimbabweans of their staple food'⁶. This campaign line is reinforced by a story on March 4, 2002, featuring a trade union official, insinuating that 'white sugar estate owners' want to raise the price of sugar 'so that people do not vote for Mugabe'. Such rhetoric coming from a trade union official is unusual but clearly consistent with ZANU PF party claims that white commercial farmers want to sabotage government. War Veterans are featured twice. One is shown on March 7, 2002, giving an account of alleged attack on his person by suspected MDC supporters, while the other is profiled the following day, as a political analyst, claiming that there is a 'third force' behind Zimbabwe's pre-election violence.

⁶ See Appendix 1 – Full description of story 4 (February 21, 2002)

There is one story featuring the judiciary on March 6, 2002, in which the Zimbabwe High Court dismisses election petitions filed by the opposition MDC seeking the nullification of parliamentary election results in Goromonzi, Mberengwa West and Murehwa North. This story symbolises victory in the courts for ZANU PF. The remaining stories feature unknown individuals, who are either praising the government land reform or discrediting the opposition. Contrary to the normative expectations of public service broadcasting and the notion of a public sphere, there is no attempt in all these stories to highlight critical voices or alternative views.

5. 8. 1. Gender

The findings from the analysed news text indicate that male actors were featured 78 times constituting 88 % of all the actors in coverage, while females were featured five times, which translated to 6 %. This occurred in a country where more than 50% of the population is female⁷. Looking at this data qualitatively, of the five stories featuring women as main actors, two are about the head of the AU observer team, Ambassador Gertrude Mwongela, two feature women civil servants: Joan Mtukwa, spokesperson for the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, Rudo Muchemeyi. The remaining stories feature the ZANU PF leader of the Women's league, Dr Olivia Muchena, who is also a government minister. Dr. Muchena appears on February 12, 2002, launching the presidential election campaign on behalf of the ZANU PF Women's league. She tells the audience that 'if you vote for Mugabe, you have voted for land'. This is a pro-ZANU PF campaign line. The other two women, Muchemeyi and Mtukwa are shown talking about issues relating to their professional duties. Muchemeyi is featured on March 5, 2002, assuring voters absolute police protection during the poll. This statement may be viewed as lending credibility to the electoral process, and by extension the ZANU PF government that is conducting the poll. Mtukwa is shown on the same bulletin highlighting efforts by the government-controlled GMB to improve supplies of mealie-meal in urban centres. This story fits into the wider notion of a social development story, but can also be interpreted as portraying the ZANU PF government as

⁷ See Appendix (4) for 2002 population census results

concerned with the social welfare of the citizenry and its leader President Mugabe as a credible electoral candidate. In the last two stories broadcasts on March 6 and 7, 2002, respectively, Ambassador Mwongela is first shown in her professional duty as the leader of AU Observer team, addressing a group of journalists, after her meeting with President Mugabe. She says the 'African Union (AU) Observer team will not be influenced by the views of other observer teams'; a remark that brings to the fore the strained relations between the European Union (EU) Observer team and the Zimbabwe government. Relations between the EU, in particular Britain, and Zimbabwe were, at the time of the elections, severely strained and it was generally known that the EU Observer team was critical of the election process in Zimbabwe.

We can observe from the analysed newscasts that there was not a single story on ZBC TV that responded directly to the EU critique of the electoral process. Instead, ZBC TV chose to focus on stories that had the potential to legitimise the electoral process and not those that questioned this legitimacy. This allowed the whole frame of discourse to shift to the assumption that other observer teams were not in agreement with the EU, and to reinforce the allegation by President Mugabe that the EU was only opposed to the electoral process because, in his words 'Britain was intent on interfering in the sovereign affairs of an independent country by supporting the opposition MDC⁸'. The next day, Ambassador Mwongela is featured again, this time it could be argued that she is essentially reinforcing her sentiment from the previous day. She says that the AU Observer team will ensure that the presidential elections are free and fair. Given the political context in which Mwongela is selected for coverage in the ZBC TV newscast, it can be postulated she was selected, primarily, because ZANU PF and the Zimbabwe government do not consider the AU hostile. Secondly, that she was selected because of the authority conferred on her by the African Union and her general standing as a foreign diplomat.

In fact, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that all the women that were featured in the analysed newscasts were selected partly because of their institutional authority. Further, female voices were not featured as women per se but were mobilised in the news-texts to

⁸ See Appendix 1 - Full description of story 7 (March 5, 2002)

reinforce the ruling party and government electoral agenda. These patriarchal limitations to access and participation are not consistent with the normative expectations of public service broadcasting and the notion of a public sphere. It is assumed in this study that the development of a genuine public service broadcasting model can help construct a more inclusive public sphere in which every citizen can participate and be represented, regardless of gender, social, political or economic status.

5. 8. 2. News Dateline

It is observed from the quantitative content analysis results, that most news considered in this study originated from the capital city Harare, which accounted for 51 stories and this translates to 59 % of all the analysed stories. Bulawayo, the second largest urban centre in Zimbabwe, also ranked second with 10 stories, and this constitutes 11 % of the analysed bulletins. The remaining 30 % is distributed almost evenly between the other eight peri-urban and rural constituencies, except for Matebeleland South, which received 0 %. The significance of this breakdown is evident in the urban versus peri-urban and rural divide. It is worth noting that the key cities are MDC strongholds (ESC 2002), but as is shown in the next section that looks at the story types, a qualitative analysis of the stories emanating from them would not lead you to think this. Further, in as much as there is a reasonable difference between urban versus peri-urban and rural dateline (62 % and 48 % respectively), there are less people residing in the key cities in Harare and Bulawayo (22.18 %), compared to peri-urban and rural areas (77.82 %). This raises a number of questions about the representativeness of public television news in Zimbabwe.

The total exclusion of Matebeleland South is perhaps explained by the fact that this province was a former ZAPU PF stronghold and later a location of many civilian deaths in the hands of the Zimbabwe military, following a conflict between the two parties, ZAPU PF and ZANU PF. It is now widely accepted that thousands of civilians were murdered, tortured, raped, beaten, had their property destroyed or were otherwise abused and dispossessed (Chiumbu 1997; Saunders 1999). Former ZBC television producer, Everisto Mwatse as cited in Saunders (1999) remembers the situation that prevailed at the national broadcasting station:

ZBC would cover stories when 'dissidents' committed atrocities...but not when the government forces were being heavy handed. I think it was self preservation that made me decide not to look at those (government) atrocities, but rather to look on something positive. (1999:19)

During this violent campaign, it became the norm to exclude political voices from Matebeleland, especially ZAPU PF leaders. This in turn created a sense of marginalisation in the people of Matebeleland. The unity accord signed between ZAPU PF and ZANU PF in December 1987 brought with it expectations for a wholesale liberalisation of political debate. However, to this day pressure groups in Matebeleland such as Imbovane Yamahlabezulu, Bulawayo Radio Dialogue and others still campaign for representativeness on ZBC programming (Qhubekani Moyo, Personal Interview November 2001). They allege that the government is systematically omitting voices from Matebeleland from participating in the media, particularly on ZBC.

5. 8. 3. Story Types

The analysed story types were categorised into four analytical categories, namely, stories dealing specifically with elections, political disturbances, social development, and sanctions. Out the 87 stories analysed in this study, 52 stories focused on elections news, 16 were about political disturbances, 16 about social development and three focused on sanctions.

Election news included any story that relates to the presidential poll or makes reference to any political party. In view of the general importance of the 2002 presidential election, the attention given to election news by ZBC TV meets, at one level, the normative expectation of public service broadcasting. However, when we begin to consider what the stories in coverage may be seen to be about, it becomes possible to notice the visible link between many of the stories to the overall campaign policies of the ruling ZANU PF party. For example, 14 out of 52 stories make reference specifically to the government sponsored land reform exercise. A basic qualitative assessment reveals that the stories are pro-ZANU PF even when oppositional voices or actors are featured. According to Curran (1996), at times oppositional voices can be mobilised to reinforce a point within a contending discourse, and this seems particularly true of several stories considered in this

study. Thus, the framing of opposition ZAPU and NAGG candidates featured in the ZBC news narrative may be seen as reinforcing ZANU PF campaign strategy on land reform, economic indigenisation and the party's critique of the MDC. For example, on February 20th 2002, ZAPU presidential candidate Paul Siwela is shown distributing campaign materials to his supporters in the streets of Harare. He is quoted saying he supports the distribution of land to black Zimbabweans and urges his supporters not to vote for any party that is likely to reverse the 'gains of independence'. The rhetoric on land reform and the defence of the country's independence and sovereignty emanating from the ZAPU leader is synonymous with that emanating from ZANU PF officials. A similar episode relates to a story on February 13th 2002, in which the president of the opposition NAGG, Dr. Shakespeare Maya, is quoted assuring his supporters that his party will work towards 'the empowerment of black entrepreneurs'. Again, Dr. Maya's rhetoric is consistent with the ZANU PF campaign strategy on 'black empowerment'. But more revealing is use of the same footage in a subsequent campaign story broadcast on February 21st 2002, in which both opposition parties, ZAPU and NAGG, are jointly featured as supporting the official consensual discourse on land reform and sovereignty authored by ZANU PF.

MDC officials are relatively more visible in the selected news items on land than the rest of the opposition parties, with a total of nine stories, which translates to 10 % of the analysed bulletins. But qualitative analysis shows they are portrayed negatively as 'puppets of white Rhodesians or foreign powers, whose aim is to reverse the gains of political independence and the government land reform exercise' (ZBC TV, March 5, 2002). Rarely are MDC officials afforded an opportunity to refute these persistently featured allegations, except when their statements validate ZANU PF allegations. For example, on February 13th 2002, MDC president, Morgan Tsvangirai is featured confirming that his party is against the land reform exercise. The report does not explore Tsvangirai's argument regarding the need for a properly planned land reform exercise in which disruption to commercial farming activity could be avoided. The same footage is mobilised on a number of the subsequent stories on land reform, including stories in which President Mugabe castigates the opposition. On Monday February 12th 2002,

President Mugabe is quoted at a rally in Manicaland accusing the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, of 'trying to rule Zimbabwe by remote control through commercial farmers'. Opposition MDC leader, Tsvangirai, is also castigated for sympathising with Blair. Archive footage of Tsvangirai criticising the manner in which the land issue has been handled is re-used in the story to support Mugabe's allegation. This story is followed by a lengthy interview with the Minister of Home Affairs, John Nkomo (who is also the ZANU PF National Chairman). Nkomo speaks singularly without any interrogating questions. The discussion focuses on the land issue as a key campaign strategy for ZANU PF and criticises the MDC for not endorsing the government land programme.

Another story type that features prominently in the analysed news relates to political disturbances. Allegations of political violence attached to MDC are perceived in this study as one way in which the opposition is deliberately projected unfavourably. For example, on Wednesday February 20th 2002, ZBC TV carries a story that claims that MDC MPs, Abedigo Bhebhe and Peter Nyoni were found drunk and in possession of drugs (dagga) and other dangerous weapons. The story carries no comment from the accused MPs. Following this story is an interview with the Minister of Home Affairs, John Nkomo in which he questions the integrity of the accused MPs.

The most outstanding charge of political violence levelled at the MDC is carried in a story about an alleged plot to assassinate President Mugabe. The story that broke on Friday March 1st 2002, a few days before the presidential poll, narrates the contents of a documentary broadcast shown on Australian TV, titled 'KILL MUGABE'. As if to confirm ZANU PF's claim that the 'MDC is a violent party'⁹, archive footage of Tsvangirai at a rally in Harare is mobilised. The MDC leader is featured saying 'if Mugabe does not leave office peacefully, we shall remove him by force'. The reporter then chronicles what he terms 'the violent nature of the MDC'. The narrative is supported by old footage of gravesites and dead people allegedly killed by the MDC. Criminal investigators are shown interviewing some of the accused persons, purported to be MDC members. The story proceeds with allegations by the ZBC reporter that MDC with the

⁹ See Appendix 1 - John Nkomo's remarks on story 5 (February 12, 2002)

support of donor funding has set up safe houses from which the party orchestrates its violent activities. Again archive footage, this time of destroyed property, is used to support the voice over. In all the subsequent stories on the alleged plot to kill Mugabe, the MDC is featured once on Monday March 4th 2002. Even then, MDC leader Tsvangirai is used to support the claim that his party indeed approached a consultancy firm, Dickens and Madison, with the proposal to kill Mugabe. Endorsement without any discernable appraisal for the ZANU PF allegations against the MDC is evident in the treatment of the news item under review.

Finally, as noted in the discussion on the urban rural versus peri-urban rural divide (see previous section on news dateline), the key cities are MDC strongholds. However, a qualitative assessment of the story types featured reveals that it was the ZANU PF elite in urban areas that set the limits of what was included or excluded in the ZBC TV news texts, while the majority of the population in peri-urban and rural communities remained outside the media constructed public sphere.

5. 9. Conclusion

As shown in this chapter, quantitative content analysis results revealed that ZANU PF dominated ZBC TV election news coverage at the expense of other social and political constituencies. This is in terms of voices, duration and story selection. Women only accounted for 3 % of the analysed newscasts. It is argued in this study that these female voices were because of their institutional authority and not as women per se. In general, the analysed bulletins do not reflect the diversity of social and political constituencies in Zimbabwe such as women's groups, churches and other organised and unorganised interest groups and individuals.

The findings also revealed a significant urban-rural divide in terms of news dateline. Equally glaring was the fact that there were no stories originating from Matebeleland South, a province that has a history of political and economic marginalisation.

To achieve a more comprehensive picture on the quantitative content analysis results, the study reported on a basic qualitative textual analysis of the analysed bulletins. The verdict was that the ZBC TV news text served the ends of the dominant political elite that is located within ZANU PF and that this resulted in coverage that favoured the ruling party at the expense of its opponents and other social constituencies. Key observations included the dominance of ZANU PF campaign themes and arguments. For example, there was no visible sense in the ZBC TV newscasts of pursuing a wider array of viewpoints on the land issue.

In view of the foregoing findings, we can conclude that ZBC TV failed to represent, in their news content, the various social and political constituencies in a reasonably egalitarian way; neither did ZBC TV offer a wide range of topics and interpretations of such topics. The next chapter looks at the discussion and interpretation of findings from the interviews with ZBC TV news personnel. Focus is restricted to understanding the major mechanisms and news values operating at the ZBC TV newsroom. The interviews sought to establish the degree of editorial independence or lack of it and how journalists at the ZBC TV newsroom arrived at the choice and interpretation of stories during the 2002 presidential election campaign.

CHAPTER SIX

INTERVIEWS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

6. 0. Introduction

This chapter interprets and discusses qualitative interviews with ZBC TV news personnel. Focus was restricted to understanding the major mechanisms and news values operating at the ZBC TV newsroom. The interviews sought to establish the degree of editorial independence or lack of it and how journalists at the ZBC TV newsroom arrived at the choice and interpretation of stories during the 2002 presidential election campaign. The chapter considers the construction of ZBC TV newscasts from the democratic public sphere perspective as outlined in chapter two.

6. 1. Making Election News

In order to understand the construction of election news on ZBC TV during the 2002 presidential election as reflected in the previous analysis findings, it was important to link the resulting data with interviews focusing on the effect of the major mechanisms employed in regulating operations in the newsroom and news values of individual reporters at the ZBC. This exercise made it possible to probe the editorial status of the newsroom and in particular whether or not the ZBC newsroom was free from political pressure from the state during the election campaign. According to de Vreese (2001) as cited in Macha (2002:76), 'this enables comparisons between intentions and internal decision making processes with the actual outcome'. The study does not profess to have conducted a thorough qualitative analysis through the interviews¹⁰ with ZBC TV respondents, but as will be shown in section 6.3 of this chapter, the data obtained nonetheless assists in answering the research questions as outlined in the introductory chapter one. For instance, from the interviews, one can observe a culture of fear among some of the respondents, resulting in self-censorship, while ideological commitment to government leaders and their patriotic agenda is evident in others. Also evident is a lack of ethical conduct along universally established journalism norms such as separation of 'fact' from 'opinion' and endeavoring for diversity of opinions, sources and topics. Thus,

¹⁰ See Appendix (3) for interview responses

these interviews enabled me, albeit not fully, to identify some the variables that shaped the construction of ZBC television news during the 2002 presidential elections.

6. 2. Interview Questions and Data Obtained

It is necessary to note a few points on the questions asked.¹¹ Questions varied between the two groups of interviewees. For instance, certain questions were specific to a specific group owing to the role played by the specific individual in the production of news. However, there are other questions that were used in both groups, for the purpose of finding a balance in the representation of opposing interests of news reporters and their 'bosses', the news managers. These questions were:

- Would you characterise the ZBC TV newsroom as autonomous in its operations? If the answer is no, what are the constraints?
- Do you consider that there was sufficient effort to accommodate in the news, actors other than those of ZANU PF; particularly those from the opposition parties? If the answer is no, explain what the limiting factors were.

These broad questions were among the most pivotal in the conceptual framing of my topic. I was concerned whether questions asked of news reporters such as those relating to the creative and editorial independence of the newsroom should be different from those asked of news administrators. This concern arose from the observation that most news administrators at ZBC are aware of their role as government gatekeepers and thus would be less willing to speak openly, and more easily offended by controversial questions. The problem was addressed by arranging potentially offensive questions in such order that they came at the end and also avoiding follow-up questions whenever an interviewee was reluctant to answer a question. This approach ensured that if a question were to affect the quality of the interview, it would not happen before collecting most of the data. In addition, these questions were phrased in a non-confrontational manner.

¹¹ See Appendix (2) for a detailed list of interview questions

The interview data was presented in terms of the categories in this chapter, all of which were informed by the research questions mentioned in the introductory chapter one. This was done in order to avoid selecting certain comments out of context.

6. 3. Inside the Newsroom

6. 3. 1. Political Interference

In countries where power is concentrated in the hands of a state bureaucracy, and where broadcasting is characterised by state control, it is often the internal organisational rules, supplemented by a restrictive regulatory framework, that ensure that the media serves the dominant elite or ruling class (Herman and Chomsky 1988). Asked whether or not there was any form of direct political interference in their choice of stories, the newsroom administrators at ZBC TV confirmed that it was common for officials from the office of the President or local ZANU PF functionaries to call the station and demand coverage:

Sometimes people up there call the newsroom and they give instructions to my subordinates. How do you handle such a situation? Sometimes these junior reporters are untouchable because they are connected to the top (Interview, ZBC newsroom manager(2), October 2002)

It is the assumption of this study that telephone calls to the newsroom by political groups, or any constituency for that matter, are not the same as direct political interference, since it is normal practice for political parties to give the media access to their party conferences and campaign events, and to inform them of dates, times and venues sufficiently in advance. Nonetheless, as we have observed from the content analysis results, ZANU PF officials dominated the analysed newscasts and therefore one might infer that ZANU PF demands for coverage were all too often granted. Newsroom manager (1) argues:

I would not see it as demanding coverage. Yes, they do call and request coverage and if we have the equipment and the crew, why should we not cover them? (September 2002)

When asked if they do get calls from the opposition parties and other social constituencies and how often they responded to these, the answer was an emphatic yes:

We get plenty phone calls from a range of people, including our viewers. We only attend to those we consider newsworthy and those that are within our geographic

jurisdiction. However, sometimes resources limit us (Newsroom manager (1), September 2002)

Both ZBC TV reporters and manager (1), unlike manager (2), claimed that the reason for the perceived focus on ZANU PF officials was that there were often more available for comment as compared to other social constituencies, including opposition parties.

ZANU PF people take the trouble to invite us in good time to their functions and they afford us VIP treatment. (Interview, ZBC Reporter (2), October 2002)

Reporter (2) claimed that it was unusual of the opposition, especially the MDC, to inform the ZBC of their activities.

The opposition people don't like us. They say we are 'ZANU PF' loud-speakers. I was barred from covering an MDC rally at the White City Stadium in Bulawayo (Interview, ZBC reporter (2), October 2002)

The claim that ZBC reporters were denied access to MDC rallies is at variance with the evidence obtained through content analysis in that MDC did receive coverage from ZBC, even though the stories featuring the MDC were not favourable. One is not suggesting that it is not possible for overzealous elements within the MDC party to behave in the manner described by ZBC reporter (2). But in light of the following remark by newsroom manager (2), we can conclude that self-preservation has had a bearing on the type of relations that exist between the ZBC newsroom and government authority:

He who pays the piper calls the tune. I have a family to look after. I cannot afford to sacrifice this job. There is only one TV station in Zimbabwe (Interview, ZBC newsroom manager (2), September 2002)

Nonetheless, it is difficult to conclude that the above statement indicates direct political interference in the newsroom. Instead, this may well signify self-censorship by the ZBC TV news staff, perhaps arising from a combination of internal rules such as the '10 Golden Rules', and also official censorship resulting from laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which potentially limit what individual reporters can do or not do. Further, this may indicate the ideological thrust of individual news people at ZBC, which could be viewed as supporting the ZANU PF 'patriotic agenda'.

In conclusion, although it was difficult for this study to determine how direct political interference works at the ZBC, both reporters and newsroom managers confirmed the

existence of political interference both in compilation of news diaries and the choice of 'what' story will eventually be broadcast. Respondents referred to incidents in which news stories were retracted off air 'because the bosses did not like them'. However, equally evident was the fact that the ideological positions of the interviewees did influence the content and the manner in which the analysed ZBCTV news text was covered.

6.3.2. Choice of Sources

Generally, in countries where the dominant class is also the political elite, government sources are more likely to equally dominate the news because of their status. Fishman as cited in Herman and Chomsky (1988) notes that:

A news-worker will recognise an official's claim to knowledge not merely as a claim, but as a credible, competent piece of knowledge. This amounts to a moral division of labour: officials have and give the facts; reporters merely get them.

ZBC Reporter claims that government ministers are more newsworthy by virtue of the public offices they hold and thus the need for them to account to the population. However, analysis of the sampled news items show government ministers not discussing professional routine but campaigning for ZANU PF. A case in point is when the Minister of Home Affairs, John Nkomo, is featured in a newscast on Friday February 12th 2002, discussing ZANU PF's campaign strategy. The discussion dwells on the land issue (which is not covered by his professional jurisdiction as minister responsible for the police force), followed by a scathing attack on the MDC and on the private press. This case, at least, undermines the claim that government was covered as government and not as ZANU PF.

A dominant feature in the analysed newscasts is that ZBC TV tended to feature ZANU PF leaders talking down to the nation. Notable ZANU PF actors in coverage are the President and his Ministers and Traditional leaders. Reporter (1) argued that there was nothing wrong with allowing legitimately elected leaders airtime on public television:

The people elected these leaders. We must be seen to be covering them, or else why should we sit here and earn public money. Where does that happen anyway in the world? (Interview, ZBC reporter (1), October 2002)

The foregoing comments indicate the 'accredited status' of the nationalist leaders and in general the status of institutional representatives in society, which I have alluded to in the theory chapter 2.

The study shares the view that, indeed public service television must continue to help construct versions of community and its leaders, but that, of course, should not be confused with the dark sides of nationalism (Dahlgren 1998), neither should it be confined to society or political party elites.

6. 3. 3. Resource Constraints

Both news reporters and managers at the ZBC seem aware that ZANU PF and government officials are more frequently covered than other social constituencies. Of the two newsroom managers interviewed in this study, all attributed ZANU PF's dominance of news on ZBC TV in terms of resource constraints.

It is not possible for news media to command sufficient material and financial resources to meet the daily news demands and imperative news schedules since they cannot afford to have reporters and cameras at all places that require coverage (Curran 1996; McQuail 2000; Herman and Chomsky 1988). At times certain locations are much difficult to reach due to geographic reasons relating to distance and poor road networks.

The ZBC TV newsroom has its share of resource constraints. For example, the Bulawayo newsroom had only two cameras for outside newsgathering and these were shared between four reporters (personal observation). As a result, material from an initial story was used to generate several bulletins over a period of time. This was quite evident in the use of archive footage, which was repeatedly used on some of the analysed news material. The situation was worsened by the shortage of fuel in Zimbabwe during the 2002 presidential election campaign. Further, there was only one vehicle allocated to the Bulawayo newsroom, and very often reporters were compelled to share transport with other departments within ZBC.

Even if we wanted to expand the range of stories on our bulletin, there are not enough material resources to do that. (Interview, ZBC newsroom administrator, October 2002)

Most of the analysed news material originated from the urban areas in Bulawayo (11%) and Harare (59%), suggesting a tendency towards 'elite' institutional sources, most of who reside in the big cities. The analysis of coverage of both the city and rural areas during the 2002 election campaign showed a propensity to follow leading ZANU PF officials wherever they went, including abroad as was the case when President Mugabe attended the CHOGM meeting in Coolumberr, Australia. Orgeret (1998) also observed a similar kind of 'follow-the-leader' journalism at ZBC. According to Orgeret (1998), the fact of being in the company of a government minister was seen in the ZBC newsroom as confirming one's worth as a journalist. The same could be said about one of the ZBC reporters interviewed in this study:

I was the one that went on board a helicopter with the Professor (reference to the Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo). Yes, I rubbed shoulders with the 'big wigs' (Interview, ZBC Reporter, September 2002)

The above attitude has serious consequences for ethical journalism, and much more, for public service broadcasting and its commitment to representativeness of voices regardless of social, political and economic status.

6.3.4. News Values and Guidelines

Considering that ZBCTV is conceived of as a public broadcaster, reporters at the broadcaster have a responsibility to accurately inform the citizenry about the different issues and how the different parties are conducting their campaigns. This means they should seek to balance contending views, and to debunk false claims and allegations that may be used to incite violence (MMPZ 2000; MISA-Zimbabwe 2000). Yet several examples of ZANU PF leaders attacking or making allegations about the MDC are identifiable in the analysed news material, with no discernable effort to substantiate the allegations. Thus there is the allegation on Friday March 1st 2002, by the ZBC reporter,¹² that foreign donor funds are being used by the MDC to set up safe houses from which their youth militia orchestrate acts of violence on suspected ZANU PF supporters. There is no effort to show the viewers the mentioned houses nor is there an attempt to solicit a comment from MDC officials. Such examples indicate a poor sense of journalistic

¹² See Appendix 1 for details of analysed newcasts

performance relating to 'impartial' reporting, and as such constitute failure to live up to public service broadcasting norms relating to news production.

As observed earlier, all election stories seemed heavily weighed in favour of ZANU PF election campaign issues and not the opposition. There was no attempt to pursue alternative angles to the same topic. For example, on Friday March 1st 2002, further to allegations that donor funds were used to promote violence, there is mention of an alleged plot to kill Mugabe. Curiously, there is no attempt to question the validity of the source. The issue is not whether the story is true or not. Instead, it is concluded in the ZBC news text, without due process of the law, that the MDC is guilty as charged. The reporter is out there reciting details of the alleged offence and showing unknown individuals condemning the MDC. When I asked for a comment on the issue, this is what a ZBC newsroom manager had to say:

Some things are obvious. Tsvangirai (reference to MDC leader) has always indicated his intention of getting the presidency via the back door. We all know that, don't you?
(Interview, ZBC newsroom manager, October 2002)

This attitude partly provides a window through which the news values of individual journalists at the ZBC can be assessed. It is from these foregoing observations that this study has concluded that ZBC TV election campaign newscasts were limited in scope to the election agenda of the ruling ZANU PF party.

6. 4. Conclusion

This chapter presented an interpretation of the interviews conducted with the reporters and managers at the ZBC TV newsroom. The ZBC news staff attributed much their performance in terms of a hostile political opposition, which they claimed viewed them as 'ZANU PF loudspeakers' and a limited resource base that made it impossible to cover all the social and political constituencies in a more or less proportional manner. However, one can also observe other variables from the interviews, which include the ethical conduct of some ZBC news producers, often in pursuit of personal ideological commitment, and self-censorship arising from either a culture of fear based on real and sometimes imagined political interference. All these factors had the net effect of limiting

the public sphere, and consequently public service broadcasting news during the election campaign. The next chapter presents the concluding remarks and makes certain recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7. 0. Introduction

This chapter presents the concluding remarks of this study and makes certain recommendations. The previous chapters five and six have attempted to reveal how ZBC TV constructed election campaign news during the 2002 presidential elections in Zimbabwe. The findings have shown that ZBC failed to mediate pluralist politics and to facilitate democratic citizenship by favouring the ruling party at the expense of other social and political constituencies, including its opponents. The findings have also showed a significant absence of female voices (6%) and that even those few females featured were accommodated because of their institutional authority. Further, there was evidence of an urban-rural divide in the news dateline, characterised by a concentration of stories originating from Harare and Bulawayo at the expense of other provinces. There was not a single story from Matebeleland South. All this points to the fact that ZBC TV news failed to achieve more or less representative coverage, both in the choice of social and political actors in coverage, gender, duration, story types and news dateline.

Also notable from the findings was the lack of ethical conduct on the part of ZBC TV news staff in line with internationally accepted journalistic conventions relating to diversity of news sources, topics and interpretations of such topics, which I outline in chapter two. This tended to undermine the public service broadcasting thrust as outlined in chapter two and violated sections of the Broadcasting Act of Zimbabwe (2001), which I allude to in chapter three, section 4.7.1. The failure to achieve representativeness in the ZBC TV newscast was ultimately a travesty of public service broadcasting principles and the notion of a public sphere. This chapter concludes with a summary discussion on the broadcast landscape in Zimbabwe and makes certain recommendations.

7. 1. Theory and Further Research

This study does not profess to address news production issues in detail but notes that this could be an interesting area for further research. There is a need to understand fully the various processes by which news is constructed and to understand the conventions, codes

and structures of society that regulate various forms of expression or result in certain forms of dominance or exclusion (Glasgow Media Group 1976).

In the case of ZBC, both news reporters and their managers explained their performance in terms of availability of resources such as time, equipment, transport and so on. But if we take the view that resource constraints are an absolute filter of what is included or excluded in the ZBC TV news text, it then becomes problematic to fathom the fact that the same ZBC TV was able to cover President Mugabe in all the analysed bulletins (see description of analysed bulletins). Indeed, there may be instances where resource constraints influence what will be covered or not, but such instances alone do not determine what will be included or omitted in the bulletins.

Some of the information resulting from interviews with ZBC TV reporters and their managers revealed that they were other factors at play, such as those relating to news values and assumptions of individual journalists or what I refer to as the ideological commitment and other such related factors. Reporter (2) for example was very emphatic that ZANU PF government ministers were newsworthy because they have a responsibility to account for their actions to the citizenry who elected them to office. Thus, the reporter sees the ZBC as a public service broadcaster that has an obligation to the same citizenry with regards to ensuring that 'elected leaders' are visible in the media. This position is interesting because from it we can proceed to analyse in detail what the relations are between journalists and the centres of power such as government officials, business people, trade unions and so on. According to Hoggart (1976) as cited in the Glasgow Media Group (1976):

The relations between journalists and the broader structures of society are tough and tender, strong and weak, and extraordinarily complicated and they do not run in the same direction. If we did work in these areas, we would at least get somewhere. (1976: ix)

Although attempts were made in this study to unravel some of the control mechanisms and conventions operating within and outside the newsroom, a detailed analysis on this aspect was not possible in this study due to reasons of focus and space. The study confirms that ZBC TV's coverage was constructed in favour of the ZANU PF party at the

expense of other social and political constituencies, and that this undermines the public service broadcasting and public sphere principles. However, it does not sufficiently explain coverage of any particular area or activity, neither does it show in-depth how the news was manufactured, the interface between news and the various structures of society which influence what will be covered in the news and how. This thesis, nonetheless, represents a useful starting point for research.

7. 2. Broadcast Landscape Issues

Liberalisation and privatisation of the broadcasting sector is sometimes viewed as pivotal to democratic citizenship (Scannell 1990). But many question the social and political implications of pursuing the privatised or de-regulated route (Moyo 2001). The tendency is to assume that privatised commercial media can provide a counter-balance to the service that is provided by state-owned media. For instance, it has been argued (Berger 2000; Ronning 1994) that in most parts of Africa, where broadcasting media is characterised by state ownership and control, the introduction of private commercial media may cause state owned media to be more even-handed in its general programming policies, and especially in its treatment of news. This, it is argued, has the net effect of securing pluralism and diversity in the public sphere. Moyo (2001) posits that the introduction of competition in the United Kingdom did not only open up the democratic space to a wider range of views from various social and political constituencies, but also strengthened the publicly owned BBC and the British Telecom. This may be the case, and ZBC could improve were it to face broadcast competitors.

It is assumed in this study that public service broadcasting, because of its thrust in public ownership and civic broadcasting, should remain a major part of the landscape. It offers a viable model that is closer to the public sphere than the market driven media. It is thus a model to be built on rather than destroyed in the name of consumer choice and freedom (Garnham 1995). But the issue that needs investigating is: Whither State, Private or Public Service Broadcasting?

Perhaps, the ideal situation lies in a three tier broadcasting system allowing for the co-existence of private, public and community broadcasting that is regulated by a legal and policy framework, that is collectively formulated by all media stakeholders and that safeguards the public interest (Windhoek African Charter on Broadcasting 2002; MISA 2000; Barker 2000; Manyarara 1996). The case for regulation in the public interest is very important, not least because all media, including broadcasting, are a repository of information and power. However, public interest should not be taken to mean conformity in the media nor should it imply subordination to state power (Netshitenze 2002).

7. 3. Public Service Broadcasting, Funding and Other Recommendations

This study advocates for a public broadcasting system that is characterised by editorial independence, which empowers broadcasters to act ‘autonomously for the good of society’ without any interference from the market or state. To achieve this ideal in practice, this study recommends the implementation of the Windhoek 2002 African Charter on Broadcasting that calls for the transformation of all state and government-controlled broadcasters into public service broadcasters. According to the charter:

All public service broadcasters should be accountable to all strata of people as represented by an independent board, that serve the overall public interest, avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender (Windhoek 2001).

The general spirit of the African Charter on Broadcasting is also captured in the recommendations put forward by MISA-Zimbabwe, a civic media organisation that has been at the forefront of advocacy campaigns aimed at promoting media diversity, pluralism, self sufficiency and independence. One principal recommendation is that ZBC must be reformed into a ‘true public service broadcaster’, guided by the following principles:

- Promotion of diversity
- Bodies that exercise regulatory authority over broadcasters should be fully independent from government.
- Editorial independence for public service broadcasters should be guaranteed. This implies that governing bodies should not interfere in the day-to-day decision making processes, especially relating programme matters.
- Public officials should refrain from interfering, even informally, in the operation of the broadcaster. In particular, officials should never seek to influence the nature and content of broadcasts.
- Public broadcasters should benefit from stable adequate funding, provided in such a manner as to safeguard independence. (MISA-Zimbabwe 2000)

The foregoing recommendations by MISA-Zimbabwe are relevant to this study since they pre-occupy themselves with the role of public service broadcasting and in particular with the independence of broadcasters from political control. However, independence of broadcasters is not enough to ensure a genuine public service broadcasting. The broadcasters could be free to do all kinds of things but still remain restricted by other legislation. For example, MISA-Zimbabwe and other media stakeholders submit that the proposed Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Bill, 9 of 2002, is in violation of sections of the Zimbabwe constitution, most specifically section 20 (the right to freedom of expression and to freely receive and impart information and ideas). Further, journalists can be constrained by internal organisational rules. For example, ZBC journalists adhering to the '10 Golden Rules'¹³ may find themselves restricted in terms of their choice and interpretation of stories.

ZBC authorities have in the past indicated that if government did not intervene with some subvention, it would be impossible to sustain the national broadcaster's broad operations, including its salary bill (Gumbo 1996 as cited in Moyo 1999). On the 30th of January, 2003, almost 115 ZBC employees were suspended from work pending termination of their contracts following a labour dispute in which workers demanded a minimum 150 % wage adjustment, just a little less than the rate of inflation that stood at 170 % (*Daily News* 30th January 2002). Prior to these abrupt dismissals, over 400 out of almost 900 full-time employees were retrenched in June 2002 (ZBC Staff Memo 2002). It would seem that the unprecedented retrenchment of a large body of staff resulted in poor morale among individual journalists who remained at ZBC and consequently on the autonomy of the newsroom. As noted earlier, there has been incidents such as the controversial retrenchment of a number of ZBC TV senior reporters and the subsequent recruitment just months before the presidential elections of non-experienced 'straight from college' reporters (Madziwa, Personal Interview 2003). It is arguable that these developments may have affected ZBC operations and the potential to deliver a genuine public broadcasting service. This could be avoided in future by various means, including

¹³ See critique of the '10 Golden Rules' in chapter 3.8

broadcast pluralism and by ensuring (through legislation) editorial independence at the newsroom level as opposed to the current client-patron relationship that exists between ZBC and the Ministry of State Information and Publicity in the Office of the President. Public service television is expected to function as a citizens' channel through which the views of all those competing for electoral office are represented (Golding 1994; McNair 1994).

The study is mindful of the imperative to adequately fund public service broadcasting but also to ensure that there is no arbitrary interference arising from any funding mechanism. According to Barker 2000:

Safeguards should be incorporated into the funding process in order to ensure that government or parliament does not manipulate the budget in retaliation for programming with which they disagree. Such a mechanism requires funds to be voted for by parliament through a multi-party consensus vote and that parties must agree. The vote must not be a simple majority (2000:4).

Another insulating device is to limit government financial control by improving the license fee collection system. It is assumed in this study that increase in public funding arising from a better-organised license fee collection system could serve as a psychological device empowering journalists to render their loyalty to the public and not just to those with money or state power (Curran 1991). The potential for a better-organised license fee collection is highlighted among the survival options put forward in the UNESCO Report on ZBC Commercialisation by retired Supreme Court Judge of Appeal, Justice Manyarara (1996). The report revealed that judging by the license fee per household, the revenue collected was not commensurate with the estimated 40 000 plus television receivers in Zimbabwe.

7. 4. Governance and Policy Formulation

Election news is an important indicator of democratic values and more than any other genre, compels the public service broadcasters to confront their role as part of a normative public sphere in which everyone is free to enter and to participate as citizens and not necessarily as consumers in a marketplace of ideas (Schudson 1995).

The findings of this study highlight the fact that ZBC autonomy was compromised, and as such restricted public debate through television. Perhaps this could partly be attributed to the unilateral appointment of members of the ZBC Board of Management by government. In line with suggestions made by Curran (1991) as cited in Golding (1994), with respect to the BBC, this study proposes that appointment to such management boards ought to be by way of 'enfranchising' representative national groups and that broadcasting staff should elect their own members. Also favoured by this study is the MISA position, which stipulates that the board should be "appointed for a fixed term, preferably by public nomination and a process of public hearing, according to publicly available criteria which guarantees diversity of representation and must be legally protected against interference"(Barker 2000:4). This would serve to establish television as a notional public sphere that is above partisan politics and social interests.

All stakeholders in media performance and regulation generally accept the protection of editorial independence, while the defence of public service broadcasting along less bureaucratic lines is one of the cornerstones of media reform worldwide. This calls for a regulatory framework that enables the public broadcaster to function as a public sphere in which democratic citizenship is facilitated. It is recommended that broad consultations with stakeholders be held as a way of ensuring effective media policy formulation along democratic lines. Media regulation presents the generality of the population with an opportunity to participate on issues of governance and to collectively define what constitutes the public and national interest. Concentration of regulatory authority in one person, in the case of Zimbabwe on the Minister of Information and Publicity, is risky, since individuals by nature are fallible and can accept bribes from other centres of power.

7. 5. Editorial Independence

According to Barker (2000), editorial independence means the right of journalists and editors to make decisions on the basis of professional criteria, consistent with international standards, such as the newsworthiness of an event or its relevance to the public interest to know and in accordance with international codes of ethics of journalism.

In the case of public service broadcast journalism, the protocols of public sphere criteria frame this independence.

While it is generally accepted that the role of government is to govern and that politicians and civil servants are prime actors in media policy formulation, the secondary role that is played by the actual broadcasters and other stakeholders, including ordinary citizens must not be undermined. Broadcasters, stakeholders and the public at large have information that policy makers and implementers need in order to design and/or formulate policies that will better meet the needs of the generality of population. Further, I would recommend community education in order to ensure participation of ordinary people on media policy issues. There are a lot of people, particularly ordinary citizens, who do not understand the seriousness of media regulation and reform and its implications on public service broadcasting, democracy and governance. So far, policy debates in Zimbabwe have been dominated by society 'elites', often held in urban centers (MISA-Zimbabwe Strategic Planning Workshop: November, 2002).

7. 6. Conclusion

Generally, this study set out to assess the public service status of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation by analysing its construction of election news. The main interest was to examine the extent to which ZBC TV news mediated pluralistic politics in the coverage of the 2002 presidential election campaign in Zimbabwe. Quantitative and qualitative content findings of the analysed election newscasts have confirmed that the ZBC news texts were constructed in favour of ZANU PF. Further, interviews with the ZBC TV newsroom staff revealed a lack of professional journalism ideology in some and a general sense of fear resulting in self-censorship as a means of maintaining one's job in the institution. The study has made certain recommendations regarding the laws that regulate public service broadcasting in Zimbabwe and these include the strengthening of the public service broadcasting model along normative public sphere principles as outlined in chapter two of this study. This calls for a regulatory framework that guarantees non-interference in the operations of ZBC TV newsrooms, including interference by 'market forces' or by 'political power holders' (Moyo 1999; Mano 1997;

Manyarara 1996). The study has also appraised the value of this thesis and indicated potential areas for further research.

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Supplementary Information

ZBC Internal Memos 2001-2

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MISA-Zimbabwe Internal Communique 2003

APPENDIX (1)

ANALYSED NEWS BULLETINS

5. 1. 1. Monday February 12th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social / Political Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1. Willard Chiwewe	Male	Civil Service	Election	Accreditation	Bulawayo	1: 12
2. Ngoni Chindeya	Male	Civil Service	Election	Accreditation	Harare	1: 42
3. Pres. Levy Mwanawasa	Male	Foreign Official	Election	Foreign Observers	Harare	1: 55
4. Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU- PF	Election	Campaign/ Land	Harare	3: 05
5. John Nkomo	Male	ZANU-PF	Election	Campaign/ Land	Harare	6: 10
6. Kelebert Nkomani	Male	Civil Service	Elections	Sanctions	Harare	1: 52
7. Olivia Muchena	Female	ZANU-PF	Election	Campaign/ Land	Mashonaland East	1: 02
8. Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU-PF	Election	Campaign/ Aids	Harare	3: 51
9. ZRP. Insp. Zwenyika	Male	Civil Service	Political Disturbance	No blame is apportioned	Mat. South	2: 07

1. Accreditation of journalists for the presidential poll starts and the department of immigration is reported to be screening visitors entering the country. Visitors are allowed into Zimbabwe for only 14 days renewable. Chief Immigration Officer warns journalists who enter the country purporting to be tourists when in fact they are reporters intent on covering the presidential elections.
2. Dr. Ngoni Chindeya, an official in the ministry of foreign affairs announces postponement to the following day of accreditation for observer teams. He attributes the postponement to the delay in installing necessary equipment at the accreditation venue. Dr. Chindeya mentions the

government's intention not accredit the British observer team owing to strained relations between the two countries. He further accuses the European Union of sending an observer team to Zimbabwe ahead of their invitation.

3. Levy Mwanawasa, the state president of Zambia is on a stopover visit en-route to Paris where he is scheduled to attend the European Partnership for Development Summit. Pres. Mwanawasa comments on Britain's exclusion from those invited to observe Zimbabwe's presidential election. He is shown saying: 'often observers from Europe do not understand the situation in Africa and thus cause confusion'. He alleges that 'sending foreign observers to Zimbabwe is tantamount to interference in the affairs of a sovereign country'.
4. President Mugabe begins election campaign in Manicaland. He takes a swipe at British Prime Minister Tony Blair and accuses him of 'trying to rule Zimbabwe by remote control using commercial farmers'. Opposition MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai is also castigated allegedly for sympathising with Blair. Tsvangirai is then quoted criticising the handling of the land distribution exercise.
5. This is a lengthy discussion focusing on ZANU PF's campaign programme featuring John Nkomo in his capacity as national chairperson for the ruling party. The discussion dwells on the land issue as the key campaign strategy for ZANU PF and criticises the opposition MDC for not endorsing the government's land distribution programme. Describing the MDC as a 'puppet project set to serve British interests in Zimbabwe', Nkomo further accuses the MDC of fanning violence all over the country. The print media is caught up in Nkomo's tirade of criticism. He accuses the press of 'painting a bad image of the country by misrepresenting the land issue'. Nkomo speaks singularly with passive questions directed at him and no interrogating questions.
6. The report focuses on the EU travel sanctions targeted at Zimbabwe government officials and the exclusion of the British observer team.
7. ZANU PF Women's league launches presidential election campaign. Olivia Muchena tells audience that 'if you vote for Mugabe, you have voted for the land'. Campaign material is distributed at the occasion.
8. President Mugabe speaks on AIDS. He says the government is considering provision of anti-retroviral drugs to AIDS sufferers.
9. This is a report on the eruption of political violence in Hwange between ZANU PF and MDC youths. Insp. Zwenyika narrates the cause of the clashes and assures viewers that police are dealing with the problem. He does not apportion blame to any individual, group or political party.

5. 1. 2. Tuesday February 13th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1.Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Attacks MDC	Manicaland	9: 12
2.A.A.G./ War Veterans/ Unknowns	2 Males	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Social development issues	Masvingo	2: 14
3.Morgan Tsvangirai	Male	MDC President	Election	Land	Harare	1: 40
4.Dr. Shakespeare Maya	Male	NAGG President	Election	Black Empowerment	Harare	1: 03
5.Pres. Mugabe & Morgan Tsvangirai	Male	ZANU PF & MDC respectively	Election	Land/ Attack on the MDC	Masvingo	2: 29
6.Douglas Nyikayaramba	Male	Civil Service	Elections	SA Election Observers	Harare	2: 09
7.Tobaiwa Mudede	Male	Civil Service	Elections	Judicial verdict	Harare	1: 51

1. President Mugabe accompanied by the first lady Grace Mugabe continue with election campaign. Mugabe tells the rally about the liberation struggle and the gains that have resulted from political independence, namely; education and health. He promises construction of a pipe to bring water from the Pungwe Valley to Mutare. Pres. Mugabe then proceeds to attack the opposition MDC and argues his audience not to vote for the opposition. In the story, Mugabe alleges that former Rhodesians and the European Union formed the MDC as a front to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle. He alleges that Rhodesian forces killed former ZANU PF leader, Herbert Chitepo (Chitepo was born in Manicaland).
2. The story starts by announcing Masvingo as Mugabe's next campaign venue. The report claims ZANU PF has remained the popular party in Masvingo since independence. The story quotes from selected members of the public, all of whom appear to support ZANU-PF. A member of the Affirmative Action Group (AAG) says he wants government to set up a bank for members of his

- organisation, while war veterans quoted in the same story want the government to support the resettled farmers with farm implements. Finally, an unidentified individual laments hunger.
3. MDC President Morgan Tsvangirai retaliates his party's position on the government resettlement programme. He says no country has ever developed on the basis of closing factories in urban areas and moving people to rural areas. 'If we all become villagers, who will buy the agricultural produce?' Tsvangirai further laments what he calls 'the persecution of the white community in Zimbabwe'. He describes them as "an endangered species who need protection" and says his party will work for multi-racial harmony
 4. The story shows leader of the opposition NAGG, Mr. Shakespeare Maya, meeting with residents in Mbare high-density suburbs. He pledges that his party will work to uplift the informal sector in Zimbabwe and will also ensure housing for all. He is quoted directly saying 'we have a policy of industrial development focusing on the black entrepreneur'.
 5. The reporter presents what he says are 'ZANU PF achievements arising from the land distribution exercise'. The story alleges that the MDC has not been clear on the land issue. Archive footage of Tsvangirai speaking on the issue of land is mobilised to reinforce the reporter's allegation that the opposition MDC is against distribution of land to the landless. Mugabe is quoted criticising Tsvangirai and describing him as a 'slave of foreign interests'. 'If you really want land to return to the white farmers, how can you expect people to vote for you?' Mugabe asks.
 6. The story focuses on the visit to the offices of the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) by a South African delegation, which includes the special advisor to President Thabo Mbeki. Electoral supervisor explains the purpose of the visit.
 7. This is a story about government's challenge of a High Court Order in which it was stipulated that the Harare mayoral elections should be held before the presidential election. The story reports that the Supreme Court has ruled in favour of an appeal by the Registrar General, Tobaiwa Mudede. The reporter highlights the fact that the executive presidential powers have been validated by the judgment.

5. 1. 3. Wednesday February 20th 2002

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub- category	Dateline	Duration
1.Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Land	Manicaland	1: 56
2.Paul Siwela	Male	ZAPU President	Election	Campaign/ Land	Harare	1: 49
3.John Sheppard	Male	Foreign Official	Elections	EU Observers/ representative	Harare	2: 40
4.Abenigo Bhebhe & Peter Nyoni	Male	MDC MPs	Political Disturbance	MDC blamed for violence	Mat. North	1:21
5.John Nkomo	Male	ZANU PF	Political Disturbance	Questions the integrity of MDC MPs	Bulawayo	1: 53
6.Other	Male	ZANU PF	Political Disturbance	Blame apportioned to unidentified persons	Manicaland	1: 51
7.Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Land & Attacks MDC	Manicaland	6: 45
8.Opposition Politicians	Male	MDC	Political Disturbance	A claim that MDC is a violent party	Harare	1: 38

1. Mugabe meets traditional leaders and ZANU PF party officials in Chipinge District. Chief brings out what he defines as the problems facing villagers and thanks government for promising land to the people. The reporter makes reference to an unspecified analyst who claims there is sure support for Mugabe. "Thousands and thousands of people attended the rally," says the reporter. The story is then taken up live via phone by another reporter, who outlines ZANU PF programmes, which he says are aimed at poverty alleviation and he laments the drought in Manicaland. He proceeds to unleash a direct attack on the MDC - referring to them as a 'party that is bent on

reversing the gains of independence'. Barwe wraps up his story by announcing President Mugabe's campaign trail.

2. Opposition ZAPU leader, Paul Siwela, is shown in the streets of Harare distributing campaign materials. Siwela speaks in support of the land issue. "The land must go back to the people; it is their birthright' he says. He then argues the electorate not to vote for any party that aims to reverse the gains of independence.
3. The story is about the arrival of the first member of the Commonwealth Election observer team, John Sheppard at the accreditation center. Mr. Sheppard is pictured giving details on the 33 other team members who are expected to report for accreditation. A member of Electoral Supervisory Commission is also quoted assuring Mr. Sheppard and the viewers that everyone will be accredited on time. The story ends with the reporter taking a swipe on journalists from the private press for allegedly trying to incite observers by creating the impression that the ESC is unwilling to register foreign observers.
4. The story claims that opposition MDC members of parliament were found in a drunken stupor and drugs (dagga) were found the vehicle of one of them. The story shows weapons such as knobkerrie's, catapults and knives allegedly taken from the two MPs. The story informs that the said MPs and 36 other youths are to appear in court to answer allegations arising from possession of illegal weapons.
5. John Nkomo, the minister of Home Affairs (also ZANU PF politburo member), is interviewed on allegations levelled at MDC MPs in the previous story. He attacks the integrity of the MDC MPs.
6. The reporter tells of an attack on ZANU PF youth by unidentified people. The report says the attackers were armed with sticks and arrows. ZRP inspector Blossious Churu is quoted confirming the incident and says no arrests have been made.
7. President Mugabe is at a rally in Zimunya. He critiques what he terms 'an alliance between MDC and the white members of opposition parties.' Mugabe argues people at the rally not to vote for Tsvangirai whom he calls 'a slave of whites'. He then harps on the land issue and the importance of preserving the country's sovereignty.
8. The story is framed around the assassination of Congo's first democratically elected prime minister, Patrice Lumumba. Belgian officials are quoted admitting their country's role in the assassination. The reporter then draws a parallel with Zimbabwe in which he claims that there is foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country through support for the MDC, and pirate radio stations (reference to Voice of the People radio & others) operating outside the country. The reporter describes these as efforts to topple government.

5. 1. 4. Thursday February 21st 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1.Min. Dr. Joseph Made & Min. Dr. Ignatius Chombo	Male	ZANUPF	Social Development	Food Relief	Harare	2:30
2.Min. Dr. Joseph Made	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Food Relief	Harare	2: 01
3. Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Public Works	Harare	1: 58
4.Commercial Farmer	Male	Commercial Farmer	Political disturbance	Farmer Blamed	Mash. Central	2: 02
5.Dr. Joseph Made	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Food relief	Harare	6: 03
6.ZAPU Pres. Paul Siwela & NAGG Pres. Shakespeare Maya	Male	ZAPU & NAGG respectively	Election	Land & Black empowerment	Harare	1: 41
7.Morgan Tsvangirai	Male	MDC President	Election	Attack on the MDC	Harare	2: 23

1. The story informs of a meeting to be held with over 300 traditional leaders to discuss maize distribution to drought stricken areas. The traditional leaders are asked to ensure speedy distribution by determining which areas are in dire need. Key actors in the story are the Minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr. Joseph Made, and his colleague, the Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, Dr. Ignatius Chombo. Dr. Made is quoted saying 'we recognise the role of the chiefs', followed by a cut to Dr. Chombo who says; 'this is not the first time government has moved in swiftly to avert food shortages'. The reporter ends the story by informing viewers that the government has acquired 200 000 tonnes of maize from South Africa.
2. The report echoes the previous item claiming that government has imported 200 000 tonnes of maize from South Africa for distribution amongst drought victims.

3. President Mugabe is at a rally in Manicaland East. He assures his audience that ZANU PF will not allow a situation in which anyone starves. Mugabe alludes to public works programmes that he says his government has established to alleviate suffering. 'Government has set aside money to pay villagers under the public works programme', Mugabe says.
4. The report claims that some commercial farmers are involved in acts of sabotage through destruction of food cereals in order to foil an exercise by the Grain Marketing Board (GMB), aimed at seizing undeclared food cereals. The reporter starts by telling viewers about 'a farmer in Mangura District' who it is said 'burnt 60 tonnes of grain'. An officer from the Zimbabwe Republic Police is shown confirming the incident. The reporter ends the story with a piece on camera: 'For many, this is an act of sabotage aimed at starving Zimbabweans of their staple food'.
5. This is an interview with the minister of Lands and Agriculture, Dr. Joseph Made. The first question: 'What is your assessment of the current agricultural season?' Answer refers to the previous story and describes the alleged action by the said farmer as an unacceptable behavior. Throughout the interview, reference is made to the alleged burning of grain. When the Minister is asked to give a progress report on the distribution of the 200 000 tonnes that have been imported from South Africa, he answers: 'We are going to be gazetting commercial farms that do not meet government criteria'. The reporter makes no effort to follow up the question.
6. The report states that five candidates are set to contest in the presidential poll. The story looks at what ZAPU and NAGG are offering in terms of campaign policy. The ZAPU leader is quoted as supporting the distribution of land to landless people, while NAGG claims support for the economic empowerment of black entrepreneurs and housing for the poor. Footage used is taken from a week-old story that was previously covered on ZBC.
7. In this story, MDC leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, is shown at a rally in Harare criticising the government land reform programme. He proceeds to defend his alliance with the white community. The report alleges that MDC plans to appoint Coltart as Vice-President if they win the presidential elections. The reporter concludes by informing the viewers that Coltart is a former soldier in the Rhodesian army.

5. 1. 5. Main News Friday, March 01, 2002

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub- category	Dateline	Duration
1.Morgan Tsvangirai	Male	MDC President	Political Disturbance	Assassination Plot/ MDC accused	Harare	2:16
2.Ben Menashe	Male	Foreign Official	Political Disturbance	Assassination Plot/ MDC accused	Harare	3: 52
3.Unspecified Officials	Unspecified	MDC	Political Disturbance	Assassination Plot/ MDC accused	Harare	1: 06
4.Nicholas Goche	Male	Civil Service	Political Disturbance	Assassination Plot/ MDC accused	Harare	5: 38
5.Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Food relief – land – Unity	Midlands	4: 37
6.Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Land	Mash. West	1: 48
7.Paul Siwela	Male	ZAPU President	Election	Judicial / internal squabbles	Bulawayo	1: 17
8.Willard Chiwewe	Male	Civil Service	Election	Accreditation/ EU Observer - deadlock	Harare	1: 55
9.Dr. Sam Motsunyane	Male	Foreign Official	Elections	Accreditation	Harare	1: 15
10.Insp. Wayne Bvudzijena	Male	Civil Service	Social Development	Conduct of journalist	Harare	1: 51

1. The story narrates contents of a broadcast shown on Australian TV alleging an attempt by MDC leadership to assassinate Mugabe. The programme entitled 'KILL MUGABE', is said to contain details of a meeting between Tsvangirai and representatives of a consultancy company (Dickens and Madison) in which the plot to assassinate Mugabe is said to have been discussed. Archive

footage of Tsvangirai at a rally is mobilised to support the claim. He is shown saying 'If Mugabe does not leave office peacefully, we shall remove him by force'. The reporter then chronicles what he terms 'the violent nature of the MDC'. The narrative is supported by old footage of gravesites and dead people allegedly killed by the MDC. Criminal investigators are shown interviewing some of the accused persons. The story alleges that MDC with the support of donor funding has set up safe houses from which the party orchestrates its violent activities. Again archive footage, this time of destroyed property, is used to support the voice-over.

2. The reporter starts by telling the viewers that Dickens and Madison firm has confirmed that MDC had sought help on how Mugabe could be assassinated. A representative of the company, Mr. Ben Menashe is linked to the story via telephone. Menashe details his version of how they met with Tsvangirai and what they discussed. He says "the discussion with Tsvangirai was that he wanted to hire a company to kill Mugabe'. Menashe ends by taking a swipe on Tsvangirai, describing him as a 'black face for a new Rhodesia'. The reporter concludes by saying 'efforts to contact Tsvangirai were fruitless'.
3. This is a reader-to-camera story claiming that MDC has admitted meeting Madison and Dickens on four separate occasions. The MDC is reported as denying ever discussing a plot kill Mugabe. No MDC official is quoted directly.
4. The story is based on an Internet report allegedly issued by Dickens and Madison. The report is said to contain details of the relationship between MDC and the Dickens and Madison firm and the latter's reasons for refusing to assist Tsvangirai. This is followed by footage of the minister of State Security, Innocent Goche, at a press conference stating that investigations on the alleged plot are scheduled to commence soon. This is followed by a series of short interviews with unspecified individuals (unknowns), all of whom are critical of the alleged plot.
5. The story starts with ecstatic traditional dancing as people await their leader, President Mugabe. A chief (traditional leader) is shown praising government for involving them in the food distribution exercise. Mugabe is then shown telling the chiefs that everyone has a right to food before the reporter links the story to an insert in which Mugabe is seen at another rally, highlighting the importance of land and national unity. His speech focuses on the role played by the late Vice-President Nkomo in both the liberation of the country from colonialism and achieving of unity after independence. The story ends with footage of the first lady distributing sewing machines to rural women.
6. The report is basically a mock survey of issues that are considered important by the electorate. The story features interviews with unspecified (unknown) villagers in Mashonaland West. Support for the government land reform exercise is the dominant theme in all the interviews.
7. The report says the High Court has postponed judgment in the case of ZAPU candidate, Paul Siwela, who is contesting the use of a ZAPU logo in the coming election. The story highlights the internal squabbles within ZAPU over the use of the logo and presidential candidacy.

8. The story focuses on the deadlock arising from government's refusal to accredit the Head of the European Union observer team, Pierrie Schori. Zimbabwe foreign affairs official outlines the government position on the matter via a live phone connection.
9. Leader of the South African Election Observer Team, Dr. Sam Motsunyane, speaks to journalists about their mission.
10. The report quotes Police Inspector, Wayne Bvudzinjena, protesting about the conduct of a journalist from the private media, Mr. Basildon Peta, for allegedly fabricating a story claiming that he slept at the police cells following his participation in a peaceful demonstration for press freedom.

5. 1. 6. Monday March 4th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1. CHOGM Head of States.	Male	Foreign Officials	Sanctions	*	Harare	4: 57
2. Morgan Tsvangirai	Male	MDC President	Political Disturbance	MDC blamed for assault	Harare	3: 25
3. Gen. Abdul Salim Abaubakar	Male	Foreign Official	Political Disturbance	No blame is apportioned	Harare	1: 50
4. Dr. Norman Mlambo & Allan Muchonga	Male	Political Analysts	Elections	Survey	Harare	2: 14
5. Dr. David Parirenyatwa	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	HIV/ Aids	Harare	1: 20
6. Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Land	Mat. North	3: 30
7. Pres. Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/ Land & Unity. Attacks MDC	Midlands	3: 23
8. Vice. President Joseph Msika/ Min. Edward Chindovechiniga	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Campaign/ Rural electrification	Manicaland	1: 40
9. Admore Wharare	Male	Other/ *Trade Union Official	Political Disturbance	Labour despute	Mash. East	1: 24

1. Reader-to-Camera: 'Africa triumphed today at the outgoing Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in the Australian coast town of Coolum, where African leaders refused to bow down to pressure from their former colonial power, Britain, to suspend Zimbabwe from the grouping'. The news anchor then links via telephone with a ZBC reporter, Faith Zaba, who is in

Australia. Zaba reports that the summit has asked the leaders of Australia, Nigeria and South Africa to evaluate fairly Zimbabwe's presidential election. There is no detailed discussion about what transpired at the CHOGM meeting regarding the threat to suspend Zimbabwe from the grouping.

2. This a story in which Morgan Tsvangirai is alleged to have verbally assaulted the head of the Namibian election observer team, Dr. Kaire Mbuende. The report describes the alleged attack as 'a desperate attempt to discredit objective observers'. The story does not give details of the alleged attack. Tsvangirai is quoted in private daily newspaper accusing the Southern African observer delegation of turning a blind eye to acts of violence and intimidation perpetrated of on opposition supporters by ZANU PF.
3. This story is based on an unsigned statement released to the Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) meeting in Australia, in which the Chairman of the Commonwealth Observer Group, General Abdul Salim Abubakar, is quoted as claiming that ZBC had distorted his remarks concerning media reports on pre-election violence ahead of the presidential poll. The report describes the statement as false and then shows a news clip in which General Abubakar is quoted in his own words saying 'reports on pre-election violence in Zimbabwe are being exaggerated.'
4. The report follows the results of a survey by a group led by a local university lecturer that indicate ZANU PF might lose the upcoming presidential poll. The ZBC report says political analysts have dismissed the prejudging of the weekend presidential poll result by some western countries. The report then quotes Dr. Norman Mlambo (described as a political analyst) and Allan Muchonga, a Research Fellow with SAPES Trust. Both are critical of the survey. The reporter wraps up the story by saying 'the move is an attempt to unduly influence the Zimbabwean electorate'.
5. In this story, the Ministry of Health is reported to have drafted a proposal that will enable the country to access the Global Aids Fund, which is meant for the benefit of people living with HIV/AIDS in developing countries. The deputy minister of Health and Child Welfare, Dr. David Parirenyatwa, is quoted confirming the report.
6. President Mugabe is seen attending a rally in Gokwe District. He assures his audience that there shall be no reversal to the country's land distribution programme and characterises the MDC as party bent on reversing the gains of independence through violence.
7. President Mugabe at another rally in Mkoba. He stresses the importance of land reform and national unity and castigates the MDC for allegedly trying 'to sneak into power via the back door.'
8. Vice President, Joseph Msika, launches a 2.28 billion Zimbabwe dollars rural electrification programme. The report says the scheme is meant to benefit over 200 000 rural families. Energy Minister, Edward Chindovechiniga is shown in attendance and the quoted saying 'the government has already secured seven billion towards the project'. Msika concludes the story by directing his audience not to vote 'for people who will reverse the gains of independence'.

9. The story focuses on a labour dispute in the Triangle Estates in which over 20 000 workers had downed their tools over wages. The report says workers have returned to work after management conceded to their demands. The story features the secretary general of the Sugar Milling Workers Union, Admore Wharare. He is quoted warning that the wage increments will impact negatively on the retail price of sugar. He insinuates that 'white sugar estate owners' want to raise the price of sugar 'so people do not vote for Mugabe'.

5. 1. 7. Tuesday March 5th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1.Tobaiwa Mudede	Male	Civil Service	Elections	Voter registration	Harare	2: 07
2.Rudo Mucheyi	Female	Civil Service	Elections	Police Protection	Manicaland	0: 54
3.Unspecified Individuals	3X Unspecified	Other/ *Unknown	Sanctions	Attack on Britain	Harare	4: 01
4.Ms Joan Mtukwa	Female	Civil Service	Social Development	Food Relief	Harare	1: 22
5.Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Food Relief	Bulawayo	1: 29
6.John Nkomo/ Obert Mpfu	Male	ZANU PF	Elections	Campaign/	Mat. North	1: 06
7.Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Attacks MDC	Mash. West	4: 50
8.Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Black empowerment	Mash. West	2: 55

1. In this story, 5.6 million Zimbabweans are reported to have registered to vote in the upcoming presidential election. The reporter speaks to the Registrar General, Tobaiwa Mudede, who confirms the figures and assures the nation that everything is in place for the smooth running of the election.

2. The report says preparations for the presidential election have reached an advanced stage in the Manicaland Province. Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police, Rudo Muchemeyi is quoted assuring absolute police protection for the voters.
3. The report starts with a reader to camera: Zimbabweans have hailed African, Caribbean and Asian heads of state for blocking the proposed imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe and its expulsion from the Commonwealth. Then a series of orchestrated interviews with unspecified individuals follow. All the people featured in the interviews are critical of the proposed sanctions. The reporter ends the story by alleging that the proposal to expel Zimbabwe from CHOGM is a ploy 'pushed by some Anglo-Saxon heads of state, led by Britain', at the CHOGM meeting held in Coolum, Australia.
4. In this story, Ms Joan Mtukwa, reveals that the task force that is monitoring maize deliveries has given urban millers the prerogative to purchase maize from the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) in an effort to improve supplies of mealie-meal in urban centres.
5. According this story, supplies of maize meal are slowly improving in Bulawayo following government efforts to ensure that there is no shortage of the staple commodity. President Mugabe is quoted at a meeting with chiefs reiterating his earlier pledge that no one shall starve. He attacks the commercial farmers for allegedly trying to create artificial shortages in an effort to discredit his government.
6. The reporter says chiefs in Binga and Hwange Districts have assured the minister of Home Affairs, John Nkomo that President Mugabe will be re-elected at the forth-coming election. The report is based on a meeting between chiefs, the minister of Home Affairs (also ZANU PF national chairman) and the provincial governor, Obert Mpfu, in Binga.
7. Mugabe is attending probably one of his most attended rallies since the start of his campaign. He commends the people for turning up in thousands. Mugabe attacks the MDC and accuses them of being 'puppets of white Rhodesians or foreign powers, whose aim is to reverse the gains of political independence and the government land reform exercise' He says 'Britain is intent on interfering with the sovereignty of the country by supporting the MDC'. He further stresses the importance of national independence and the land reform programme. The story constantly highlights shots of the audience either ululating or listening attentively.
8. The story begins with the reporter on camera: 'Some companies which have been closed down because their owners were at variance with government policy will be reopened and given to the workers.' Then the report cuts to President Mugabe addressing the rally in Marondera. Mugabe assures his audience that the Cold Storage Company (CSC) in Marondera, which has been closed down for years, will soon be opened soon.

5. 1. 8. Wednesday March 6th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub- category	Dateline	Duration
1.High Court	Unspecified	Judiciary	Election	Judicial	Harare	1: 21
2.Sobuza Gula-Ndebele	Male	Civil Servant/ *Chairman-CSC.	Elections	Election Observers	Harare	2: 46
3.Chief Enerst Shonekan	Male	Foreign Official	Sanctions	Mugabe Praised	Harare	0: 56
4. ZBC Reporter	Male	Other/ *ZBC	Elections	Election Dates	Harare	2: 28
5.Pres. Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Declaration of Holiday	Harare	0: 59
6.Unspecified: '700 white Zimbabweans'	Male	Other/ *Unknown	Elections/ Voters Roll	Voters' Roll	Bulawayo	3: 16
7.Wilson Khumbula	Male	Pres. ZANU-Ndonga	Election	Internal squabbles	Harare	0: 25
8.Ambassodor Gertrude Mwongela	Female	Foreign Official	Elections	AU Observer	Harare	1: 31
9.Dr. Ignatius Chombo	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Welfare of Nurses	Harare	0: 50
10.Edward Chindori Chininga/ Sydney Sekeramayi	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Rural Electrification	Mash. West	1: 57

1. This is a court story in which the Zimbabwe High Court dismisses election petitions filed by the opposition MDC seeking the nullification of parliamentary election results in Goromonzi,

Mberengwa West and Murehwa North. ZANU PF initially won the three seats amidst claims of electoral irregularities.

2. The story features the chairperson of the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), Sobuza Gula-Ndebele. He is quoted saying 'Zimbabwe is not hostile to foreigners' and that 'everyone is free to observe the campaigning, polling and post polling period of Zimbabwe's elections.'
3. In this story, former Nigerian government state president and leader of the Nigerian election observer team, Chief Enerst Shonekan, is reported to have congratulated President Mugabe and the people of Zimbabwe for what the reporter describes as 'the diplomatic success in the just ended CHOGM meeting in Coolom, Australia'.
4. This story carries information about voting procedures in Harare. The reporter is the key source of information this story. He reminds the viewers that there are only three days to go before the presidential elections and that Harare will have tripartite elections comprising the presidential, mayoral, and council elections while Chitungwiza will hold only the presidential and mayoral polls.
5. In this story, President Mugabe declares Saturday the 9th, 2002, a public holiday. The report says the reason is to allow Zimbabweans to vote without undue hindrance.
6. The story looks at an appeal by more than 700 members of the white community lodged at the civil court against the removal of their names from the voters' roll by the registrar general's department.
7. This a story about how opposition ZANU-Ndonga presidential candidate, Wilson Khumbula, is continuing with his campaign despite the High Court order barring him from using the ZANU-Ndonga logo. He says he now has a new logo, 'the submarine'.
8. The story features the head of the AU observer team, Ambassador Gertrude Mwongela. She says 'the AU observer team will be objective and will not be influenced by the views of other observer teams'.
9. Minister of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing, Dr. Ignatius Chombo (also ZANU PF central committee member) says government has made available six thousand stands to nurses in Harare and Chitungwiza as part of a programme to improve the welfare of nurses.
10. The story covers the commissioning of the rural electrification programme in Mahusekwa growth point, in Mashonaland East. The two government ministers featured in the story are Edward Chindori Chininga and Sydney Sekeramayi, minister of Mines and Energy, and ZANU PF Member of Parliament respectively. Both are members of the ZANU PF Central Committee.

5.1.9. Thursday March 7th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1.Douglas Nyikayaramba	Male	Civil Service	Election	Monitors	Mash. West	1: 48
2.Sobuza Gula-Ndebele	Male	Civil Service	Election	Electoral Code	Harare	2: 13
3.Prof. Jonathan Moyo	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Journalist	Harare	1: 44
4.Gertrude Mwongela	Female	Foreign Official	Election	AU Observer	Harare	0: 59
5.President Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Campaign/Housing	Harare/	2: 53
6.President Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/Land and Unity	Midlands	3: 39
7.Andy Mhlanga	Male	War Veteran (ZNLWVA)	Political Disturbance	MDC blamed	Harare	1: 33
8.Youths	Unspecified	MDC and ZANU PF	Political Disturbance	MDC blamed	Bulawayo	1: 12
9.Dr. Swithun Mombeshora	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Upgrading of Airport	Bulawayo	1:37
10.Unspecified '644 members of the white community'	Unspecified	Unknown	Election	Voters' Roll	Bulawayo	3: 12
11.Dr. Mariyawanda Nzuwa	Male	Civil Service	Election	Journalists	Harare	1: 20

1. The report says election monitors have already been deployed to Matebeleland South as preparations for the weekend election get into full swing. Chief Elections Officer is quoted saying the deployment of monitors to other provinces is expected to be complete by tomorrow afternoon.
2. The story refers to unspecified political analysts who are said to have hailed the signing of an electoral code of conduct by all political parties in country as a milestone. The chairman of the Electoral Supervisory Commission says the code of conduct seeks to promote conditions that are conducive to free and fair elections and a climate of tolerance in which electioneering activity may take place without fear or coercion, intimidation or reprisals.
3. The Minister of State Information and Publicity in the Office of the President, Professor Jonathan Moyo, implores journalists to uphold the values and principles of the profession ahead of the weekend presidential election.
4. Ambassador Gertrude Mwongela, head of the AU observer delegation, says the African Union is determined to see a free and fair election in Zimbabwe so that the will of the people prevails after the election. She speaks to journalists in Harare after a meeting with President Mugabe at Zimbabwe House.
5. President Robert Mugabe rounding up his campaign for Harare Province with a rally at Hatcliffe extension where it is claimed government has already allocated six thousand houses to individuals and co-operatives.
6. President Mugabe arrives in Kadoma for his 49th rally at Rimuka Stadium and argues people to vote for 'land' and 'national unity'. He warns of a threat by the MDC to destabilise the country.
7. Police say most cases of political violence have occurred in Harare, the major incident being the assault on the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veterans' Secretary General, Andy Mhlanga. The War Veterans' leader gives an account of the alleged ordeal and accuses MDC for orchestrating the attack.
8. MDC Youths reported to have fought running battles with ZANU PF youths at a construction site in Bulawayo's Emganwini Suburb.
9. Dr. Swithun Mombeshora, minister of Transport and Communication (also ZANU PF central committee member), is shown at the airport in Bulawayo. The reporter says the upgrading of the airport has begun in earnest. The airport was recently renamed Joshua Mqabuko Nkomo Airport, after the late Vice President, Dr. Joshua Nkomo. The minister says the government is committed to the airport project.
10. The story reports that the High Court has dismissed an appeal by 644 members of the white community to be considered as permanent residents to enable them to vote in the upcoming elections. The reporter informs the viewers that that the appellants had renounced their Zimbabwean citizenship opting for their foreign citizenship.
11. The chairman of the National Elections Directorate, Dr. Mariyawanda Nzuwa, urges journalists to be accurate in their coverage of the presidential election.

5. 1. 10. Friday March 8th 2002.

Main Actor(s)	Gender	Social Constituency	Story Type	Sub-category	Dateline	Duration
1.Mr. Stephen Ndicho	Male	Foreign Official	Social Development	Land	Harare	1: 58
2.Douglas Nyikayaramba	Male	Civil Service	Election	Monitors	Harare	4: 00
3.Dr. Ibbo Mandaza / Chris Mutswangwa	Male	Other/*Political Analysts & War Vet. Respectively.	Political Disturbance	Third Force blamed	Harare	3: 57
4.David Karimanzira	Male	ZANU PF	Social Development	Food Relief	Mash. East	1:45
5.ZBC Reporter	Male	Unknown	Election	Discredits MDC	Mash. East	1: 02
6.Steve Tswete-SA, Membathisi Mdhlahlana-SA, Dr. Kaire Mbuende (Namibia)	Male	Foreign Officials	Election	Observers	Bulawayo	2: 34
7.President Robert Mugabe	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Campaign/Land	Mash. Central	4: 55
8.Prof. Jonathan Moyo	Male	ZANU PF	Election	Journalists	Bulawayo	2: 34

1. Zimbabwe's land reform programme is praised by visiting Kenyan Member of Parliament, Mr. Stephen Chindo.
2. The Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC) chairman, Douglas Nyikayamba, says he is satisfied with the deployment of monitors to 4000 polling stations countrywide.

3. Political commentator, Dr. Ibbo Mandaza (former government secretary), says there is a third force behind some of the political violence that prevailed ahead of the weekend's presidential election. War Veteran, Chris Mutswangwa, agrees with Mandaza.
4. Mashonaland East governor, David Karimanzira says 90 million dollars was disbursed today for drought relief in Mashonaland East Province. He says the money was allocated to the province's nine districts and urban councils.
5. The report says the MDC and Britain are attempting to discredit Zimbabwe's upcoming presidential poll. The reporter says 'Britain which sympathises with the opposition MDC party is alleging that the ruling ZANU PF party wants to rig the presidential election.' No comment is sought from anyone.
6. Three foreign officials, Steve Tshwete: SA Minister of Safety and Security, Membathisi Mdladlana: SA Minister of Labour, and Dr. Kaire Mbuende of Namibia are shown commending the progress made so far in the preparation for the presidential poll.
7. President Mugabe at a rally in Bindura pays tribute to African member states of CHOGM for defending Zimbabwe's stance on land at the just ended meeting in Coolum, Australia.
8. Professor Jonathan Moyo at a press conference in Bulawayo says journalists from the BBC risk being banned permanently from coming to Zimbabwe for using improper methods to sneak into the country to cover the presidential election.

APPENDIX (2)

INTERVIEW GUIDE - QUESTIONS

1. Would you characterise the ZBC TV newsroom as autonomous in its operations? If the answer is no, what are the constraints?
2. Who authors the newsroom diary?
3. How much input do the rest of the staff in the newsroom have on the news diary?
4. Have you ever felt constrained in your choice and interpretation of stories you cover?
5. Do you consider that there was sufficient effort to accommodate in the news, actor(s) other than those of ZANU PF; particularly those from the opposition parties? If the answer is no, explain what were the limiting factors.
6. Do you sometimes get calls from political office holders requesting or demanding coverage? If the answer is yes, how often?
7. Do you get similar calls from the opposition parties and other social constituencies? If the answer is yes, how often to you attend to these?
8. Were all the packaged stories on election issues broadcast on the news?
9. Who decides what goes on air and what does not?
10. Do you consider that ZBC coverage of the 2002 election was adequate?
11. What is your understanding of public service broadcasting?
12. Do you think ZBC meets the normative expectations of public service broadcasting?
13. What is your understanding of a balanced news story?
14. Why was it that most stories on the opposition carried a one sided-comment from the ruling party and no verification from the subjects concerned?
15. Why is it that most stories seem to have focussed on ZANU PF politicians and not the other contending parties?
16. What is your understanding of public interest?
17. Have you ever felt constrained by availability of resources such as vehicles and cameras?
18. Have ever received any assistance from the people you cover, including politicians in terms of transport or whatever?
19. Have you ever felt threatened that perhaps you could lose your job if you do not achieve what is expected?
20. Why do you use archive material of people or events that you could actually cover?
21. Would you cover a story that clearly critiques government policy?

APPENDIX (3)

The responses outlined below are not exhaustive of the answers received. I have, nonetheless, attempted to retain those responses that are relevant to this study.

Question: Would you characterise the ZBC TV newsroom as autonomous in its operations? If the answer is no, what are the constraints?

Newsroom manager (1): 'Yes, we decide what the diary for the day will look like. Nobody tells us what to do and how to do it'.

Newsroom manager (2): 'Most of the time we are free to do as we please, but of course we know where not to cross the line. This is normal in every newsroom throughout the world'

Reporter (1). 'After the story is assigned to a reporter, it is unusual for the editor to participate in the actual filming and processing of the story. Occasionally, the editor may suggest changes, but this is rare'.

Reporter (2). 'It really does not matter to me. I'm just here to do my job and so far my boss is happy'.

Question: Who authors the newsroom diary?

Newsroom manager (1). 'The bulk of it is my job. However, reporters are free to come forward with story ideas and quite often we bring those ideas on board. Sometimes viewers phone us with story ideas and we take these very seriously'.

Newsroom manager (2). 'We are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the newsroom, that includes preparing the diary'.

Question: How much input does the rest of the staff in the newsroom have on the news diary?

Reporter (1). 'We are required to contribute to the diary. We meet every morning to discuss new ideas and how to approach them. Our 'bosses' (newsroom managers) are very accommodating of our views. There are times though when they agree on a story, only to shot it down afterwards'.

Reporter (2). 'Yes, we do come up with suggestions but you must understand that authoring the diary is not our job'

Question: Have you ever felt constrained in your choice and interpretation of stories you cover?

Reporter (1). 'Yes. Sometimes it is not possible to do certain stories for political reasons and sometimes due to limited resources such as cameras and crews'

Reporter (2). 'We have no problems covering ZANU PF people. They take the trouble to invite us in good time to their functions and they afford us VIP treatment. The opposition people don't like us. They say we are 'ZANU PF' loud speakers. I was barred from covering an MDC rally at the White City Stadium in Bulawayo.

Question: Do you consider that there was sufficient effort to accommodate in the news, actor(s) other than those of ZANU PF; particularly those from the opposition parties? If the answer is no, explain what were the limiting factors.

Newsroom Manager (1). 'Even if we wanted to expand the range of stories on our bulletin, there are not enough material resources to do that'

Question: Do you sometimes get calls from political office holders requesting or demanding coverage? If the answer is yes, how often?

Newsroom manager (2). 'Sometimes people up there call the newsroom and they give instructions to my subordinates. How do you handle such a situation? Sometimes these junior reporters are untouchable because they are connected to the top'.

Reporter (2). 'The people elected these leaders. We must be seen to be covering them, or else why should we sit here and earn public money. Where does that happen anyway in the world?'

Newsroom manager (1). 'I would not see it as demanding coverage. Yes, they do call and request coverage and if we have the equipment and the crew, why should we not cover them?'

Question: Do you get calls from the opposition parties and other social constituencies? If the answer is yes, how often to you attend to these?

Newsroom Manager (1). 'We get plenty phone calls from a range of people, including our viewers. We only attend to those we consider to be newsworthy and those that are within our geographic jurisdiction. However, sometimes resources' limit us'.

Question: Were all the packaged stories on election issues broadcast on the news?

Newsroom manager (2). 'Of-course not. Stories get dropped for various reasons. We have a responsibility not carry sensational material that can cause unnecessary alarm and despondency to the nation. Other stories are dropped due quality considerations'.

Reporter (1). 'Some stories are not politically correct, so they get dropped'

Question: Who decides what goes on air and what does not?

Reporter (2). 'It is our 'bosses' (newsroom managers)'.

Newsroom manager (2). 'Sometimes stories are rejected in Harare (ZBC main newsroom). I suppose availability of airtime plays an important role'.

Question: Do you consider that ZBC coverage of the 2002 election was adequate?

Newsroom manager (2). 'We did our best under the circumstances. We could have done more where it not for shortages of resources. There were moments when even transport was a problem. The fuel shortages made the situation worse'.

Reporter (1). 'In most cases, we were first with story. The feedback from our viewers was good. My parents were very proud of me. Only the opposition did not like our stories. They wanted us to be like the *Daily News*. But you see, ZBC presents the story from the point of view of the majority. We are not like the

private press who must sell their papers to survive. We have a responsibility to our nation and its elected leaders’.

Question: What is your understanding of public service broadcasting?

Newsroom manager (1). ‘Public broadcasting means that we broadcast what the public want. It means that we are the voice of the people, the voice of Zimbabwe’.

Newsroom manager (2). ‘Public service broadcasting is about public issues. It is about common people and their issues. It is also about their government’.

Reporter (1). ‘It means that ZBC is owned by the government on behalf of the public’.

Reporter (2). ‘Public service broadcasting means we have a duty to serve the Zimbabwean public’

Question: Do you think ZBC meets the normative expectations of public service broadcasting?

Newsroom manager (1). ‘Yes. Our service is truly Zimbabwean. We are now broadcasting to our people 24 hours a day, bringing them the latest national, regional and international news. We go were to places in Zimbabwe where CNN does not go.

Newsroom manager (2) ‘Yes, but we could do better if we had more equipment and transport and if our staff were paid better we could retain a lot good journalist. They all leave and go to the private sector’.

Reporter (1). ‘What do you mean?’

Reporter (2). ‘I think so’

Question: What is your understanding of a balanced news story?

Newsroom manager (1). ‘A balanced story has two sides and it’s fair’

Reporter (2). ‘A balanced story must tell the truth and not lies’.

Question: Why was it that most stories on the opposition carried a one sided-comment from the ruling party and no verification from the subjects concerned?

Newsroom manager (1). ‘What do you mean there was no verification from the subjects concerned? Where possible, we always seek comments from opposition people’.

Question: ‘How do you explain the story about an alleged plot to ‘Kill Mugabe’. What were your sources?

Newsroom manager (1). ‘ I must say I did not cover that story, neither was it covered by my crew. But honestly, some things are obvious. Tsvangirai (reference to MDC leader) has always indicated his intention of getting the presidency via the back door. We all know that, don’t you?’

Reporter (2). ‘It is true MDC bought houses in the suburbs and information from our sources prove that point. We shall film those houses and show them to the viewers. Some of these youths who were arrested for violence live in those houses paid for by the MDC. We are just telling it like it is’.

Question: Why is it that most stories seem to have focussed on ZANU PF politicians and not the other contending parties?

Newsroom manager (1). 'The people elected these leaders. We must be seen to be covering them, or else why should we sit here and earn public money. Where does that happen anyway in the world?'

Newsroom manager (2). 'He who pays the piper calls the tune (laughs)... I have a family to look after. I cannot afford to sacrifice this job. There is only one TV station in Zimbabwe'

Reporter (1). 'They (ZANU PF officials) always invite us in advance and they treat us well. When we invite them to the studios they come without asking too many questions, the opposition people who are so difficult'

Question: Have ever received any assistance from the people you cover, including politicians in terms of transport or whatever?

Reporter (2). 'I was the one that went on board a helicopter with the Professor (reference to the Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo). Yes, I rubbed shoulders with the 'big wigs'.

Newsroom manager (1). 'It happens all the time. People phone for coverage and sometimes offer to transport our crews. Our crews often travel with the President on foreign trips, otherwise it would be unaffordable for us. Sometimes we get footage from the President's cameramen or other people'.

Question: Have you ever felt threatened that perhaps you could lose your job if you do not achieve what is expected?

Reporter (1). 'I hear there is another retrenchment coming. It is worrying for those of us who love our jobs'

Newsroom manager (2). 'No, not at all. I'm good at my job. That's why I survived the last retrenchment'.

Reporter (1) and Newsroom manager (2) refused to comment on the question. Reporter (1) refused on two separate occasions. I did not pursue the question with newsroom manager (2)

Question: Why do you use archive material of people or events that you could actually cover?

Newsroom manager (2). Sometimes the relevant footage is impossible to get and sometimes archive material is necessary to prove a point. For instance, we re-used Tsvangirai's footage because he is difficult to get hold of. He is more difficult than the President (reference to Mugabe).

Question: Would you cover a story that clearly critiques government policy?

Newsroom manager (1). 'We do cover critical stories and sometimes they go on air but its up to the guys in Harare. They decide what they will broadcast and not us. There are times when stories have been retracted from air during transmission for fear that it might offend the big 'guns'.

Newsroom manager (2). 'It depends on a lot of factors. If it does not insult the government and is not false, we are likely to cover the story'

APPENDIX 4, Zimbabwe Population Censuses (2002)

Zimbabwe Central Statistics Office- Preliminary Results Summary

Male population	5 631 426	No. of households	491 332
Female population	6 003 237	Av. size	3.9
Total population	11 634 663		

Annual average
Growth Rate, 1992-2002 (%) 1.1

Average size of household (no. of persons) 4.4

Population density (persons per square
km) 29.77

Per cent distribution by province

Mat. North 6.03%
Bulawayo 5.82%
Mat. South 5.63%
Masvingo 11.30%
Midlands 12.60%
Mash. West 10.51%
Mash Central 8.58%
Harare 16.36%
Mash East 9.67%
Manicaland 13.47%

Bulawayo Province

Male 323 390
Female 353 397
Total 676 787

No. of households 165 383
Average size (no. of persons) 4.1

Mat. North

Male 338 349
Female 363 010
Total 701 359

No. of households 144 341
Average size 4.9

Mat. South

Male 310 273
Female 344 606
Total 654 879

No. of households 135 103
Average size 4.9

Harare

Male 949 824
Female 953 686
Total 1 903 510

Mash. Central

Male 489 870
Female 508 395
Total 998 265

No. of households 217 763
Av. size 4.6

Mash. East

Male 545 015
Female 380 340
Total 1 125 355

No. of households 265 053
Av. size 4.3

Mash. West

Male 608 302
Female 614 281
Total 1 222 583

No. of households 276 466
Av. size 4.4

Midlands

Male 704 231
Female 762 100
Total 1 466 331

No. of households 310 423
Av. size 4.7

Masvingo

Male 616 243
Female 702 462
Total 1 318 705

No. of households 286 487
Av. size 4.6

Manicaland

Male 745 929
Female 820 960
Total 1 566 889

No. of households 360 732
Av. size 4.3

