Activist Radio and the Struggle to Empower Audiences: A Case Study of the Zimbabwean History

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by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my partner, Robina, who always believes in my ability to succeed in my studies and in life. Your constant support and inspiration have brought me this far.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
ANC	African National Congress
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
ARM	Activist Radio Movement
AU	African Union
BSA	Broadcasting Services Act
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
CBD	Central Business District
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
CORAH	Community Radio Harare
CRIs	Community Radio Initiatives
CRM	Community Radio Movement
COSSA	Christian College of Southern Africa
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DA	District Administration Officer
DW	Deutsch Welle
EDICISA	Ecumenical Documentation and Information Centre in Southern Africa
ERC	Election Resources Centre
FBS	Federal Broadcasting Services
FEBA	Far-Eastern Broadcasting Association
FM	Frequency Modulation
FTA	Free-To-Air
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
LM	Lorenzo Max Radio
IMS	International Media Support
LOMA	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MoU	Memorandum of Understandings
MOPA	Maintenance of Peace and Order Act
MPOI	Mass Public Opinion Institute

MSU Midlands State University

NCA National Constitutional Assembly

NDP National Democratic Party

POSA Public Order and Security Act

PVO Private Voluntary Organisations Law

SADC Southern African Development Community

SWAPO South West African People's Organisation

SWRA Short-Wave Radio Africa

UZ University of Zimbabwe

VOA Voice of America

VOP Voice of the People

VoR Voice of Revolution

VoZ Voice of Zimbabwe

WENELA Witwatersrand Native Labour Association

WOZA Women of Zimbabwe Arise

ZACRAS Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations

ZANLA Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army

ZAPU Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZANU Zimbabwe African National Union

ZANU-PF Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front

ZBC Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

ZIANA Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency

ZLHR Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights

ZIPRA Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army

ZRP Zimbabwe Republic Police

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DECLARATION RELATING TO PLAGIARISM

I affirm that this dissertation is the product of my own efforts. I have appropriately attributed all ideas from other authors and referenced any direct quotations from their work. I have not permitted anyone else to borrow or replicate my work.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the evolution of activist radio in Zimbabwe, tracing its history from the mid-20th century to the present.

Chapter 1 outlines five phases in Zimbabwe's socio-political history, highlighting how each phase influenced the media landscape. It examines the era from the final stages of colonial rule in the late 1950s to contemporary times. It then discusses the role that media came to play at each of these moments, tracing an ongoing struggle between government and pro-democracy activists around the role that media plays within processes of democratisation. Chapter 2 establishes a theoretical framework that enables the researcher to analyse the values and principles motivating pro-democracy media activists throughout this history. In doing so, it identifies analytical tools that can be applied at the microlevel to the articulation of the beliefs and ideals held by individual participants in this history; at the medium level to the traditions of media that these participants established; and at the macro level to the impact of these traditions on systemic relations of power within a media landscape. This framework is then applied to a discussion of the way that these different levels have interacted with each other as part of the Zimbabwean history of media activism. Against this backdrop, Chapter 3 reviews the literature that describes the history of pro-democracy radio in Zimbabwe, detailing its role in media activism during each of the five identified periods. It includes the emergence of nationalist radio in the 1950s, its escalation in the 1960s and 1970s, the suppression of activist radio in the 1980s and the resurgence of pirate and community radio in the early 2000s. Chapter 4 describes the research plan for the empirical study, explaining that it includes biographical, episodic interviews with twenty individuals involved in activist radio. Chapters 5 to 7 present the findings from these interviews. Chapter 5 focuses on nationalist and pirate radio activists, examining their motivations and the radical media traditions they established. Chapter Six discusses community radio advocates who lobbied for legal recognition and developed a community radio movement. Chapter Seven explores the creative and strategic activities of community radio practitioners, who produced and distributed content despite legal constraints.

The study reveals the persistent efforts made by radio activists during each stage of this history to challenge state control and promote democratic media practices. It highlights the resilience and adaptability of these activists in fostering media freedom. By doing so, the study provides significant insights into journalism and media studies, demonstrating the impact of a grassroots radio movement in an authoritarian regime.

Key words: Activist radio, Authoritarian regime, Colonial rule, Community radio, Democratisation, Grassroots movement, Journalism, Media activism, Media Freedom, Media landscape, Media traditions, Nationalist radio, Pirate radio, Pro-democracy activists, Socio-political history, Zimbabwe.

INTRODUCTION

This study is grounded in my 18-year career in journalism in Zimbabwe. This journey began in January 2006 at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), where I started as a news reporter. In June 2008, I left ZBC and transitioned to freelance roles, including work at Radio Voice of the People (VOP), which broadcasted from South Africa using Radio Netherlands' transmitters in Madagascar. Simultaneously, I corresponded for The Zimbabwean Newspaper, edited in the UK, printed in Johannesburg, South Africa, and distributed to Zimbabwe, Radio Netherlands, Free Speech Radio News (USA), KPFA Pacifica Foundation Radio (USA), and DW (German). More recently, my work has expanded into the digital domain, contributing to New Zimbabwe, an online newspaper for the Zimbabwean diaspora in the UK, before transitioning to Community Radio Harare.

Throughout my 18-year career as a media practitioner and journalist in Zimbabwe, I faced constant state-sanctioned interference, and even physical violence, while executing my responsibilities. Initially, at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), several colleagues and I, including our news editor, were politically victimised and ultimately fired for covering opposition political players and human rights activists. Later, when I was operating outside state-established media outlets, I experienced a series of threats, intimidation, arrests and detentions by state security. This was also true during my six-year tenure as the chairperson of the Media Institute of Southern Africa's Harare advocacy committee. This experience underscored the importance of studying the history of media activism in this country, focusing on the role that activists have played sustaining the alternative media despite intimidation by the state. I am convinced of the importance documenting their experiences, capturing their contribution to the creation of alternative communication platforms for marginalised audiences.

In exploring the literature I discovered that the traditions of activist media, in which I have been involved myself, are rooted in a much older history that can be traced back to pre-independent Zimbabwe. At that time, colonial authorities also restricted media freedoms and employed violence against pro-democracy activities, referred to as nationalists. I decided, for the purpose of this study, to delve into this pre-history of media activism in Zimbabwe, focusing on radio in particular. I wished to gain insight into the way media activists have, over time, sustained their involvement in the traditions of radio practice that can empower marginalised communities. I was conscious that the continued survival of activist radio in this country has often been arduous, with activists facing harassment, arrests, and detentions by authoritarian administrations resisting the opening up of

democratic spaces. I wished to trace this history of resistance from its origins in the mid-twentieth century to the time of my own involvement in such radio in the 21st century. In particular, I hoped to identify shared normative foundations as well as shared practices for the implementation of these ideals.

Chapter One of the study explores the history of activist radio from the mid-20th century to the present, identifying five distinct phases in Zimbabwe's socio-political history and illustrating how each phase shaped the media landscape. Building on this, Chapter Two establishes a theoretical framework underpinning the values and principles driving media activists to create people-oriented radio projects to empower marginalized communities. Chapter Three delves into the documented history of activist radio within the broader context of media activism in Zimbabwe, engaging with each of the five key moments detailed in Chapter One. Chapter Four outlines the research plan for the empirical fieldwork and discusses its implementation. In Chapter Five, I present interviews with radio activists from the 1970s' nationalist radio and those involved in the pirate radio tradition that re-emerged at the turn of the millennium, sharing their practical experiences. Chapter Six focuses on interviews with community radio advocates, detailing their involvement in radio activism during the first decade of the millennium. Finally, Chapter Seven examines the activities of community radio practitioners, exploring their experiences with unlicensed radio projects and highlighting their creative endeavours.

CHAPTER 1: THE ZIMBABWEAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Introduction

This study examines the struggle history by pro-democracy activists to establish and sustain a tradition of radio in Zimbabwe that serves to empower the marginalised people of the country. It identifies the emergence of the struggle in the mid-twentieth century and traces it to the present moment. It aims to gain insight into the ways in which these activists have conceptualised the role that radio should ideally play in society and how they experienced attempting to put these ideals into practice in the Zimbabwean context.

This chapter identifies five distinct phases in Zimbabwean social history since the mid-20th century, each case exploring how that moment shaped the country's media landscape of the time. I want to quickly acknowledge that the periodisation of these five socio-political phases is not based on any scholarship but on my understanding and observations of this history.

The first phase spans the late 1950s to the early 1960s, during which time Zimbabwe, then known as Rhodesia, was still firmly under colonial rule. The second phase is represented by the period between the early 1960s and the late 1970s when colonial governance of Rhodesia was increasingly challenged by both internal and external opposition. The third phase falls between 1980 and 1999 and represents the first two decades of Zimbabwe's independence, a period defined by extreme internal conflict and the establishment of a one-party state. The fourth phase spans from 1999 to 2010 and shaped by the rise of organised opposition to one-party rule and the consequent emergence of multi-party democracy. The fifth phase falls between 2010 and the present, and includes the period during which a power sharing government was put in place and subsequently replaced by a military coup.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the Zimbabwean media landscape, at each of these moments, was embedded in the broader history of struggle for democracy in the country. For this reason, the discussion of each phase begins with a brief reminder as to political context, mapping out the state of democracy that existed in Zimbabwe at that time and the relations of power that informed it. This is followed by a description of ways in which this context shaped the Zimbabwean media landscape as it existed in that moment. Hence, this chapter provides a backdrop against which the subsequent chapters will describe a detailed examination of the history of activist radio.

1.1 The final years of colonial hegemony: the late 1950s to the early 60s

1.1.1 Colonial rule and the birth of nationalist resistance

By the mid-twentieth century, the region now known as Zimbabwe, existed as the British colony of Southern Rhodesia, governed by a white elite under a federal government. This same federal administration was also ruling Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) (Chiumbu, 2009). Throughout the region, there was growing resistance amongst an emerging black middle class opposing white minority rule. This new middle class played a leadership role in the establishment of political organisations that called for national self-determination and the overthrow of white minority rule. They aligned themselves with national liberation movements based in neighbouring countries that had already gained independence (Mossia et al., 1994). Of particular importance was the emergence of the National Democratic Party (NDP) in 1960, led by Joshua Nkomo. Membership of the NDP included prominent nationalists such as Leopold Takawira, Ndabaningi Sithole, Jason Ziyaphapha Moyo, Inos Nkala, Hebert Chitepo, Edgar Tekere and Robert Mugabe (Dombo, 2018:104). It is of historical significance that Nkomo was a member of the Ndebele tribe while Takawira and his compatriots were Shona-speaking. Across the twentieth century, Shona and Ndebele-speaking people have respectively comprised about 80% and 16% of the Zimbabwean population. These categories of linguistic, ethnic, and tribal identity came to play a central role in the way in which political organisations in Zimbabwe defined themselves.

The colonial government responded to the emergence of organisations such as the NDP by seeking ways in which to assimilate their leadership into the colonial structures of governance. Of particular importance was the facilitation of a constitutional amendment that allowed participation by the black middle class in parliament. Such strategies were employed in the hope that the resistance movement would be weakened (Dombo, 2018:95). The NDP's leadership initially agreed to participation in government but this led to disagreement within party ranks, which expressed itself along lines of ethnic identity. The majority of the Ndebele-speaking members saw involvement in government as a way of initiating change from within, while some Shona-speaking members saw this as a betrayal of the liberation struggle. Takawira accused Nkomo of selling out and was consequently expelled from the NDP, leaving the organisation divided along tribal lines.

At this point, the colonial authorities withdrew from negotiations with the NDP and reverted to a hard-line response to political opposition, pronouncing harsh laws and disrupting the nationalist movements' activities. One such law was the application of the Law-and-Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) of 1960. On 9 December 1961, using another such statute entitled the Unlawful Organisations Act, the colonial regime banned the fragmented NDP but nine days later the defiant Nkomo formed another party, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) (Dombo, 2018:96-98). The organisation lasted for almost a year before splitting along tribal lines. In August 1963, Sithole,

Tekere and Mugabe defected from ZAPU and formed a splinter Shona-dominated party, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) (Dombo, 2018:104).

During this phase, the colonial administration employed a political tactic of divide and rule. Their efforts partly succeeded and ended up fragmenting the opposition by fostering ethnic division. However, despite their differences, the nationalist groupings remained motivated by a shared commitment to liberating the region from colonialism.

1.1.2 The media landscape: hegemony and the beginnings of its disruption

The media landscape in Southern Rhodesia at the time was shaped by an interest in the media as an apparatus of political control. Both within the print and broadcast sectors, state officials enacted a cocktail of laws that criminalised freedom of expression and promoted media monopoly controlled by the government. In addition, the government established media partnerships with business interests in the region that enabled the creation of a private media sector that operated as an extension of state media. Nevertheless, these media systems were dressed up in the trappings associated with a free and inclusive media environment (Chiumbu, 2009; Dombo, 2018:28-29).

In the newspaper sector, these contradictions could be observed in the involvement of government in what appeared, on the face of it, to be the facilitation of an independent and diverse press. The colonial administration worked in close co-operation with mining companies to fund newspaper stables. A key example of this partnership between the government and mining industry was with Anglo-American who owned mineral rights in the region. Also of particular importance was the establishment of African Newspapers, who received support from government and industry on the understanding that they would promote the interests of their sponsors. Officials in government were directly involved in this venture, guiding its editorial agenda. They appointed black editors in demonstration of a commitment to the democratising function of a free press and the importance of representing the interests of black readers. The newspapers were published both in English and in indigenous languages, in an attempt to engage with local audiences. They were, however, required to implement editorial policies that advanced a colonial agenda. The inclusion of black editors and local languages was put in place, window dressing the newspapers with an appearance of legitimacy as result. In reality, this gave them the authority to operate more successfully as channels for state propaganda (Dombo, 2018:21-28).

In the broadcast sector, it was also possible to identify characteristics associated with a media guided by principles of democracy, while in fact these principles were not implemented. Radio broadcasting had started in Southern Rhodesia in the early 1930s and by the early 1940s the federal government had set up a commission to advise how this should be regulated. In 1958, based on their recommendations, the Federal Broadcasting Services (FBS) came into operation, serving the Central African Federation of Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi. This federation was formed by the colonial rulers in 1953, but only existed for one decade as a political entity. After the fall of the federation in 1963,

separate corporations were established in the three territories, culminating in the establishment in 1964 of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) (Chiumbu, 2009; Dombo, 2018:29-30). The RBC claimed to be an independent statutory body, managing the broadcast sector for the purpose of the public good. However, in tandem to the establishment of the RBC, the government was constructing a regulatory environment in which broadcasting would be under tight control of the state. Indeed, the Broadcasting Act of 1957 stipulated that radio services could only be operated by the state and, using this legislation, the colonial powers turned radio into a vehicle for propaganda and social control (Chiumbu, 2009).

It emerges that during this period the colonial administration presented itself as invested in the principle of a free press and a diverse, inclusive media environment. However, in practice, they sustained reasonably soft mechanisms of influence through which they maintained tight control of the editorial agendas of both print and broadcast media.

It will become evident in Chapter 3 that this was also the period in which alternative forms of radio began to emerge, informed by the interests of social activists who were campaigning for democracy. Indeed, they were significantly influenced by resistance movements that were on the rise in Southern Rhodesia. The role that such radio played in promoting the interests of nationalist movements would soon provoke the authorities to invoke practices of subjugation and control.

1.2 Hegemony becomes challenged: from the early 1960s to 1980

1.2.1 The years of the liberation war

By 1965 the government of Southern Rhodesia, under the leadership of Ian Smith, had claimed independence from the United Kingdom and redefined the territory they were governing as the nation of Rhodesia. Smith adopted a new Constitution, which relegated the status of the indigenous population to that of second-class citizens. The implementation of this Constitution triggered armed resistance from Black Nationalist movements who recognised Smith's government stood for the maintenance of white supremacy. By then, the NDP had been banned and in its place, Nkomo founded the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). In 1963 power struggles along tribal lines led to the internal fracturing of ZAPU. Ndabaningi Sithole and his Shona-speaking compatriots formed a splinter organisation named the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) (Dombo, 2018:104). For some time, these two nationalist organisations operated in parallel to each other in a relationship of mutual antagonism. In the early 1970s they were able to overcome their differences and joined forces in their shared struggle for liberation. This provoked the Rhodesian government to respond with violence (Dombo, 2018:105). Smith unleashed a series of restrictive laws, which criminalised public gatherings and unsanctioned political meetings. As a result, several nationalists including Mugabe, Sithole and Nkomo were arrested and detained for more than ten years, without trial, for waging a violent war of resistance to white minority rule (Chitepo, 1973).

Despite the arrest of the nationalist leadership by the colonial powers, nationalist movements continued to receive support from the broader population, especially farming communities in rural areas, where the majority of indigenous people lived. The nationalists were successful in establishing their power bases in these areas both by gaining the loyalty of farming communities and by building alliances with traditional leaders (Frederikse, 1983:310). They could depend on the internal organisation of these communities to assist them in conducting political education and mobilisation. Night vigils (pungwes) were held where they spoke to villagers about the importance of the liberation struggle and the ills of colonialism (Frederikse, 1983:56-63). The colonial government countered the night vigil strategy by introducing curfews, both in rural areas and in townships. Under these laws Rhodesian security forces were empowered to shoot black people on sight if they were found "loitering" between the period of dusk and dawn (Mushonga, 2005). Other African countries, which had already gained independence from colonial rule responded to these strategies with outrage and a show of solidarity. They offered Rhodesian nationalists' refuge within their own borders and provided them with military training (Frederikse, 1983:43-55).

During this period, there was growing internal and external political resistance against white minority rule. It is possible, within these patterns of resistance, to observe the rise of Pan-Africanism in which shared ideological values and beliefs from neighbouring countries contributed to the liberation struggle in Southern Rhodesia.

1.2.2 The media landscape: the rise of alternative media

During this period, the increased use of media by the resistance movement to further its goals became evident. The Nationalists took advantage of their embeddedness within the rural population to circulate resistance media. By 1966, at political gatherings and pungwes, they were making use of word of mouth, pamphlets, magazines, newspapers, cassettes, and posters printed in local languages to circulate the messages of the liberation war (Frederikse, 1983:111-113). These communication strategies played a highly effective role in establishing a consciousness amongst rural people about the agenda of the resistance movement.

The beginning of the 1960s also saw the emergence of newspapers and church magazines dedicated to the cause of the resistance movement. Seasoned journalists who had worked with the federal government defected, joined their compatriots, and established these newspapers. Of particular significance was the *African Daily News,* which was dedicated to covering the nationalist movements' political activities. Also at that time, starting in 1959, The Roman Catholic church turned its magazine *Moto* (fire in Shona) into a communication vehicle for nationalists (Dombo, 2018:133-135). The *African Daily News* published stories that exposed the ills of the colonial administration

and served to counter state propaganda. Nkomo is noted as saying that the paper was established to counter the harm done by the colonial powers. He pointed out that state media was misreporting, distorting, or deliberately refusing to cover commentaries by critics of government and the activities of nationalist movements. These papers served the black elite who had settled in urban environments, particularly those men who moved to towns and cities in order to find work in order to enable their families back home, in rural areas, to survive (Dombo, 2018:100).

In parallel to the emergence of such papers we also see the establishment of radio dedicated to the interests of the nationalist resistance movements, linked to ZAPU and ZANU respectively. As described in Chapter Three, activists operated these stations from Moscow, Egypt, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique using the shortwave broadcasting spectrum (Mosia et al., 1992). In fact, such radio could penetrate the rural areas more easily than the resistance papers. One reason for this was that radio technology was suited to easy distribution in rural spaces. Another was that programming presented in the vernacular, namely Ndebele and Shona, was accessible to a rural population. As a result, radio gained the status of the key medium of resistance in rural communities which, as we have seen, formed the primary support base of the nationalists' movement (Frederikse, 1983:112).

In response to the emergence of such media, the colonial authorities invoked the authority of law. They shut down the *African Daily News* as early as 1964 and the *Moto* magazine in 1974, labelling them enemies of the state (Dombo, 2018:106-134). They marshalled people in the farming and rural areas and put them into military confinements called 'keeps' and imposed curfews. Such restrictions on movement made it easier for the colonial powers to monitor their subjects' activities. It also meant that nationalists could not conduct night vigils (pungwes) with their compatriots. They also invoked the Law-and-Order Maintenance Act, the Emergency Powers Act, the African Affairs Act, the Censorship and Entertainment Act and the Broadcasting Act to criminalise anti-colonial material and events (Frederikse, 1983:24)

In addition to curtailing the communication strategies of the resistance movement, the colonial powers also made the most of state media to spread propaganda. They deployed the Censorship Act to edit the *Rhodesian Herald* and *The Chronicle* on any story that was anti-establishment. They also used these publications to publish stories that denounce nationalists in the name of 'promoting national security' (Frederikse, 1983:25-28). In the broadcast sector, black announcers presented programming in English, Shona and Ndebele that preserved and promoted white supremacy. They criticized the ideological agendas of the nationalists, throwing doubt on the values of Pan-Africanism, communism, and nationalism. Such programming included derogatory references to nationalist leaders, labelled as terrorists and accused of incompetence (Frederikse, 1983:28-30, 95-97).

However, the colonial powers' propaganda failed to convince the rural population, given that the rural community was already strongly invested in nationalist values and ideology. Indeed, the 20

nationalists were able to strengthen such investment, winning the hearts of the younger generation by means of their alternative communication platforms and strategies. After attending pungwes addressed by nationalists in their communities, young people from rural communities chose to slip across the borders in order to join the liberation struggle (Frederikse, 1983:60).

1.3 The first two decades of Zimbabwean independence: The early 1980s to 1999

1.3.1 The Political moment: Gukurahundi and its aftermath

In elections held in 1980 Mugabe and ZANU won with 57 seats, defeating Nkomo and ZAPU who secured 20 seats in Matabeleland. There were also 20 seats reserved for whites, won by Ian Smith. The United Kingdom responded by acknowledging the independence of Zimbabwe as a sovereign state. Mugabe then invited Nkomo to form a coalition government and appointed him as one of his cabinet ministers. However, Nkomo was not persuaded by the value of this arrangement, remaining convinced that he was the true representative of the liberation struggle and deserved far more recognition within the new governmental system (Dombo, 2017:96). Conflict escalated once more and divisions within the coalition government continued to manifest itself along lines of ethnic identity. In 1982 an arms cache was allegedly discovered on ZAPU's property and Mugabe reacted with accusations of insurgency. He arrested the Nkomo allies, fired those whom he had given posts in the coalition government (Dombo, 2018:141), declared a state of emergency and deployed his soldiers in Nkomo's strongholds. The soldiers mercilessly killed villagers in what is now known as Gukurahundi massacre, leaving an estimated 20,000 civilians dead (Alexander et al., 2000; Muzondidya, 2009; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009). The period is also known as the Gukurahundi era in Zimbabwe, a Shona term that refers to the early rains that wash away the chaff after the harvest. Translated into English it means to clean the debris or to sort out the chaff from the grain (Zimbabwe Crisis Report, 2007:2; Msindo, 2012:21). Gukurahundi officially ended on December 22, 1987, after Mugabe coerced Nkomo into accepting another unity government, which led to the formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) (Chiumbu, 2010; Mpofu, 2016; Dombo, 2018:141). The new unity government abolished the 20 seats reserved for whites; it was, however, still characterised by a high level of internal acrimony, and to ensure future stability, Mugabe rushed to create a one-party state (Kriger, 2003). He insisted that the absorption of ZAPU was the only way in which the credibility of the state could be consolidated:

> A united ZANU-PF has the potential ... to develop into that sole party to which all Zimbabweans can and should lend their support and membership ... any attempt to form any new political parties for the future is a long step backward (Mugabe cited in Dombo, 2017:142).

Two years after Gukurahundi in 1989, Mugabe's longtime ally, Edgar Tekere, formed his own political party, the Zimbabwe Unity Movement (ZUM). Tekere had been fired from ZANU-PF by Mugabe for questioning his policies in the previous year. ZUM came into being when Mugabe's ministers were implicated in a government vehicle scheme scandal. Tekere used this scam as his trump card to campaign and contest in the 1990 Presidential polls. Mugabe launched an offensive and propaganda attack and crushed Tekere's emerging political movement (Dombo, 2018:142).

What followed was an extended period of one-party rule. Activists were prepared to support Mugabe because they believed that he would institute democratic reforms in line with the ethos of the 1987 unity accord that led to the formation of the ZANU-PF government. However, Mugabe ignored the terms of this accord and instead continued to construct a state governed by one party, ruled by commitment to nationalism. In the years that followed, he used the power of the state to crush any opposing voices and accused them of attempting to derail the gains of both the liberation struggle and national independence. This status quo continued until disruption of the one-party state agenda by prodemocracy activists at the turn of the millennium (Dombo, 2018:142-144).

1.3.2 The media landscape: media capture

At independence in 1980 the Mugabe administration inherited colonial media laws and assigned them to govern both the print and the electronic sectors within the new state of Zimbabwe. The former colonial rulers had used these laws to silence critical voices and Mugabe employed them for the same purposes. It was expected that the new government would repeal such laws, and the government made promises in this respect. However, Mugabe did not see the urgency of democratising the Zimbabwean media landscape. He quickly realised that these laws existed to uphold power and could be helpful for his own governments' control of the political arena (Shamuyarira cited in Dombo, 2018:122-123).

Within the print media sector, the government inherited the Rhodesian Printing and Publication Company, a South African-based Argus Group subsidiary. This company produced dailies like the *Rhodesia Herald* (which now became the *Herald*), printed in Salisbury (later Harare); the *Bulawayo Chronicle*, published in Bulawayo and the weekly *Sunday Mail*. In 1981, the government secured a grant from the Nigerian government that enabled it to purchase 43% of Argus stock held by South African investors and converted the Argus Company into Zimbabwe Newspapers Limited (Zimpapers). The government became the majority shareholder and formed a trust, the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT), which they claimed guaranteed independence from the state. The Zimpapers stable also has two weeklies, *Kwayedza* and *Umthunywa*, printed in Shona and Ndebele from Harare and Bulawayo respectively (Chiumbu, 2009:7-8).

At this time there was little evidence of resistance media within the print sector, other than the *Moto* Magazine, inherited from the Roman Catholic church. This publication was banned by Smith in 1974 for sympathizing with nationalists, but now became conservative, serving as a platform for the mixed opinions on politics, sports, music and entertainment by the black elite. At times it did expose corruption and state-sponsored human rights violations but was unable to sustain such critique. It broke ranks with the state in March 1983 when it sent shockwaves across the establishment by covering state sponsored Gukurahundi atrocities. After that, it dropped politics from its editorial agenda and shifted to Catholic and rural issues, making it unpopular with its audience and contributed to its natural demise. Later, in the second decade of democracy, *Moto* was superseded by two other magazines, *Parade* (which focused on investigative journalism) and *Horizon*, (which covered political news). *Parade* later closed down because of a lack of funding. At the same time, hefty defamation charges from the Zanu PF politicians hit *Horizon*, forcing it to cease operations in the mid-1990s (Dombo, 2018:133-135).

The 1990s saw the emergence of a small section of the private print media, comprising weekly newspapers including the *Financial Gazette* (which covered business news) and the *Zimbabwe Independent* and the *Standard* (which specialized in politics and investigative journalism). Although The *Financial Gazette* was a private publication, it was associated with the state security department. The *Independent* and the *Standard* belonged to a former Zimbabwean journalist-turned-businessman, Trevor Ncube (Dombo, 2018:136-140). These two newspapers stood out as different, making possible voices of critique and resistance within an environment that was heavily censored and controlled.

In the broadcast sector the government renamed the RBC in 1980 and it became known as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). The new government appointed ZANU cadres who were running VOZ in Mozambique to manage the state broadcaster. These military veterans worked alongside compatriots who had been employed at this broadcaster when it was still RBC (Mosia et al., 1994:18). At this time, ZBC consisted of one television station and four radio channels. One radio channel had studios in both Harare and Bulawayo where it interchangeably broadcast in Shona and Ndebele. Another one was based in Harare and broadcast educational programmes in 17 indigenous languages. The remaining two stations catered for an urban-based elite audience and youth audience respectively and used English as their programming language (Chiumbu, 2009:41). The Mugabe government used the state broadcaster to promote the ruling party's ideology. They achieved this by appointing former ZANLA politicians in key leadership positions at the broadcaster, while former ZIPRA nationalists were blocked from taking up such positions. Zanu military veterans also joined ZBC and worked there as the ears and eyes of government (Mosia et al., 1994:19). Meanwhile, resistance radio struggled to sustain itself. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the government set about to undermine such stations.

The media, previously controlled by the colonial government, was put to the purpose of establishing systems of inequality and control, serving the interests of the governing party of the newly independent Zimbabwean state. Within this environment, there was little evidence of voices of resistance. A possible reason for this may be that the majority of Zimbabweans still sympathized with the new leadership, given their contribution to the liberation of the country in the hope that the new government would ultimately be invested in social transformation and reform. At the same time, the chilling effects of the liberation war followed by the Gukurahundi atrocities could also have affected the people's willingness to challenge authority.

1.4 The rise of opposition to one-party rule: 1999 -2010

1.4.1 The political moment: the era of resistance to the one-party state

The turn of the century marked the birth of multi-party democracy brought about by the advent of the strongest opposition party in Zimbabwe's history, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) led by trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai. Organised resistance was triggered by the advent of the February 2000 referendum, which sought legitimisation of the Chidyausiku draft constitution. This gave Mugabe unlimited powers and term of office (Chiumbu, 20009:2). It also asked for approval of the inclusion of a clause that would empower the government to seize white owned commercial farms without compensation (Chiumbu, 2009:2). The MDC teamed up with its alliance partners from civil society, university students and the church and campaigned against the referendum. They launched a broad campaign in which they argued that the objectives of the referendum were fundamentally undemocratic. As a result, the no-vote prevailed, checking the state's attempt to consolidate one-party rule (Dombo, 2018:168). Thus, Tsvangirai and his followers succeeded in disrupting the state's one-party agenda.

The government proceeded to seize white-owned farms using violence (Dombo, 2018:168). Simultaneously, the opposition gained ground and intensified their pro-democracy campaign, provoking open hostility from the state, which responded with violence. Mugabe enacted a series of undemocratic laws and unleashed them on the opposition activists and their activities (Moyo, 2010; Chenzi and Hove, 2020:4). Human rights violations escalated and plunged the country into a political, social, and economic crisis.

Nevertheless, in the MDC under Tsvangirai's leadership, Zimbabwe had witnessed the emergence of a strong and credible opposition to one-party rule. The MDC was successful in identifying opportunities within the existing legislative framework of the Zimbabwean state to lay claim to the democratic rights of its citizens. In the wake of the successful challenge of the referendum

in 2000, civil society organisations became more confident in their critique of the government and organised in their demands for the strengthening of democracy.

The state responded by crafting a series of draconian laws legitimising its human rights violations. In 2002 they amended LOMA, renaming it the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) (Moyo, 2010). The new legislation empowered the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) to authorise or deny public gatherings and political meetings. The state used this law to ban opposition and civil society gatherings whilst allowing those organised by ZANU PF and its sympathisers. Under POSA anyone found at an 'unsanctioned' gathering would be arrested. In the same year, the state also enacted the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). This statute was assigned to encroach on and close privately owned newspapers critical of the ZANU PF (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, 2004).

During this period in Zimbabwe, the forces of opposition and of authoritarian rule became more equally matched. The MDC gained broad support within the Zimbabwean population and was able, as a result, to resist attempts on the part of the government to encroach on their democratic freedoms and rights. However, their success in doing so meant that the state increasingly turned to brute force in order to repress all opposition.

1.4.2 The media landscape: critical, plural and diversity era

The heightened political climate of the first decade of the new millennium gave rise to the emergence of a more robust independent press, for example with the launch of the *Daily News* in March 1999. It is no coincidence, that the establishment of this paper coincided with the formation of the MDC, the challenge of the 2000 referendum and the chaotic farm invasions that followed. This newspaper came with a pro-democracy and civil society editorial agenda and spoke out strongly against state-sponsored violence (Dombo, 2018:153). The privately owned publication criticised Mugabe while sympathizing with the victims of state brutality, campaigns for the strengthening of civil society, and with the opposition in general (Dombo, 2018:170-172). Within the broadcast sector, as explained in Chapter 3, activists identified constitutional loopholes that enabled them to challenge state radio monopoly.

These challenges, both from within the print and broadcast media, provoked the government who responded by creating more draconian laws and applied them across the media sector (Feltoe, 2002). The state applied these laws to shut down private media houses, including both newspapers and private radio stations, displacing many journalists and media workers. The ruling elite further instructed the state broadcaster to remain silent about civil society and opposition activities. When the state media did cover these activities, they gave the news a negative spin that tarnished the

opposition's standing. The state media also promoted hate speech against the opposition and used derogatory language in reporting on its activities (Masuku, 2006). As to be discussed in Chapter 3, some of the displaced journalists mobilised and established radio stations and operated them from outside the country (Chiumbu, 2009; Mare, 2013; Dombo, 2018). Again, the state responded with violence and hate speech calling these stations pirate radios, at the same time accusing them of working with the west with the aim of effecting regime change in Zimbabwe (MISA, 2006; Moyo, 2010:33).

As a result of these developments, we see the emergence of highly partisan journalism practice during this era. The state media, on the one hand, supported the government while the private media and resistance media backed the opposition and its civil society allies. The state also used restrictive laws to ban both freedom of association and freedom of expression. This resulted in increased state sponsored violence on private media organisations, arrests, torture and displacement of journalists and opposition political activists. This media onslaught by the state was tamed by the formation of a power sharing government of Mugabe and Tsvangirai in 2009.

1.5 The years of power sharing governments: from 2010 to the 2020s

1.5.1 The political moment: during and after the Government of National Unity

The second decade of the 21st century was the first time for Zimbabweans to enjoy democracy in practice, despite the fact that the country had gained independence 30 years previously. Unfortunately, this democratic situation was imposed upon by regional forces that intervened in political impasse between Mugabe and Tsvangirai. At this time, the Zimbabwean political landscape was shaped by the establishment of a Government of National Unity (GNU) made up of Mugabe's ZANU PF and the MDC, led by Tsvangirai. This government came into being as a result of the violently contested and discredited presidential run-off election of 27 June 2008. Tsvangirai had boycotted this election, citing state sponsored violence committed against his supporters. The resulting political deadlock attracted the world's attention. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), supported by the African Union (AU), appointed Thabo Mbeki (the South African president at the time) to mediate. On 15 September 2008 Mbeki brokered an arrangement between Mugabe and Tsvangirai, entitled the Global Political Agreement (GPA) that eased the decade-long political tension between the two protagonists. Within this partnership, Mugabe retained executive powers but Tsvangirai attained the position of prime minister (GPA, 2008; Masunda & Zembe, 2013). Mugabe allocated less powerful but critical social amenities portfolios to the opposition. These ministries included, education, health, and finance, but he refused to compromise on the defence, state security

and justice portfolios. These three ministries are critical to the administration of the state and have for a long time been linked to the running of elections.

The GPA prescribed constitutional reforms that the power sharing government was supposed to implement to avoid future political crises. Mugabe stalled the reform agenda and passively adhered to these directives whilst buying time for the five-year political arrangement to expire. He scaled down state-sponsored violence and succeeded appeasing the regional and international actors who were monitoring him. However, he also watered down the obligation for reform because that would mean volunteering power to an aggressive opposition (Masunda and Zembe, 2013:2). Within five years he had given up any pretence of respecting the terms of the agreement and declared 31 July 2013 as an election date. Soon after this, cases of human rights violations re-emerged, with the securocrats once again publicly declaring war against the opposition if Mugabe loses the election (Masunda and Zembe, 2013:20). Mugabe though thrashed Tsvangirai with 61% of the Presidential vote against 33%. In parliament, ZANU PF increased its numbers from 99 seats in 2008 to 159 in 2013, while Tsvangirai's seats dropped from 99 in 2008 to 49. Thereafter, ZANU PF continued with political dominance and completely shelved the reform agenda (Raftopoulos, 2013).

A year after the expiry of the GNU, internal power struggles rocked the ruling party and distracted the Mugabe administration from the implementation of the government's plans for facilitating economic recovery (Gumbo and Mugabe, 2014). Indeed, the economic positives brought about by the GNU started to deteriorate soon after the end of the unity government. Conditions in Zimbabwe began to revert to the situation that existed prior to 2008. Cash shortages resurfaced, fuel queues re-emerged and claims of government corruption increased (Raftopoulos, 2014). Zimbabweans responded with anger, mobilising against social and economic injustices. This period saw the emergence of radical social movements led by informal traders, former student leaders, unemployed youths and human rights activists. Mugabe did his best to suppress these radical social movements (Chenzi and Hove, 2020:7 -14). The state deployed armed police who used tear gas and water cannons to attack pro-democracy gatherings. Many leaders of these social movements became victims of state sponsored violence during this period. Zimbabwe had, once more, degenerated into a military state (BBC Report, 2016; Chenzi and Hove, 2020:5).

Nevertheless, in the final years of Mugabe's rule, Zimbabwe could not return to authoritarian rule as this existed before the era of the GNU. Despite being short lived, the tenure of the GNU had left its mark on the Zimbabwean political landscape, as it existed post 2013. During the time of the collaborative government, more progressive stakeholders within government were able to introduce economic reforms that helped to contain hyperinflation. Basic commodities had become more available, schools and universities reopened, transport systems regained their functionality and social services were revived with the assistance of donor agencies. These improvements in the social context

remained in place even after the dissolution of the agreements on which the GPA had been based (Mukuhlani, 2014). In the discussion below it is argued that, in what would remain of the Mugabe era, this legacy of the GNU years continued to ensure opportunities for radio activists to challenge the controls imposed on the radio landscape by an authoritarian state.

Mugabe's reign ended on November 21, 2017, in context of a military coup that emanated from his failure to contain ZANU PF internal fights. The military turned against him after he fired his long-time ally and deputy, Emmerson Mnangagwa, for allegedly plotting to topple him. In the same month Mugabe had also attempted to arrest the country's military chief, Constantino Chiwenga, for aligning with Mnangagwa. The coup paved the way for Mnangagwa to take over from the aging ruler (Tendi, 2017). Mnangagwa's ascendence to power brought hope to Zimbabweans and the world at large as the perception was, amongst the international community, that he would make a better leader than Mugabe (The Chronicle, 2017). This was despite his tainted human rights record including his active role in the Gukurahundi massacres and the bloody and discredited 2008 Presidential run-off elections (Tendi, 2017).

During his inauguration on 24 November 2017, Mnangagwa pledged to undo Mugabe's undemocratic polices but barely eight months after him taking office, unleashed soldiers on peaceful protesters demonstrating against the delayed announcement of the July 30, 2018, election results. The soldiers shot dead six defenceless civilians in the skirmishes (Mavhinga, 2020). In the Presidential results announced three days after the bloody shootings, Mnangagwa was declared the winner with 50.8% of the Presidential vote against his main contender, Nelson Chamisa (Kaaba, 2019). In the years that followed, Mnangagwa's leadership was characterised by severe repression by means of arrests, abductions, torture, and detention of government critics. In 2019 and 2020, in the name of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, over 70 government critics were abducted and tortured by individuals, suspected to be state agents. These activists included female opposition leaders, youth leaders, teachers' union leaders and health workers (Human Rights Watch, 2020).

Since his ascendancy to power, Mnangagwa put Zimbabwe's human rights record back to where it was at the turn of the millennium, during the height of Mugabe's dictatorship. He renewed several laws, shrinking the already compromised democratic space. He pursued violent strategies while at the same time making a public display of democratic reform. A significant example is the so-called repeal, in November 2019, of POSA (2002) which was renamed the Maintenance of Peace and Order Act (2019), (MOPA) (Herald, 2019). Despite the change in name, MOPA still maintains clauses that quashed democratic freedoms, including the criminalisation of public gatherings. His latest autocratic law is the enactment of the Private Voluntary Organisations Law (PVO) in 2023 which clamps down on political dissent and restricts the operations of civic organisations and NGOs (Sunday Mail, 2023; United Nations, 2023). Mnangagwa has also repealed the Access to Information

and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) of 2002, replacing it through an amendment with another repressive statute integrated into the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act, commonly recognized as the Patriotic Bill. This recent legislation deems actions perceived as detrimental to Zimbabwe's sovereignty illegal, imposing stringent penalties, including death. The Amendment to the Criminal Code extends the range of offences, constricting freedom of expression and opinion, particularly for individuals critical of the government (Amnesty International, 2023:14). Additional recent laws encompass the Freedom of Information Act (2020) and the Cyber and Data Protection Act (2021) (Amnesty International, 2023:17).

The government has employed such legal frameworks to quell dissent, as evidenced by the apprehension and maltreatment of civil society leaders and opposition members. The legislative agenda pursued by the Mnangagwa administration mirrors historical repressive measures, signifying the government's intention to restrict human rights.

It can therefore be argued that the Mnangagwa administration has perpetuated a legacy of human rights transgressions, utilizing legislation and coercion to stifle dissent, limit freedom of expression, and intimidate those expressing criticism of the government. This circumstance, in which violent oppression is combined with a semblance of democracy, continues to characterise the Zimbabwean landscape to the present day in 2024.

1.5.2_The media landscape: digital media era

During this period, the GNU forced the government to democratise the media sector, resulting in the licencing of newspapers including the resuscitation of the *Daily News* which was violently shut down in 2003 (Dombo, 2018:202). The government did, at the same time, voluntarily licensed two national commercial radio stations and eight local commercial radio stations (Amnesty International, 2015:9). However, it ignored the already existing exiled (pirate) stations and the community radio sector. This era also saw the rise of digital media in Zimbabwe, made possible by the economic stability that characterised this period as progress in the electrification of rural areas led to a sharp increase in the availability of mobile networks and internet service providers. Smartphones and computers became more readily available, and the cost of mobile SIM cards decreased dramatically. These factors made the internet accessible and affordable for the previously marginalised. Many Zimbabweans for the first time began to experience what it means to be part of a digital world (Chenzi and Hove, 2020:6). The radical social movements that emerged in the post GNU era made their presence strongly felt in this new online environment. Examples of the campaigns facilitated on social media include #Tajamuka, #ThisFlag, #OccupyAfricaUnitySquare, and #ThisBachi. In 2016 alone, using social media platforms, radical groupings combined, mobilised and staged 40 national demonstrations

nationwide (Chenzi and Hove, 2020:3-5). However, soon after the tenure of the GNU, the state reacted to the rise of activism within the digital realm. The government succeeded in curtailing the power of such activism by switching off the internet and jamming of all social media platforms. This enabled them to stifle the flow of information whenever activists call for mass protests (Bearak, 2016).

As we will see in Chapter 3, struggle radio has flourished during the digital era. Pirate stations and CRI's joined forces at this time to make use of shared media platforms, in order to distribute their content both in Zimbabwe and across the world (Ndawana, 2015; Mangwiro, 2018). Nevertheless, there was still no legitimation of such radio by government. In recent years, the government has finally allocated the first licenses to community radio stations (Mahlahla, 2021) which, however, were given only to a handful of remotely based radio projects with no history of pro-democracy activism (Herald, 2022). The clampdown on digital media and the continued resistance to the legitimisation of activist radio continues to characterise the contemporary broadcast environment.

Conclusion

The history of the Zimbabwean media landscape has always been characterised by a struggle for control, often characterised by extreme conflict. This remains true for the years of the colonial regime and after the establishment of an independent Zimbabwe. On one side of this struggle, government officials and industry stakeholders sought to control media for the purpose of the maintenance of an authoritarian state. Social activists, on the opposite side, engaged in a continuous history of resistance to such control, continuously finding new opportunities to use the media in order to open up spaces for voices of protest. The aim of this study is to gain insight into this history of resistance as observed in the context of radio. The next chapter presents a discussion of theoretical debates that can be applied to such an investigation.

CHAPTER 2: NORMATIVE THEORY AND THE ZIMBABWEAN MEDIA A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction

In this chapter the researcher considers the history of Zimbabwean media discussed in Chapter 1 in order to gain insight into the values and principles that motivated social activists to ensure the ongoing survival of media dedicated to the empowerment of the Zimbabwean people. The focus is on the normative principles that informed their participation in this history. In order to articulate a theoretical framework that can be applied to the discussion of these principles, the chapter draws on literature dealing with the normative foundations of media. It applies conceptual tools drawn from this literature to an analysis of the description of the relationship between the Zimbabwean media landscape and its socio-political context at five moments in history. It is also important to state that the researcher depended on minimal literature and scholarship on the experiences of the radio activists in Zimbabwe and had to depend on the limited available literature.

Section 1 deals with such analysis at a macro-level, where the aim is to broadly examine the media systems that become established in a given environment and how they are shaped by norms and principles. Section 2 focuses on analysis at the medium level, in which the aim is to discuss the traditions of media practice that emerge within these media systems. Section 3 centres on analysis at the micro level, where the aim is to engage with individuals and groups who have participated (and continue to participate) in these media traditions. The chapter thus articulates conceptual terms that can be applied to a discussion of the role that ideals and values of relevance to democracy play at each of these levels within the history of Zimbabwean media. In subsequent chapters, this framework will be applied to an examination of the way in which activist radio formed part of this history.

2.1 Analysis at the macro-level: media systems and the norms that inform them

2.1.1__Theoretical debates: four theories of the press and after

Historians focusing on media studies generally explain that Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm (1956) in their project Four Theories of the Press, were the first scholars to formulate conceptual tools that allow for comprehensive analysis and comparison of the norms that underpin the systemic organisation of different media landscapes. These theorists paid attention to political structures and systems as they exist in different social contexts around the world and considered the media systems that were established in each case. Based on this review, they identified four distinct normative conceptualisations of journalism, each associated with a different social system. They referred to these conceptualisations as 'authoritarian', 'libertarian', 'social responsibility' and 'soviet communist', and described the schema as a whole as the ‘four theories of the press.’ (Siebert et al., 1956:6).

Within this schema, Siebert et al (1956), argue that because each of the four conceptualisations emerged at a different moment in history, they are informed by beliefs about the social purpose of media that were dominant at that time. The authoritarian conceptualisation is thus understood to have come into being in European media systems in the 16th and 17th centuries. In these societies, authorities ruled with an iron fist and used the media to conceal the truth from the public. Information in these jurisdictions was heavily controlled, and censored by the state (Siebert et al., 1956:2).

The libertarian conceptualisation became dominant in the 17th to 19th century, again in the European context, and stood in reaction to the authoritarian approach. It was informed by a broader challenge to authoritarianism which championed the rights of the general public to participate in rational and informed social debate about the way society should be governed, for the purpose of the public good. Within this political world view, the media was understood to play a crucial role in the empowerment of citizens, by informing them and enabling them to participate in public debates. The media thus ceases to be an instrument of state control and becomes instead a vehicle used by citizens to hold authorities accountable. To be empowered to achieve this purpose, media need to achieve freedom from authoritarian control, including that of government (Siebert et al., 1956:44; Kapiri, 2017:26).

The 'social responsibility' conceptualisation of the purpose of media was birthed in the mid-20th century in America as an elaboration of the libertarian version (Peterson, 1956:75). Siebert et al (1956), describe this conceptualisation as a response to an abuse of the right to freedom of the press within this period. It assumes that press freedom is not an absolute right; instead, it is limited by a commitment to the responsibility to the public good (Siebert, 1956:54; Kapiri, 2017:27). In this way, the social responsibility approach attaches a degree of moral duty to freedom of expression (Peterson, 1956:97). For this reason it requires a system of professional self-regulation within the media, so that freedom of the press can be balanced against other rights and responsibilities (Peterson, 1956:74).

Finally, the Soviet communist conceptualisation represented a different version of the authoritarian approach, first articulated in the early 20th century in the Soviet Union. The authors explain that in the mid-twentieth century this conceptualisation informed media systems in Russia and China and formed part of dictatorship that existed in these countries at that time. In each case, the media is seen to promote governance organized around a one-party state and served to maintain the power of the ruling party (Siebert et al., 1956:5).

Siebert et al's schema has for long invited critical discussion within the fields of media studies and journalism studies, with scholars often questioning its generalisabilty and universal applicability. It has been pointed out that the framework was in itself informed by values and beliefs inherent to twentieth century America. It took as point of departure the normative views associated with libertarianism in the mid-twentieth century referred primarily to the media as it exists in Western

industrial societies. Scholars attempted to build on their framework by developing approaches that responded to media as it exists elsewhere in the world (McQuail, 2010:151). Seminal contributions were made, in this context, by Hallin and Mancini, who argued that the theorisation of the normative foundations of any media system needs to be informed by detailed empirical investigation of its context (Kapiri, 2017:27). Such studies should seek to understand variations in the social systems that exist in each case and trace the relationship between these, and the way media operates in that society (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:6). They put this approach into practice by conducting empirical studies in fourteen countries in Western Europe, Northern Europe, Eastern Europe and North America, middle east, Asia (excluding India) Africa (South Africa) and Latin America (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:2). In later studies they also included countries beyond the Western world, with an emphasis on developing environments and transitional democracies. These studies included reference to countries in Africa, the Middle East and again in Latin America (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:2; Kapiri, 2017;27).

In their empirical studies, Hallin and Mancini identify four characteristics of media systems that can be compared to each other across different social contexts. This includes the 'structure of media markets', referring for example to newspaper circulation and the presence of broadcast media. Secondly, there is 'political parallelism', which has to do with the relationship between media systems and the existing political structures. Thirdly, there is journalistic ‘professionalisation’, or the extent to which news industries achieve the ability to self-regulate and commit themselves to public service. Finally, there is the role of the state in controlling media systems both for the purpose of censorship and regulation in the interest of the public good (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:2-4) Based on scrutiny of the presence of these characteristics in media systems, it becomes possible to identify three distinct kinds of media landscapes. Hallin and Mancini developed models that are descriptive of each of these kinds of landscapes and referred to them as, ‘liberal’, ‘polarized pluralist’ and 'democratic corporatist’ (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:13). The liberal model is understood to be descriptive of Britain, Ireland and North America, where market structures dominate the organisation of media. This system places an emphasis on the independence of a commercial and politically 'neutral' press, while public service broadcasting often has a weak presence, with the notable exception of the UK and Ireland (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:75). The democratic corporatist model is seen to be of relevance to Northern Europe, where the state plays a more active role and public broadcasting is well developed and the state operates within reasonable limitations and some private media are encouraged. Journalists claim a professional identity in these spaces and with this the right to freedom of the press and the responsibility for neutrality (McCargo, 2012:207; Albuquerque, 2012:72; Hadland, 2012:105). The polarized pluralist model is observed to describe media landscapes in Southern Europe where the media is controlled by the elite, and primarily government. Commercial media and the independent

press remain weak (Hallin & Mancini, 2012:13-17). Journalists do not tend to claim a professional identity for themselves, and they adopt openly politicised perspectives (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:132).

Hallin and Mancini provide media researchers with a framework for studying the arrangement of media landscapes in different societies at a macro-level, in a way that allows for better understanding of ideas about the social purpose of media that dominate in each case. In the discussion that follows, this framework is applied to an assessment of developments within the Zimbabwean media landscape, as this was described in Chapter 1.

2.1.2 Application to the Zimbabwean social context and media landscape

A review of the discussion in Chapter 1 suggests that, across history, Rhodesia in the colonial era and Zimbabwe after independence has remained descriptive of what Siebert et al (1956). call an authoritarian society. Furthermore, the media systems that form part of this society have continued to embody aspects of authoritarianism. In this sense, then, the example of Zimbabwe is demonstrative of Siebert et al.'s argument that the normative foundations of a given social environment will inform the media systems that become established within it. However, a review of developments within the Zimbabwean media landscape, as described in Chapter 1, suggests a more complex picture in which the normative foundations of the media remain contested.

Chapter 1 describes such contestation from the time that activist radio first emerges in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) in the mid-twentieth century. Since that time, struggles around media ownership in this country have been informed by contrasting understandings regarding the social purpose of the media. This can be observed in each of the five distinct moments in this country's political history, as identified in the previous chapter. Siebert et al.'s normative conceptualisations of media provide useful ways of distinguishing between these contesting understandings. Hallin and Mancini's models are also of use, providing a language in which to describe the actual media systems that became established in Zimbabwe, informed by such conceptualisations.

In the view of this researcher, consideration of each of the five moments suggests that two of Siebert et al.'s conceptualisations have remained of constant relevance to the media landscape throughout the history of this country. Firstly, there is the libertarian conceptualisation, which assumed that media should help to establish an informed and critical citizenry and for this purpose be free from authoritarian control by government. This conceptualisation existed as a term of reference within public debate in Rhodesia and then Zimbabwe throughout the period in history covered in this study. However, rather than existing as a guideline for the development of actual media systems, it operated at a rhetorical level as an ideal to be invoked by government and activists alike. On one hand, the colonial administration paid lip service to libertarian ideals as a form of window dressing, to give legitimacy to the media platforms and publications that they controlled. On the other hand,

activists within the nationalist movement challenged such strategies, arguing that they did not indicate a genuine commitment to the establishment of a media system based on the libertarian model. Secondly, there is the authoritarian conceptualisation, which informs media systems that develop in autocratic societies and which exist primarily for the purpose of political control. This conceptualisation can be seen to dominate the Zimbabwean media landscape as it has existed from the colonial era to post-independence.

This analysis also helps to explain how Hallin and Mancini's models of media systems can be seen to apply to the Zimbabwean context. Because the state's commitment to a libertarian conceptualisation of the media exists primarily at a rhetorical level, the actual media systems that they have established are not descriptive of Hallin and Mancini's 'liberal' model. It is not, in other words, a landscape dominated by commercial media, with an emphasis on the independence of the press and an avoidance of explicit support of political parties. Rather, what we can observe is commitment to Siebert et al's authoritarian conceptualisation of the media, which then becomes embodied in what Hallin and Mancini describe as a polarized pluralist media system. It is, in these terms, a system with a weaker commercial sector and a strong presence of state-owned media, controlled by an elite. There is an emphasis on political parallelism and on openly politicised journalistic commentary with journalists tending to refrain from claiming a professional identity. Nevertheless, over time, it is possible to observe ways in which activist movements win some ground in opening up spaces within the Zimbabwean media landscape that are informed by Siebert et al's principle of libertarianism, and in which aspects of Hallin and Mancini's liberal model are realized in practice.

From the late 1950s to the early 1960s, in the final years of colonial rule, the rhetorical invocation of the libertarian principle by government could be observed in its public presentation of its media platforms and publications. In Chapter 1 we saw this in the attention that government paid to the appointment of black editors whose presence gave credibility to state-controlled newspapers. It could also be observed in the establishment of radio stations under the FBC who were required to produce programming in native languages, suggesting the nurturing of the diversity and plurality required of a public broadcaster. However, newspaper editors were closely monitored by government and FBC remained directly controlled by the federal authorities. This is a system that is clearly informed by Siebert et al's authoritarian conceptualisation of media and is strongly descriptive of Hallin and Mancini's polarised pluralist model.

The discussion in Chapter 1 suggests that these patterns could still be observed in the 1960s and 70s, even as the liberation movement gained strength and moved Rhodesia towards a change in government. The colonial government continued to present state owned media as libertarian in their orientation, while they are actually authoritarian in their intent and pursue the establishment of a

polarised pluralist system. During this period, however, we begin to see internal challenges to the colonial media system as nationalists demand true inclusivity within the public sphere. These tensions were sparked by the colonial powers' intolerance to critique and ideological clashes between them and the nationalists, while activists responded by establishing their own media platforms. They dedicated these platforms to the purposes of the resistance movement so that they acted as spaces in which the veracity of the content of government media was directly challenged. In this way, then, the activists could be seen to prize open spaces that allowed for the emergence of media informed by principles of libertarianism, signaling the possibility of the establishment of a liberal media model. However, the government responded to these challenges through draconian legislation and the intensification of propaganda. By using these measures, they succeeded in keeping at bay the possibility of a media system representative of Hallin and Mancini's liberal media model. At the same time, they ensured that a system descriptive of the polarized pluralist model remained firmly in place. Nevertheless, the activist movement did not retreat, and continued to fight for the continuation of alternative media platforms that could be the foundation of a liberal media system. This status quo continued until at independence in 1980.

In the third period, spanning from 1980 to 1999 and representative of Zimbabwe's first decade of democracy, the authoritarian conceptualisation of media remains firmly dominant. The new government consolidated the polarised pluralist media environment that Zimbabwe inherited from its former colonisers. It could be argued, however, that under Mugabe's leadership there was a shift away from the European conceptualisation of authoritarianism to that of soviet communism. We saw that Siebert et al described the Soviet approach as being closely associated with media systems in Russia and China, so that there is an emphasis within them on maintaining the power of one ruling party and government employed the media to promote a one-party state. At the same time, at least in context of the print sector, Mugabe continued to invoke a libertarian approach to media at a rhetorical level. It was in the name of libertarian values that he allowed for the establishment of a print media sector which featured a small cluster of private newspapers and magazines. In the broadcast sector, however, commitment to authoritarianism and the soviet communist model was more explicit. We saw in Chapter 1 during this time the government openly maintained a tight grip on both radio and television stations and deployed politicians to run them. All broadcast programming on these stations promoted the government's communist-oriented one-party state and nationalist agendas. There was, then, little attempt to obscure the authoritarian nature of the broadcasting system.

At the same time, the government could be said to have made a gesture towards libertarianism by establishing four national radio stations under the ZBC, with the aim of responding to different audience demographics. Within this design there was, again, an emphasis on the inclusion of local languages, suggesting the nurturing of the diversity and plurality required of a public broadcaster.

This may be one reason why activists were slow to criticize the government openly for the authoritarian approach to state media. It is possible that they remained optimistic that the government would fulfil the promises they had made at independence for the establishment of a liberal media system. However, as we will see in the next section, these promises remained unfulfilled.

In the fourth moment, between 1999 and 2010, activists entered into direct confrontation with the new Zimbabwean state. Indeed, this was a moment in which civil society began to flourish and was thus able to openly challenge the soviet conceptualisation of authoritarianism that had dominated Zimbabwean society since independence in 1980. Activists demanded the establishment of a media sector built on an alternative set of values, informed by libertarianism. Indeed, they put in place some of the foundations on which such a media sector could be built, including the establishment of independent radio stations. This direct confrontation pushed Mugabe into overtly responding in defence of authoritarianism and the polarized pluralist media system on which his governance depended. He did so at this time by intensifying the politicisation of state media in both print and broadcast sectors, so that these platforms now explicitly operated as mouthpieces for the ruling ZANU PF party. The public commitment to authoritarianism can also be observed in the open invocation, at this time, of repressive laws that criminalized unsanctioned social gatherings and the operation of private media. This state's violent backlash against activists and private media meant that their vision of liberal media system remained unfulfilled. Nevertheless, this vision lived on as media activists moved into exile, where they continued to sustain media platforms dedicated to pro-democracy programming.

During the fifth and final period, from 2010 to the contemporary moment, it is at last possible to see characteristics emerge within the Zimbabwean landscape that are descriptive of aspects of what Hallin and Mancini might describe as a liberal media environment. A review of Chapter 1 suggests that this became possible partly due to the rise of the digital age as media activists took advantage of the internet to open up spaces for the democratisation of the media. It was, however, not long before the state instituted surveillance on these stations and invested in jamming their digital platforms and interrupting cyberspace. Also, during this period, Mugabe became increasingly adept at repurposing aspects of a so-called liberal media system for the purposes of continued autocratic rule. He publicly endorsed aspects of a liberal media system but at the same time used his executive powers to sustain the polarised pluralist media system. His endorsement of libertarianism can be seen, for example, in his encouragement of the establishment of commercial radio stations. His continued commitment to authoritarian systems of control can, on the other hand, be observed in the fact that he ensured that these stations had close associations with ZANU PF and his continued exclusion of pirate stations and the community radio sector. More recently, in the post-Mugabe administration, we see the state putting into place aspects of a liberal media system by building a community radio sector. On the

other hand, as we have seen, ownership of community radio licences has been carefully controlled so that they have ended up in the hands of stakeholders with an investment in the continuation of the authoritarian state. In this way, the ZANU PF government was extending the polarised pluralist model that had been maintained since independence and before.

Two important insights emerge from this application of theoretical frameworks to the analysis of history of change within the Zimbabwean media landscape. Firstly it would seem that, in the Zimbabwean context, both the Liberal and the Polarised Pluralist models have been at play. Similar patterns have been observed in other environments in Africa, where empirical investigations suggest a combination of traits from different models rather than the existence of only one. In South Africa, for example, the media landscape is thought to represent a mix of all three models (Hadland, 2014:111). However, in the Zimbabwean case, the relationship between these models is not one of convergence, but rather one of contestation.

Secondly, it is striking that within the Zimbabwean context the government can lay claim to stand for libertarian principles and adoption of the liberal model even when the associated normative principles are of little relevance to the actual media systems that they promote. This insight resonates with observations made elsewhere in literature, in which it is noted that models of media systems sometimes operate separately from the socio-historic contexts in which they were originally articulated (Hallin & Mancini, 2004:251). In such contexts, the liberal model is understood to be of increasingly international relevance (Voltmer, 2012:231; Albuquerque, 2012:72; Hallin & Mancini, 2004:294). It may be that it is due to this international status that the Zimbabwean government has consistently invoked the liberal model without committing itself to its implementation.

2.2 Analysis at the medium level: media as normative social practice

2.2.1__The theoretical debates: Christians et al. (2009)

The previous section dealt with the relationship between normative principle and media as this exists at the broad systemic level, in the context of the establishment of media landscapes. This next section focuses on analysis of this relationship at the medium level, as this applies to the traditions of media practice that come into existence within these landscapes. In discussions of such literature, reference is typically made to the work of Clifford G. Christians, Theodore L. Glasser, Denis McQuail, Kaarle Nordenstreng and Robert A. White (2009). Inspired by the New World Information Communication Order (NWICO) debate at the beginning of the 20th century, these scholars have interrogated the broad spectrum of traditions of journalistic practice that have emerged within different social contexts worldwide. In doing so they articulated conceptual tools that assist in investigations of the role of the media in a democratic society and the traditions of journalism that emerge in each context (Christians

et al., 2009:8). They improved on Siebert et al.'s four theories of the press by differentiating the 'ideal' and 'real' roles of journalism. As such, they turned their attention to the investigation of journalism as an empirically existing social practice, informed by normative principle. Through an investigation of such practice, they identified four normative roles that journalism performs in societies and describe them as monitorial, collaborative, facilitative and radical in nature. They point out that the extent to which each of these roles become actualised in practice will depend on the prevailing social and political environment (Christians et al., 2009:121). Indeed, it is possible to identify a correlation between the role that journalism comes to play within a given social context and the extent to which that environment is expressive of one or another of Hallin and Mancini's societal models.

Monitorial journalism is informed by a commitment to the unearthing and sharing of information relevant to the public. This is, then, a conceptualisation of the role of journalism that is informed by Siebert et al's principles of libertarianism and social responsibility, with a commitment to the public good. It is, furthermore, a conceptualisation of journalism most closely associated with media landscapes descriptive of Hallin and Mancini's liberal and democratic corporatist media models. Journalists within this tradition of practice claim the right to scrutinise those in positions of authority such as government departments and private companies in order to hold them accountable to the public (Christians et al., 2009:125).

Collaborative journalism is also understood to operate in service of the public good. However, whereas monitorial journalism defines itself as interrogating government and corporate power, collaborative journalism works in partnership with government. Traditions of journalism that are defined by this commitment to collaboration can typically be observed in newly independent nations with immature democratic institutions where the state strives to achieve economic growth with limited resources. The state in these nations call on the media to contribute towards objectives of nation building and social development, and the media are expected to cover government programmes, policies and agendas without interrogating them. In such environments, collaboration is understood to take place in context of unequal power relationships. It is, in other words, the political elite who determine and define how developmental policies and programmes are covered by the media (Christians et al., 2009:127). As such, collaborative traditions of journalism can be seen to be informed in practice by Siebert et al's principle of authoritarianism rather than of libertarianism. It could, therefore, be argued that collaborative journalism traditions are associated with Hallin and Mancini's polarised pluralist landscapes where the political elites have strong interests in the media and strive to dictate their operations.

Facilitative journalism understands its core purpose as the strengthening of civil society, by involving the public in deliberative processes geared to resolving shared social problems. As such, it is fundamentally defined by libertarianism and social responsibility, rather than authoritarianism.

this tradition, the public become active contributors to the production of social knowledge. This contrasts with monitorial and collaborative traditions of journalism, which tend to locate audiences as passive receivers of information (Christians et al., 2009:126). Such traditions of journalism can be observed across different media landscapes descriptive of the liberal and democratic corporatist model. They are, however, less prevalent within authoritarian societies with polarised pluralist media landscapes, where authorities understand them to be disruptive of established relations of power (Hallin & Mancini, 2012).

Radical journalism can be seen to be informed by an extreme version of the libertarian principle, in which empowerment is not just defined as the disruption of unequal power relations but rather as the fundamental rearrangement of those relations. This type of journalism is therefore inherently revolutionary. Christians et al explain that such journalism traditions often emerge in context of authoritarian regimes. They are put into practice by social activists as a part of their struggle for freedom and empowerment and for the inclusion of voices that have been marginalised within the public sphere. These traditions take root in reaction to the existence of social inequalities and injustices by the state and public office holders. Radical journalism can also be observed in liberal environments, where they are representative of social and political movements informed by minority interests (Christians et al., 2009:126-127). In such contexts, radical journalism is typically located outside the sphere of established, mainstream media and do not as a rule associate themselves with a code of journalistic professionalism.

Through the distinction between these normative approaches to journalism, Christians et al provide media researchers with a conceptual framework for investigating media at the medium level as a normative social practice. In the next section, this framework is applied to an analysis of the traditions of journalistic practice that came to being in the Zimbabwean context, from the mid-twentieth century onward.

2.2.2 Application to Zimbabwean media landscape

The five moments in Zimbabwean media history, as described in Chapter 1, demonstrate clearly that the traditions of journalism that have been dominant from the mid-twentieth century onward have been primarily collaborative in nature. Such journalism can be observed in the context of state-owned newspapers as well as the state broadcaster. At the same time, it is possible to identify periodic interventions from social activists into this media landscape, to allow for the emergence of other practices. These interventions can each be read as evidence of one of the traditions of journalistic practice that Christians et al describe. In some instances, such evidence exists at a purely rhetorical level, in which the principle of an intervention is invoked as window dressing by the state. In other

cases, there is evidence of a true attempt at intervention in which social activists struggle to open up spaces for alternative approaches to journalistic practice.

It is noticeable, furthermore, that each tradition of practice that emerged in the Zimbabwean context became associated with a particular media sector. Collaborative journalism, as already mentioned above, found its power base within state owned media, both in the newspaper and broadcast sector. Monitorial journalism has been closely associated with private media and more particularly independent newspapers. Facilitative journalism, in turn, took root in community-based communication strategies such as pungwes and night vigils. Finally, the radical tradition is evident in those moments in this history when the media had to move outside the established regulatory framework. This can be seen, for example, in the role played by FM stations that left the country in order to stay in touch with their audiences back home, and then later went online to achieve this same purpose.

The fluctuation between an overpowering dominance of authoritarian media and disruption of such dominance by alternative voices found its place in each of the moments described in Chapter 1. In the 1950s to 1960s, the colonial government strived for what Christians et al. might have termed a collaborative media ecosystem. Within this system, journalists were called upon to serve the project of the colonial state. We saw this strategy in the inclusion of black editors in state newspapers, as well as that of African languages in the state broadcaster's programming. In both these instances, traditions of journalistic practice came into being in which indigenous people were expected to participate in order to give legitimacy to the role that these platforms played in reproducing existing relations of power.

From the mid-1960s into the 1970s, in context of the rise of resistance to the colonial state, spaces opened up that enabled the emergence of traditions of media and communication that were both radical and facilitative. They could be observed in context of the grassroots-oriented media strategies cultivated by political activists in context of pungwes and night vigils in rural communities, as well as emergence of underground radio. Both of these traditions of practice were sustained throughout the final years of colonial rule until independence in 1980, existing in opposition to the interests of the state.

In the first decade of independence from 1980 onward, the newly independent government adopted and maintained the collaborative traditions of journalism that had been established by their colonial predecessors. This is evidenced by the deployment of former military veterans in key positions at ZBC and Zimpapers to manage their newsrooms. At the same time, the government did allow for the establishment of what on the face of it appeared to be an independent press, based on a monitorial tradition of journalism. As we have seen, however, the monitorial role of this tradition of journalism remained profoundly restricted by the presence of state security.

In the first decade of the millennium, in context of the rise of progressive challenges to the state, civil society activists began to build traditions of journalism that were monitorial in nature. The launch of independent radio stations played a key role in this intervention. This is also the period in which we see another example of truly facilitative radio, with the birth of the CRIs. However, there was a quick backlash from the state, so that the independent stations were forced violently into exile, while the CRIs suffered silently in the hands of the state. It could be argued that in the wake of such treatment, both of these categories of radio then re-emerged as radical in nature. The collaborative tradition, however, remained dominant within the mainstream Zimbabwean media landscape while alternative models of practice introduced by activists continued to exist on the margins of society.

Most recently, under the final years of Mugabe's rule as well as the era of Tsvangirai, the government has continued to bolster the presence of collaborative media while at the same time allowing for the continued presence of a monitorial tradition, carefully contained. In context of the rise of digital media, activists were able to build online media spaces that were monitorial, facilitative and radical in nature, as a counter strategy to state surveillance of the media. At the time of writing this thesis, the state was extending a collaborative radio sector by creating a seemingly pro-state community radio sector.

There is no doubt, then, that within Rhodesian and then Zimbabwean media history, as described above, a collaborative media consistently dominated the media landscape, operating in service of the maintenance of the status quo. At the same time, it is possible to trace ongoing interventions by social activists that enabled the continued survival of alternative traditions of media practice. These include monitorial media, particularly in the private media sector, and facilitative media in context of community-based activism. Radical media surfaced intermittently particularly in moments of extremity, when media activists were violently forced to the margins of the Zimbabwean public sphere. The government has systematically rejected the legitimacy of alternative media, unless such media became facilitated within the collaborative media system that they controlled.

2.3 Analysis at the micro level: the experience of participants in media traditions

2.3.1 The theoretical debates: Kovach and Rosenstiel

In scholarship dealing with the norms that underpin media practice at the microlevel, Bill Kovach and Tom Rosenstiel (2001)'s contribution at the turn of the millennium in the American context has been of seminal importance. Their work was triggered by a public outcry about the image of journalism in American society at that time and particularly the general perception that the public was losing trust in the integrity of journalism. Kovach and Rosenstiel argued for the importance of empirical research in which journalists themselves could give an account of the norms on which their

practice is based. The aim was to identify the norms on which the best of American journalism was actually based rather than the principles that social commentators assumed they should be based on. Such research, in which journalists are given the opportunity to articulate the actual principles on which their work is based, could then become a resource for the reinvigoration of American journalism. In a demonstration, Kovach and Rosenstiel conducted research with a sample of 300 practicing journalists (Kovach & Rosenstiel 2001:10-12). They asked these media practitioners to reflect on the purpose of journalism and on how this purpose can best be realised in practice, in a way that could bring back public trust. They focused in particular on the desired principles that should underpin journalistic practice. Based on this they distilled nine normative ‘elements’ on which they argued American journalism should be based to save the profession of journalism from ‘disappearing’ (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:12-13; Kapiri, 2017).

In the view of this researcher, it is of relevance to summarise the nine principles here even though they were articulated in the US within communities of journalistic practice far removed from the Zimbabwean context. This is because, despite this difference in context, many of these principles resonate with values and norms that have emerged within Zimbabwean media. It is worth noting that the nine elements were articulated in an environment that is descriptive of Hallin and Mancini’s liberal model and informed by Siebert et al’s libertarian conceptualisation of journalism. As we have seen in the section on media analysis at the macro-level, a libertarian approach to media has circulated internationally, irrespective of the norms that are dominant within specific socio-historic contexts. For this reason, the circulation of ideas in Zimbabwe that are similar to ideas articulated by journalists in America should not come as a surprise.

The first element that Kovach and Rosenstiel identify is that of an 'obligation to the truth', in which journalists assert that getting the facts correct should be their primary mission. Professionalism in news production is achieved through an emphasis on accuracy and fact-checking (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:37). Secondly there is 'loyalty to citizens', described as commitment to serving the public by giving them access to information (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:51-52). Thirdly, there is ‘verification', in which the emphasis on evidence is understood to differentiate journalism from public relations and propaganda (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:71-72). Fourthly, there is 'independence' from news sources, in which attention is drawn to the need for neutrality and impartiality in news coverage (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:97). The fifth element is represented by the 'watchdog' role of journalism, in which people in positions of power, such as public officials, are monitored on behalf of society (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001: 112). The sixth element is that of providing a 'public forum' for discussions on issues concerning citizens by ensuring that certain sections of media platforms are dedicated to uncensored content (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001: 131). The seventh element is that of relevance through the provision of news that is 'interesting’ or ‘meaningful’ to particular audiences

(Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001: 149). The eighth element puts emphasis on producing 'comprehensive and proportional' news, by providing the detail and depth that helps the public to develop informed understanding (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:164-165). The ninth and final element is journalists' responsibility to 'conscience' by not abusing their journalistic privilege, and instead being guided by a personal sense of ethics and responsibility (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:164-165).

It is worth pointing out that American journalism as it exists in practice, does not measure up well, when evaluated against the presence of these nine elements. This is despite the fact that journalism as it exists in the American context is traditionally held as a key example of practice informed by libertarian values and based in a liberal media model. Kovach and Rosenstiel explain that one reason for this is that although individual journalists may hold to the importance of the nine elements of journalism, their systemic context constrains them from doing so. There are, in other words, organisational and institutional factors that affect the way news is produced, despite the values and principles that journalists themselves may hold to. Journalists can of course call editors and owners to account and they can criticize newsroom politics, editorial policies and resource distribution. However, the balance of power that exists within media organisations means that they remain limited in achieving transformation of systemic factors (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2001:164, 181)

2.3.2 Application to Zimbabwean media communities of practice

Kovach and Rosenstiel's discussion of the nine elements of journalism provide a useful framework for looking at the period in the history of the Zimbabwean media discussed in this study at micro-level. It allows the researcher to reflect, in particular, on the values and principles that informed the participation of individual media practitioners in different media traditions. More particularly, it provides a language for engaging with relationship between, on one hand, the ideals that informed their practice and on the other the extent to which they were able to put these ideals into practice. Kovach and Rosenstiel point to the role that systemic context plays in either constraining or enabling the individual practitioner to put into practice the values and principles that inform their beliefs regarding the social purpose of media. It is possible to observe patterns in such constraint and enablement in the Zimbabwean context when one considers the media histories described in Chapter

1. Furthermore, it is possible to observe the presence of values and principles that are very similar to those identified by the journalists that spoke to Kovach and Rosenstiel in the American context.

However, in contrast to the American example, journalists find the space to do so in the context of the media traditions on the margins of society, and not within the mainstream media. Thus it is possible to relate the following five Kovach and Rosenstiel's journalistic elements with the practice in the private media since independence in 1980 to the recent moment: objectivity, fact

checking, impartiality, watch dog role, and ethical journalism. Their other journalism attributes such as commitment to citizenry, providing a public sphere for democratic debates could be visible as the principles guiding journalism practice firstly identified with the nationalist radios in the colonial era, and lately adopted by pirate radios and CRIs sectors at the turn of the millennium, and beyond.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates a continuous tussle at a macro level by activists challenging authorities for a democratic political system that accommodates all voices. This contestation could be traced to pre-colonial times, where at a micro level, nationalists first invoked radical communication networks against the collaborative authoritarian media system. The same history could be seen repeating itself in post-independent Zimbabwe, where at the micro level social activists again resort to alternative media platforms and establish facilitative and radical communication platforms without radio licences. The next chapter examines how these activists set facilitative radio regimes under such extreme environments in Zimbabwe at different historical moments.

CHAPTER 3: THE ZIMBABWEAN HISTORY OF ACTIVIST RADIO

Introduction

Chapter 2 applied theorisations of the normative foundations of media to an assessment of the period of Zimbabwean history that represents the focus of this study. The aim was to gain insight into the norms that motivated social activists during this period in their struggle to ensure the ongoing survival of media dedicated to the empowerment of the Zimbabwean people. The chapter focused on the Zimbabwean media landscape generally, teasing out systemic structures at the macro-level, traditions of practice at the medium-level and individual participation at the micro-level.

In this chapter, the researcher investigates how radio was located within this broader history. The chapter deals with the way in which activist radio was co-opted by different interest groups and used either to maintain relations of authoritarian rule or to challenge them. Within each of the five historical moments described in the previous chapter it is possible to observe different actors participating in the history of such radio, adopting distinct strategies for the purpose of the empowerment of Zimbabwean audiences. The chapter demonstrates how the normative traditions mentioned in Chapter 2 (of collaborative, facilitative, monitorial and radical media production) can be seen to form part of these histories.

The chapter reviews evidence of the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe as captured and presented in the available literature. As such, it provides an overview of how the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe has been documented in academic scholarship. The discussion identifies possible gaps in this documentation and points out the questions left unanswered. In this way, the chapter establishes the foundations for further research that will be conducted as part of the fieldwork for this study.

3.1 The rise of nationalist radio in the time of colonial rule (1950s – early 1960s)

In the final years of colonial rule, the radio landscape in Zimbabwe was defined by relationships of conflict. On one hand, the colonial government used the medium as an apparatus for maintaining political control. To achieve this the state established an authoritarian rule and enacted a cocktail of laws that criminalised freedom of expression and promoted state media monopoly. Such laws included the Broadcasting Act of 1957, which stipulated that broadcasting services could only be operated by the state. The same laws allowed the state to control the state media and they used it to assign the state broadcaster a collaborative role that preserves their colonial agenda (Chiumbu, 2009:7).

On the other hand, from the 1950s onwards, activists within local nationalist movements also began to use a radically facilitative radio as a vehicle of resistance to oppression. This was made possible by the existence of broadcasters based in other African countries that had already gained independence from colonial rule. Available literature makes reference to the role played by such broadcasters in Egypt, Botswana, Tanzania, Ghana, Zambia and Mozambique (Mossia et al., 1994:4
& Lekgoathi et al., 2020:65-136). It is explained that these broadcasters were able to reach audiences across the African continent by means of shortwave radio. They provided space in their programme schedules for content supplied by nationalists in African countries that were still subject to colonial rule. Stations that made use of such opportunities include Radio Freedom from the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and Voice of Namibia from Namibia's South West Africa People's
Organisation (SWAPO). All of these stations had the common purpose of radically opposing colonialism, apartheid and white minority rule in their countries of origin. Zimbabwean activists also responded to these opportunities in order to establish their own stations. The literature notes that, as early as 1958, the Nasser government of Egypt provided frequency space for NDP later to be called ZAPU's Voice of Revolution (VoR) Southern (Mossia et al, 1994:11 & Lekgoathi et al, 2020:115-116).

This description of nationalist radio as it existed in the mid-twentieth century in Southern Rhodesia demonstrates that the birth of activist radio in Zimbabwe was nurtured by contrasting normative interests and principles. On one hand, the emergence of such radio depended on a Pan-African movement in which countries who had gained independence assisted their neighbours in the achievement of freedom from colonial oppression and white rule. We see, in this, a correlation between the evolution of a tradition of radio that was both radical and facilitative, and a political identity that cuts across state boundaries and that is expressive of a shared commitment to liberation. On the other hand, nationalist radio was also profoundly informed by internal difference defined along ethnic lines. These tensions undermined the role that activist radio, and in this case nationalist radio, could play in the nurturing of solidarity. One factor that made this possible was that these groups received support from other African states who had already gained independence and who stood in solidarity with the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe.

3.2 Nationalist radio and the disruption of colonial hegemony (mid-1960s to 1980)

The intensification of political contest between the colonial regime and nationalists demanding for majority rule shaped the history of radio as this evolved in Rhodesia during the years of the liberation war. This can be observed, firstly, in the way that state-owned radio was collaboratively used by the colonial administration to repress the activities of the liberation movement. The restrictive laws that were put in place by the government for this purpose extended to the regulation of broadcasting. 47

Smith had inherited the Broadcasting Act of 1957 from the previous regime, and was therefore able to sustain state control of both radio and TV services. By 1960, the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) was empowered by this law to be the sole institution with broadcasting rights. The authorities collaboratively used it for the purpose of propaganda, amplifying their own voices and ignoring those of their subjects. Both the print media and RBC published and broadcast content that delegitimised the two main nationalist organisations, calling them “terrorist groups” (Frederiski, 1983:193).

Nevertheless, despite these restrictions, the presence of an activist radio continued to grow. At its formation in August 1963, ZANU established its own radio station, the Voice of Zimbabwe (VoZ). This station complimented ZAPU’s VoR in offering alternatives to the propaganda circulated by the state broadcaster. ZAPU and ZANU operated these stations from outside the borders of Rhodesia, using them to disrupt the authority of the state (Mosia et al., 1994). From 1963 onward, Radio Tanzania accommodated VoR and VoZ by providing them with broadcast slots. Botswana, through Radio Francistown, was also aiding VoR by hosting and giving airtime to the station's broadcasts. Botswana extended this generosity to VoR following Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Zimbabwe (Lekgoathi et al., 2020:115). VoZ, at the same time, was also broadcasting on Ghana’s state broadcaster and continued to do so until the fall of Kwame Nkrumah in 1966. By 1967 VoR and VoZ were also beaming from Zambia. However, in 1975, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda halted both ZANU and ZAPU broadcasts. He was concerned about the extent to which the two stations defined themselves in opposition to each other and invoked differences in ethnic identity as part of this opposition. Kaunda wanted VoR and VoZ to broadcast jointly, adopting a common identity, but ZANU and ZAPU disagreed on this distinction and would not drop party slogans from their broadcasts (Mossia et al., 1994). In 1975 VoZ relocated to Mozambique where they received assistance from the newly established Frelimo government. VoZ broadcast from Maputo into the Rhodesian airspace using short- and medium wave frequencies made available by Radio Mozambique (Mosia et al., 1994). In the same year, available literature shows that VoR re-established a relationship with Egypt where it was hosted by Radio Cairo. VoR also received support from Radio Moscow in Russia, where they secured some broadcast slots. VoR continued its broadcasts in Ndebele through Radio Moscow until the early days of independence in 1980 (Frederikse, 1983:102).

Scholarship describing these stations provides some glimpses into their operation and the kind of content that they carried. It is noted for example that VoZ was allocated daily 30-minute broadcasts on Mozambican radio between 8.00pm and 8.30pm on six short-wave bands and on medium-wave. The time was later extended to one hour as the struggle for independence in Rhodesia intensified. One of VoZ’s directors, Grey Tichatonga, explains that ZANU was using its broadcasts to counter

state propaganda and to locate the struggle for liberation in Rhodesia within an international liberation movement (Mosia, et al., 1994:12):

> We aired mostly news related to the struggle for independence and we tried to add stories of the worldwide struggle for independence and social justice ...We wanted to show our people that the struggle was wider than just Zimbabwe (Mosia et al., 1994:12).

This emphasis on the international perspective was achieved by focusing not only on the plight of people in Rhodesia, but also the struggles for independence as this took place in other countries. Such content was relayed by means of news bulletins, speeches by nationalist leaders and revolutionary songs to "…mobilise people of Zimbabwe to join hands with the ZANU in order to defeat the colonial regime and its state apparatus" (Mosia et al., 1994:13).

In response to the impact exerted by these radio stations, historical documentation indicates that in 1966, a highly powered delegation comprising the RBC and Rhodesia Television, endeavoured to visit Radio Francistown, the host of VoR, in an attempt to disrupt ZAPU's radio activities in Francis Town, Botswana. Despite concerted efforts, these endeavours faced hindrances as the Botswana authorities impeded the British team's access to the studios (Lekgoathi et al., 2020:115). Subsequently, the colonial regime adopted various strategies to undermine the nationalist broadcasts. One approach involved lobbying the British government to discontinue funding Zambia, the host of VoR and Voz. Furthermore, investments were directed towards jamming technology. A prominent revolutionary musician, Thomas Mapfumo, describes the impact of these strategies on his experience of listening from inside Rhodesia to VoZ during the era in 1978:

> I had my own radio, but it could not just catch Mozambique; it was disturbed by those funny sounds. I am sure they tried to make our radios so they could not just catch Mozambique. But if you were lucky and you had a radio that was not affected, then you could listen to Mozambique. You would do it very carefully, otherwise if they catch you doing that, they could put you behind bars for opening Radio Mozambique (cited in Frederikse, 1983:103).

As a third measure, there was an escalation of propaganda and counter-propaganda initiatives through the RBC. The fourth tactic encompassed the confiscation and prohibition of radio receivers in rural areas, the regulation of battery sales, and the restriction on listening to any radio station other than RBC in concentration camps referred to as "keeps," where an estimated 750,000 Africans had been relocated (Lekgoathi et al., 2020:114-115). In addition, the colonial authorities also applied the Broadcasting Act law that enabled them to arrest anyone found listening to their broadcasts to intimidate those sympathizing with the liberation struggle (Frederikse, 1983:102; Chiumbu, 2009).

According to the existing scholarly literature, after unsuccessful physical endeavours to disrupt VoR broadcasts from Botswana in 1966, the British authorities 1975 established a pseudo-independent radio initiative named Radio Mthwakazi. This initiative was placed under the umbrella of the RBC and was conceived with the explicit purpose of diminishing and countering the influence of VoR. The colonial administration strategically staffed Radio Mthwakazi with Ndebele-speaking Africans and curated programs to undermine VoR broadcasts' credibility. These programs were developed in the Ndebele language and transmitted through an FM transmitter located at the border between Zimbabwe and Botswana. Additionally, the British leveraged this transmission tower to jam VoR broadcasts emanating from Radio Francistown into Zimbabwe. It is further posited that the station propagated tribalism by disseminating messages that depicted significant ethnic divisions within the structures of the Zanu and Zapu parties and their respective military wings, Zanla and Zipra. These actions were orchestrated to divert public attention and dissuade any affiliations with these revolutionary groups (Lekgoathi et al., 2020:115-116).

However, it is crucial to emphasise that despite the presence of ethnic divisions within these two nationalist parties, it would be inaccurate to assert that Zanu exclusively comprised Shona individuals and Zapu solely consisted of Ndebeles. Both parties exhibited a blend of these ethnic groups within their upper echelons of leadership structures.

The depiction of activist radio in the mid-60s to 1980, as presented in this section, suggests that it bore some similarity to such radio as it existed at the end of the colonial era. The radical stations still survived largely due to being given access to shortwave frequencies by countries that stood in solidarity with ZANU and ZAPU in their struggle for liberation. Broadcast content continued to be informed by a pan-African commitment to freedom from colonial rule. Indeed, the account of VoZ broadcasting on Mozambican radio in the late 1970s suggests that expression of solidarity with this pan-African mission had become integral to the station’s editorial vision. However, the description of Kaunda’s intervention in both stations’ presence on Zambian radio suggests that ethnic conflict remained a point of concern. Nevertheless, the resulting content was clearly of value to its target audience, as is evident from Mapfumo’s description of listening to VoZ. Programming was designed to encourage support for the liberation struggle and participants in the struggle were prepared to tune in and listen despite the threat that this might pose to their own safety.

3.3 Nationalist radio and the one-party state (1980 – 1999)

The power struggles that formed part of the era of Gukuharundi can again be seen to have shaped the Zimbabwean radio landscape of this time. Mugabe’s government inherited the infrastructure of the collaborative and authoritarian Rhodesian state broadcaster and repurposed this for the establishment of the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). The government had promised, when they 50

came into power, to liberalise and reorganise the broadcaster so that it would represent the interests of the once marginalised Zimbabweans. The first Information minister, Nathan Shamuyarira, noted that his own experience of suppression in colonial times fundamentally informed his vision for a free media in Zimbabwe. He pledged to decolonise the media so that they would no longer operate to marginalise Africans (Shamuyarira cited in Dombo, 2018:123). But instead, the ZBC operated in a similar way as its predecessor, locating itself in the Information Ministry and serving as the official voice of government and the ruling party. As such, it became a vehicle for government propaganda (Melber, 2004). During the period of the Gukurahundi massacre ZBC referred to Nkomo's supporters as "dissidents" and described the massacre as the "hunting down of the dissidents" (Mpofu, 2016:7). Once the unity government became established in the late 1980s, Mugabe assigned ZBC a collaborative role and used the broadcasting system to suppress voices of opposition. Content that profiled ZANU liberation war veterans and their success stories were prioritized and the news agenda was set by Mugabe and his cabinet ministers.

This discussion highlights that throughout this decade the radio sector was dominated by what Siebert et al. could view as authoritarian media with Christians et al.'s collaborative attributes. The evidence of this could be seen in the absence of a private radio sector and no attempt of establishing such, as well as a deliberate avoidance of putting that agenda in the political discourses.

In the available literature there is no commentary on the role that activist radio played during this period. Based on the account that emerges from this literature it is indeed possible to conclude that the state had crushed any radio that radically challenged the status quo and that monitored the government to account for its involvement in a history of atrocity. However, it is possible that such radio did continue to exist, even during this period of extreme oppression. One aim of the empirical component of this research project, as captured later in this thesis, is to explore this possibility.

3.4 Activist radio in the era of resistance to the one-party state (1999 – 2010)

During this period, the Zimbabwean radio landscape becomes more diverse so that it included legally sanctioned alternatives to the state broadcaster. This became possible because civil society organisations found lawful mechanisms for establishing broadcast operations that could offer alternatives to the ZBC. The discussion, below, deals with two categories of radio that emerged as a result of these strategies. The first is represented by stations that claimed that they had the legal right to broadcast, based on loopholes that media activists and their civil society allies identified within the Zimbabwean legislative system. Despite this claim, they were referred to by the government as "pirate" or "underground" stations and were treated as if they had no legitimacy (Masuku, 2006; Moyo, 2010). The second category is represented by projects that were set up by media activists in

the hope that they would, in time, be invited by the state to apply for community radio licenses. As

such, they came to be known as Community Radio Initiatives (CRIs). Media activists established these projects on the assumption that the government would act in good faith with regards to communities' rights to own and control the Zimbabwean airwaves. However, as we will see in the discussion below, these projects have until very recently received no support from government.

i) The pirate radio stations

Literature dealing with the so-called pirate stations in Zimbabwe refers to three such initiatives that became established in the first few years of the new millennium: Voice Of the People (VOP), Capital Radio and Studio 7. All three stations saw their purpose as facilitatory and providing a public platform for the voices of the Zimbabwean people because they had been marginalised by the state broadcaster (Masuku, 2006).

In June 2000, VOP became the first station to take on this challenge by setting up its offices in Harare and registering itself with the High Court Deeds Office as a 'communications trust'. Such registration was provided for within Zimbabwean legislation, applicable to individuals wishing to establish independent media production houses. At VOP's helm were broadcasters who had worked for both the colonial RBC and the post-independence ZBC. They had been dismissed from the state broadcaster by Johnathan Moyo after his appointment as Minister of Information in 2000. As soon as he took office, Moyo replaced veteran broadcasters with younger journalists, possibly on the assumption that the Information Ministry would be better able in manipulating them. From its Harare offices, VOP began to produce recorded content in Shona, Ndebele and English. They alternatively sent this material to a Madagascar-based relay station belonging to Radio Netherlands, the Dutch public broadcaster that produces programmes for international audiences. Radio Netherlands then broadcast this content to Zimbabwean audiences on shortwave (Masuku, 2006:68).

On the 28th of September in that same year, Capital Radio commenced broadcasting, six days after a successful Supreme Court challenge against the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's (ZBC) monopoly in the radio sector. Guided by a consortium of human rights lawyers and activists, the station established its offices at the Monomotapa Hotel in the central area of Harare. In contrast to VOP, however, they opted to refrain from employing the precaution of relaying their content through an external broadcaster on shortwave. Instead, they transmitted to a nationwide audience on FM from their studios in Harare (Chiumbu, 2009; Moyo, 2010:25).

Swiftly responding to this move, the authoritarian Zimbabwean government invoked state presidential powers to declare Capital Radio illegal. On the 4th of October 2000, state security forces raided the station's studios and confiscated their broadcast equipment (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2007:2; Moyo, 2010:25). Subsequently, the station relocated to the United Kingdom in

2001, establishing its studios in London and re-emerging from exile to broadcast into Zimbabwe as Shortwave Radio Africa. The British government financially supported its operations in the UK as part of the UK's aid to NGOs in Zimbabwe. Ultimately, the station ceased operations on the 10th of August 2014, primarily due to financial distress (MISA, 2014). In contrast, VOP was able to stay on air for two more years. Nevertheless, in August 2002 they became the second target of violence when their studios were bombed and destroyed by suspected state security agents (Masuku, 2006:67). Undocumented information indicates that VOP halted its operations in January 2017, citing financial difficulties as the primary cause.

Studio 7 was launched in 2003, slightly later than the first two stations, by a team of exiled Zimbabwean journalists. Unlike VOP and Capital Radio, they did not set up offices in Harare. Instead, they located themselves in Washington DC as part of an initiative of the state-owned US international broadcaster, Voice of America (VOA). From this vantage point, they reached audiences in Zimbabwe via a repeater station in Botswana, broadcasting for two hours every evening (MISA, 2006). In this way the station was more distant than VOP and Capital Radio had been from Zimbabwe as a geographical space. However, they did establish listener clubs across the country, particularly in rural areas. They were thus able to ensure that local communities could alternatively access the station's programming (Dombo, 2017:239-240).

Still hosted by VOA and under the US government funding, Studio 7 persisted in broadcasting without disruption for a longer duration than the initial two stations. As of the composition of this thesis, it continues to transmit into Zimbabwe through shortwave frequencies. Additionally, Studio 7 packages its 30-minute bulletins in Shona and Ndebele, producing them twice daily and disseminating them to their listeners groups via WhatsApp. This may have been because they were not broadcasting from inside the country and were therefore less vulnerable to intimidation. Initially, their listener clubs did not attract attention from the state. But in 2006 this changed, when the station partnered with the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe to distribute wind-up and solar-powered radios sets to their listener clubs. The state launched a hunt for these radio sets, raiding villages to confiscate them. It is noted in the literature that, during the searches, state security agents arrested and tortured those found in possession of the receivers (MISA and IFEX, 2006).

However, despite the Zimbabwean government's treatment of these stations, they did not stop broadcasting, but they established alternative ways of broadcasting. By 2001, Capital Radio had relocated to London and, under the new name of Short Wave Radio Africa (SWRA), began broadcasting to Zimbabwe on shortwave frequencies (Chiumbu, 2009:43; Moyo, 2010:32).VOP went into exile in South Africa where it continued beaming into Zimbabwe, also by means of shortwave frequencies. Its Zimbabwe-based correspondents sent news reports to the station's Johannesburg studios via emails and couriers (Mare, 2013). Studio 7 also kept on broadcasting, despite the

government's violent treatment of its stringers, listener club members and the violent confiscation of their wind-up radio sets. Furthermore, the station's Zimbabwe correspondents continued to file stories to their station in Washington, taking care to hide their identities (MISA and IFEX, 2006).

It would seem that at this point in the history of Zimbabwe, the government would not tolerate any attempt on the part of radio activists to open up a space within the country's airwaves for alternatives to the ZBC. More than this, they quelled such attempts with violence, particularly in those instances where radio activists based their activities inside the borders of the country. The response to Capital Radio, who broadcast directly from inside the capital city, was particularly swift but VOP soon received even more violent treatment, despite the fact that they were sharing their content on another broadcaster from outside the country. Studio 7, who did not even have a base inside Zimbabwe, also became the target of a violent backlash as soon as their listener club-based activities became too noticeable.

These developments despite, radio activists continued to find alternative routes that enabled them to continue reaching their audiences. One such strategy was to locate themselves outside Zimbabwe and broadcasting to local audiences on shortwave radio. At the same time, within the local environment, listeners and content contributors went into hiding, using pseudonyms to avoid persecution and direct confrontation with the authorities. It is evident that despite persecution by the state, participants in activist radio remained deeply committed to the project of creating alternatives to state-owned radio for the people of Zimbabwe.

ii) The Community Radio Initiatives (CRIs)

The Community Radio movement emerged in parallel to the so-called pirate stations at the start of the new millennium and the histories of these two kinds of stations are interwoven. The emergence of this sector can be traced back to the efforts of community-based organizations, notably pioneers such as Radio Dialogue and the Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter. These organizations played varying roles in forming the national body, the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS), established in 2003 (Zacras, 2014). Like the pirate radio sector, the community radio movement also wanted to facilitate democracy by accommodating civil society and ordinary people's voices in their programming. Indeed, the opportunities that opened up for the establishment of the CRIs can be traced back to Capital Radio's successful challenge, in September 2000, of the ZBC's broadcasting monopoly. To cover the legal vacuum created by the Capital Radio court case in April 2001, the authoritarian state enacted the Broadcasting Services Act, BSA (2001). This bill prescribes a three-tier broadcast sector consisting of public, commercial and community stations. In line with these requirements, the government set up a regulatory body entitled

the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) mandated to grant licences to broadcasters and to oversee their operation within the broadcasting sector. As part of this role, the BAZ was tasked with inviting applications from aspiring broadcasters (Chiumbu, 2009).

In the wake of these regulatory pronouncements, media activists established a number of CRIs on the assumption that they would soon be able to apply for licenses. The Zimbabwean branch of the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) facilitated the establishment of these initiatives and attempted to create an enabling environment for them. They sought to achieve this goal by putting pressure on the government to make community radio licences available (Moyo, 2010). They were also central to the establishment of the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) tasked with capacitating the CRIs. ZACRAS worked with local communities to establish more CRIs and registered them with the High Court Deeds office as Trusts to avoid legal clashes with the authorities. They trained members of these initiatives so that they could operate as 'citizen journalists' equipped with the knowledge to run the CRIs as independent content production houses (Amnesty International, 2015).

By 2011 there were 28 CRIs of this kind in all ten provinces of the country, producing programmes on human rights and service delivery issues. They used alternative media and distributed this content on cassettes and CDs to community groups in their geographical areas. They also regularly convened community-based field broadcasts, making use of loudspeakers and used these events to facilitate discussions on matters that affected the quality of life of residents. They recorded conversations at these meetings and then packaged them for distribution. Particular mention is made in the literature to Radio Dialogue and Community Radio Harare (CORAH), who shared such content with local taxi drivers who could play them on their runs. In this way, the CRIs were able to build a foundation for community radio by demonstrating its benefits, both to the Zimbabwean government and to communities themselves (Mhiripiri, 2011; Moyo, 2012).

The government showed little interest in Community Radio Initiatives (CRIs) efforts and groups pushing for community radio licenses. According to George Charamba, the Ministry of Media, Information, and Broadcasting Services at the time, the government seemed more interested in radios that focused on agriculture and weather or had specific themes. Additionally, the government consistently said that the rules and processes for community radio should be handled by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe, moving away from the involvement of civil society groups (ZACRAS, 2014). This showed that the government preferred a centralised approach in managing community radio, especially leaning towards some subject regions they deem important.

This did not stop several of the CRIs from approaching BAZ and submitting unsolicited applications. However, none of these applications were granted (Chiumbu, 2009:43). Community Radio Harare (CORAH) filed a High court challenge that directed the BAZ to invite radio licence

applications, but the regulator ignored this challenge (Kwaramba, 2013). The state, instead, maintained strict surveillance of CRIs, disrupting their activities and raiding their studios (MISA, 2000; Mhlanga, 2014; Amnesty International, 2015).

It should be clear that in lobbying for their own legitimacy as broadcasters the CRIs chose a far more diplomatic route to that of the so-called pirate stations. Whereas those stations challenged Mugabe's government directly by claiming a space for themselves within the Zimbabwean broadcast sphere, the CRIs continued to signal their support for the state's regulation of licensing processes. However, despite this difference, the authorities treated them in the same way as the pirate stations, subjecting them to violence and intimidation. In the first ten years of the new millennium, then, radio remained firmly under the control of the state. This was regardless of the existence of laws that should, in principle, have enabled the emergence of a diversity of voices within the Zimbabwean broadcast landscape. Nevertheless, through the use of field broadcasts and the circulation of recorded content, media activists were able to provide local communities with first-hand experience of the role that audio as a medium could play to empower them. In this way, they cultivated an environment that offered fertile ground for the establishment of community radio.

3.5 Activist radio during and after the Government of National Unity

A requirement of the GPA was that the GNU should introduce democratic reforms within the Zimbabwean media landscape. This included a call for the transformation of radio by introducing a three-tiered broadcast sector, which made space not only for a public broadcaster but also commercial and community stations. As part of this arrangement, the government should allow exiled radio stations to return home (GPA, 2008:12). These requirements for reform empowered CRIs to put pressure on the government to provide them with the chance to apply for licenses (MAZ, 2008:1-2).

In November 2011, in a gesture towards such reform, Mugabe licenced two commercial stations, Star FM and ZiFM Stereo. However, both had links to the ZANU PF and thus did not operate in independence from government. Star FM was owned by the Zimbabwe Newspaper Group (Zimpapers), which had a 51% majority shareholding by government (Chiumbu, 2009). ZiFM Stereo was owned by a company entitled AB Communications, under the leadership of a ruling ZANU PF parliamentarian, Supa Mandiwanzira. In 2014 a government-led Information Media Panel of Inquiry Report, IMPI (2014) pointed out that these relations of ownership put into question the legitimacy of Mugabe's gesture towards reform:

> The licencing of new radio stations by the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) has been perceived as unfair as the shareholders of the organisations that were awarded were viewed as sympathetic to the ruling party (IMPI, 2014:54).

During the same year, the community radio movement observed the governmental approach as being oriented towards prioritising quantity over quality. The sector said the evidence was in the expansion of media players without concurrently implementing a comprehensive democratisation process within the media environment (Zacras, 2014). ZANU PF used these stations to amplify its voice throughout the tenure of the fragile power sharing government that ended on 31 July 2013. By March 2015, the government had also licenced eight local commercial radio stations in selected urban centres. These stations belonged, respectively, to Zimpapers and AB Communications (Amnesty International 2015:14). However, the government did not provide CRIs with an opportunity to apply for broadcast licences, and neither did they invite the so-called pirate radio stations to come back home (Alfandika and Muchetwa, 2019). Despite a pretence towards the diversification of the broadcast landscape, then, the state's control over radio was still firmly in place.

The era of the GNU also saw to the rise of digital media in Zimbabwe, made possible by the economic stability that characterised this period. One reason for this was that the government had made progress in the electrification of rural areas, which led to a sharp increase in the availability of mobile networks and internet service providers. Smartphones and computers became more readily available, and the cost of mobile SIM cards decreased dramatically. These factors made the internet accessible and affordable for the previously marginalised. Many Zimbabweans for the first time began to experience what it means to be part of a digital world (Chenzi & Hove, 2020:6). The radical social movements that emerged in the post GNU era made their presence strongly felt in this new online environment. Examples of the campaigns that they facilitated on social media include #Tajamuka, #ThisFlag, #OccupyAfricaUnitySquare, #ThisBachi. In 2016 alone and using social media platforms, radical groupings combined, mobilised and staged 40 national demonstrations nationwide (Chenzi & Hove, 2020:3-5).

This increase in access within Zimbabwe to the digital realm also provided new opportunities for radio activists. At this time, the CRIs were still lobbying for legal status. However, both the CRIs and pirate stations could now easily circumvent legal constraints by posting and streaming their content on Facebook, Twitter, Skype, YouTube, WhatsApp and Short Message Services (SMS) (Chenzi & Hove, 2020:5). In 2012, many of these stations migrated to satellite broadcasting and established an online radio platform they named Channelzim. They were able to achieve this through technical support from the International Media Support (IMS) and other like-minded donors who stood in solidarity with their struggle for public access. They established digital hubs in South Africa

and the UK where the infrastructure remained safe from state raids. On this platform radio activists could interchangeably stream their content reaching their audiences through Free-To-Air decoders (FTA) (Ndawana, 2015; Mangwiro, 2018).

In 2016, the state introduced the Computer Crimes and Cybercrimes Bill in order to tame the proliferation of social media platforms that were hosting these social movements. The bill empowered the authorities to regulate online content in the name of protecting the public against cyber criminals (Mandiwanzira, 2016). The authorities also assigned gatekeepers to monitor online platforms and empowered them to retrieve content deemed critical of the state and used it as evidence to prosecute activists. Under the new law, the state could also verbally intimidate activists, warning them that it was spying on their activities. These strategies were also applied to radio activists who had found spaces online such as Channelzim, in an attempt to constrain them from using the digital space to speak truth to power.

The government justified its treatment of the CRIs and pirate stations because they existed outside the space that the state now claimed to have created within the Zimbabwean broadcast sector for legally licensed radio stations. The state's commitment to media diversity could be demonstrated by the presence of the commercial radio stations licenced in 2011 and 2015 respectively. Indeed, the international donor community largely accepted the existence of these stations as evidence of significant progress towards the democratisation of the Zimbabwean media landscape. As a result, they scaled down funding that had previously sustained the CRIs. By the end of the Mugabe era, activist radio in Zimbabwe existed in a state of beleaguerment, despite the leverage that it had found within the digital environment to reach its audiences.

3.6 Activist radio in the post-Mugabe years (2017 – 2022)

Mnangagwa's maintenance of a veneer of democratic reform extended to the media where he supported the enactment of existing broadcast regulations in order to establish a community radio sector. In 2021, for the first time in the country's history, the state licenced 14 Community radio stations (Mahlanhla, 2021). However, only five of these licenses were awarded to applicants who could lay claim to a background in radio activism. This was confirmed in an announcement in the state-controlled daily soon after the granting of these licences to 14 community radio stations by the BAZ:

> Zacras members who include Twasumpuka Community Radio Trust, Radio Bukalanga (Pvt) Ltd, Vemuganga Community Radio Trust, Madziwa Community Radio Trust and Patsaka Nyaminyami Community Radio Trust trading as

> Kasambabezi FM were also awarded broadcasting licenses. The latest development brings the total number of licensed community radio stations to 14 (Zhakata, 2021).

The ownership and origins of the other nine applicants were linked to the state through quasi-government institutions, strongly suggesting that these stations were initiatives of the Zimbabwean government. CRIs with a known legacy of involvement in the radio activism movement, such as Radio Dialogue, CORAH, Patsaka, Kumakomoyo, and Nkabazwe, remain unlicensed (Mukundu, 2022).

It can be argued that community radio has come into being in Zimbabwe at a point when the activists who campaigned for the establishment of such a sector have been successfully marginalised. By 2021, VOP, SWRA and Channelzim were no longer active, largely because international funding has been redirected to the rhetorically facilitative commercial stations set up by the state. CRIs have returned to individual fundraising efforts and continued using social media platforms, but their impact remains minimal. One exception is Studio 7, which survives and is still broadcasting on shortwave and social media platforms today because its funding comes directly from the US government. Studio 7 strives to expand its presence in the Zimbabwean media space by packaging daily 30-minutes broadcasts and sharing them on WhatsApp groups.

In this most recent moment in the history of Zimbabwe, then, we see that the government has been largely successful in disrupting activist radio. It has been able to achieve this goal by claiming to facilitate broadcast reform and convincing international donors to redirect their support away from activist radio and instead to endorse stations licensed by the state.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed available literature dealing with the long history of the struggle for activist radio in Zimbabwe, since its first emergence in the mid-twentieth century. The literature reveals that participants in that period were subjected to severe suppression, sponsored by state authorities. We learn from accounts by commentators that, in the most severe instances, their studios have been raided and bombed and their broadcasting equipment confiscated. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, these radio activists have persisted, always finding new ways to sustain programming and reach their audiences. They did so by drawing on the affordances of media technologies that the authorities could not control, firstly through short wave radio; then by making use of CDs and cassettes and later through social media and digital platforms. They also benefitted from support from groups and organisations who stood in solidarity with their cause, both regionally and internationally. In addition, they received ongoing support from their audiences, who risked their lives by clandestinely listening to content produced by these activists. As a result, they have now been able to sustain a continuous

history of activist radio for more than seventy years, opening up alternatives to the radio offered to Zimbabwean audiences by an authoritarian state.

We also gather from this chapter that throughout this history the state repeatedly instituted radio reforms that had the appearance of being informed by a commitment to democratic inform. However, the purpose was primarily to appease the outside world. In reality, the state was perpetuating existing undemocratic laws under new titles, and issuing radio licences to its close associates at the expense of activist radio projects.

The literature reveals a struggle by activists to establish systems that would enable the growth of a facilitative tradition of radio that can contribute to democratization and the achievement of social justice. The authorities responded, instead, by supporting a model of state-owned radio that could be said, at best, to be collaborative in nature and at worst purely authoritarian. As we have seen, they were prepared to defend this model, and the repression of facilitative radio, through outright violence. This has meant that activist radio has mostly continued to exist only at the margins of society, as a radical media tradition. The recent licensing of community radio may seem to suggest that there is now potential within the mainstream of media for a facilitative tradition of radio. However, given the tight control that the government has maintained over the allocation of such licenses, it is highly unlikely that this potential will be fulfilled.

There are many questions that remain unanswered about this history, especially at the micro level, when one considers the way individual activists experienced the struggle to maintain alternatives to state-owned radio. In the empirical component of this dissertation as set out in subsequent chapters, the research provides a comprehensive account of this story of endurance, told from the perspective of the people who took part in this struggle.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH PLAN FOR THE EMPIRICAL STUDY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

The first three chapters of this dissertation provided a discussion of the normative foundations of the activist tradition of radio in Zimbabwe since its emergence in the middle of the twentieth century. Chapter 1 mapped the context for this history at macro-level by exploring the relationship between socio-political events and developments within the Zimbabwean media landscape from the 1950s onward.

Chapter 2 provided a conceptual language for making sense of how norms and values informed how this media landscape changed over time. This language was applied at macro-level to understand the systems around which media became organised, and at the medium level to the traditions of media that materialised within these systems. Finally, it dealt with such analysis at the micro-level, focusing on the norms that informed the actions of individual participants in these traditions of practice.

Chapter 3 reviewed available literature on activist radio in the Zimbabwean context. It focused on the role that activists have played in sustaining radio, despite ongoing resistance and even direct persecution from the state. The researcher was able to provide such an account as it can be observed at the medium level, in terms of the description of traditions of practice. However, as noted at the end of Chapter 3, the available literature does not engage with this history at micro-level, told from the perspective of the individuals who participated in it. The empirical component of this study, as presented in the remainder of this dissertation, serves as an attempt to engage with the history of Zimbabwean activist radio at the micro-level.

This chapter outlines the empirical research plan and comments on its implementation. Throughout this chapter and in the findings, I use the first person to claim ownership of and responsibility for my own conceptualisation and implementation of the research process.

4.1 The research plan

The discussion of my research plan is organised around the main design decisions that I made in order to ensure the overall reliability and validity of the research process. To provide context, the section begins with a brief review of the overall goals of the empirical study. Against this backdrop the choices I made with regards to the methodological framing of the study is explained; the choice of method; the design of research instruments; guidelines for conducting fieldwork and for the analysis and presentations of research findings.

4.1.1 The research aims and objectives

The aim of the empirical component of this dissertation was to gain insight into the way in which individuals who participated in the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe made sense of their experience. The literature reviewed in Chapter 3 suggests that they became involved because of their commitment to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, but I wanted to explore their motivations in detail. I was curious to learn about their understanding of the social purpose of such radio; to hear more about the principles and values that informed their participation and about their experience of putting these principles into practice. From the reviewed literature it is evident these activists were resilient; defied authoritarianism and remained steadfast despite backlash from the authorities. I wanted to find out why they remained committed and ensuring the survival of activist radio, despite the harsh treatment from the Zimbabwean authorities. I also wanted to know how they were able to do so given the intensity of state-sponsored violence associated with the repression of the resistance movement. A theme to pursue was the role played by a sense of solidarity in sustaining their participation in the struggle for alternative approaches to radio in Zimbabwe. Available literature suggests that such solidarity was crucial to the survival of activist radio, especially in context of support provided by individuals and organisations based outside the borders of the country. I planned to explore these themes by engaging directly with activists who had participated in this history of struggle and who could talk from personal experience. I hoped that the stories and perspectives that they could share with me would provide a deeper understanding of their motivations.

4.1.2 Methodology: a qualitative framework of study

I located this study within a critical qualitative paradigm. This framing is appropriate for a research process that seeks to contribute to the achievement of the goal of emancipation (McCabe & Holmes, 2009). The critical paradigm focuses on confronting social oppression at whatever levels it occurs and promotes transformation and deliverance from oppression (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Analysis based on this paradigm is applicable to my research as it interrogates the power relations between the state and pro-democracy activists. I believed that it would enable me to make sense of the role that the activists play in challenging the media agenda pushed by the state as part of their fight for social justice in an authoritarian environment. It would assist me in exploring how radio activists interpreted events surrounding their struggle for the establishment of a democratic, facilitative and emancipatory radio sector in Zimbabwe, and how relations of power and ideology impact on that history.

4.1.3 The choice of method: biographical, episodic interviews

I chose to make use of in-depth, narrative, biographical and episodic interviews. Such interviews allow the researcher to seek out detailed explanations, descriptions and interpretations of the lived experiences of people who took part in what they themselves understand to be key moments in history (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992; Strelitz, 2008:65). This type of an interview is typically organised around questions that generate personal narratives focusing on the contributor's own history, sharing such experience in rich detail. At the same time, the focus is on episodic interviewing in which the contributor is encouraged to focus selectively on significant moments in that history that are of relevance to the research question (Strelitz, 2008:65). In this study, my focus would be on moments that are of relevance to the contributors' involvement in the history of activist radio. I believed that this approach to interviewing would afford me the opportunity to capture the voices, emotions, gestures and expressions of participants in that history. My hope was that this would help me to gain in-depth understanding of ways in which the participants make sense of their involvement in the creation and continuation of that history, as they recollect these specific periods in their lives (Yin, 2003).

4.1.4 The selection of interview candidates

In drawing up a list of research participants, I needed to include individuals from a wide variety of social categories who all contributed to the survival of activist radio in different ways. This would include former freedom fighters (so-called 'nationalists'), journalists, human rights lawyers, clerics, and NGO and CSO workers as they all participated in and witnessed radio activism from pre-independence in the late 1970s to the recent moment. For the purposes of identifying the right candidates for the interviews, I created two categories of participants in this history, and respectively named them "practitioners" and "enablers". The category of practitioner refers to activists who were directly involved in producing radio programming. They included former freedom fighters who were broadcasters with VoR and VoZ in the 1970s; post-democracy pirate radio activists who worked for Capital Radio, VOP and Studio 7; and CRIs activists. Under the category of enablers were individuals who stood in solidarity with the practitioners and provided them with moral and or financial support, typically through their involvement in organisations. These organisations include CSOs such as MISA Zimbabwe, ZACRAS, ZESN and ERC. The two categories mirror those that emerged in the literature review pursued in the previous chapter. My personal background as a journalist influenced the selection of the participants for this research. I worked initially at ZBC as a news reporter, followed by another four years as a freelance radio reporter with VOP, followed by a six-year tenure as an editor at CORAH, a position I held concurrently with media activism at MISA. In addition, my

first-hand experiences and knowledge of activist radio in Zimbabwe shaped my decision to include these specific contributors as I recognise the significant roles that professional journalists and grassroots activists have played in shaping the history of radio activism in Zimbabwe. In selecting the appropriate participants for each category, I used the purposive sampling approach, choosing individuals who would be most appropriate to interview for this study given their level of experience and involvement.

4.1.5 The design of the research instrument: an interview guide

I designed an interview guide consisting of three sections; focusing firstly on a preliminary conversation, then moving to the sharing of personal history and then finally focusing on reflections about the significance of that experience (see Appendix 1). The preliminary conversation included introductions and discussion of the nature of the interview, its purpose and how the findings would be used. This conversation was designed to set the tone of the interview, ensuring that the contributor was comfortable. The section focusing on the contributor's history included questions, which sought to gain an understanding of the individual activist's experience of radio activism. The third and last section prompted the contributor to reflect on that history, commenting on the challenges that they encountered in the journey and how they overcame them, as well as sharing their current assessment of radio as it exists in Zimbabwe. I produced two versions of this guide to cater for the two categories of research participants as described above.

4.1.6 Managing the fieldwork process

In designing the approach to the fieldwork process, I understood that I would need to ensure that research participants would be comfortable, and confident about sharing their stories. For this reason I decided to ask the participants to choose venues that they felt comfortable with and where they would feel safe from scrutiny. I believed that this would enable me to meet the requirements of good field interviewing, in which the researcher instils confidence in the participants so that they could feel free to answer all questions (Orb et al., 2000).

4.1.7 Ethical considerations

In planning these interviews, I kept in mind ethical principles that are appropriate to a study of this kind. I knew I would need to secure informed consent by ensuring that participants are empowered to voluntarily accept or refuse to participate in this study (Orb et al., 2000; Kvale 1996). My decision, as described above, to ask the contributors to identify the venues for interviews was similarly guided

by my interest in providing them with agency, so that they could make informed decisions about the nature of their involvement in the research process. I knew I would also need to alert the contributors in advance of the interviews to the sensitivity of the subject matter. In particular, it would be important for contributors to take note of the fact that the research deals with their involvement in historical activities that was censured by the Zimbabwean government. As such, they would need to think carefully about sharing information about their own involvement in this history, in context of research that would be placed in the public domain. They would for this reason need to consider whether they would prefer to remain anonymous within the research process. I understood, at the same time, that I could not assure anonymity for contributors even if their names were excluded from the study as their description of the activities in which they had been involved would in itself allow government officials to identify them. Participants would need to consider this possibility before agreeing to participate in the research process. For all of these reasons, I factored in enough time at the preliminary stage of the interview process to examine these concerns.

4.1.8 Approach to analysis

I planned to adopt a thematic approach to the analysis, in which I looked for patterns in the experiences, thoughts, or behaviours that my contributors shared with me (Braun & Clarke, 2012). In this way I hoped to create a comprehensive picture of the study participants' collective responses (Aronson, 1994). I would chronologically present the findings in an analytical story telling format using direct quotations from the interviews to suit, a style used in studies within the social sciences (Silverman, 2005).

I understood that as part of such analysis, my research question would need to remain uppermost in my mind. As noted at the start of this chapter, the aim of my empirical work is to gain a better understanding how individuals who participated in the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe made sense of their own contribution to the history of activist radio in this country. In searching for repeated patterns in the interview material, I would need to stay close to this subject matter.

I planned, as part of this process of analysis, to apply the conceptual framework that I developed in Chapter 2. As such, my focus would be on patterns in the participants' description of their own normative motivations for participating in the history of activist radio, as they experience this at the micro level of the individual. I would then tease out connections between this experience as it exists at the micro level, and the insights about the history of activist radio that I have been able to capture at the medium level in my literature review in Chapter 3. In this way I hoped to succeed in producing an empirical study that is grounded in the theoretical and contextual terms of reference that I had articulated in context of my literature review.

4.2 The implementation of the research plan

This section describes the implementation of my research plan. It deals, firstly, with the way my fieldwork worked out in practice, and then provides a commentary on my analysis of the interview material. This description is provided in order to demonstrate evidence of the reliability and validity of the research process.

4.2.1 The implementation of the fieldwork plan

This discussion of fieldwork deals, firstly, with my attempt at identifying research participants and securing their agreement to participate in the research process. It then provides an evaluation of my management of the resulting fieldwork process.

i) Selecting the interview candidates and securing permission for interviews

My own experience as a media practitioner and radio activist working in the Zimbabwean context, including my involvement in Community Radio Harare (CORAH), provided me with a network of contacts that enabled me to identify twenty individuals who were willing to participate in the research process. They included journalists, human rights activists, civil society activists, a lawyer-turned-politician, and a cleric, and all of them had been directly involved in post-independence activist radio. Some were no longer residing in Zimbabwe, having left the country in the early 2000s in the context of political disruption while others were still in Zimbabwe, working as journalists and activists. I was able to secure face-to-face interviews with some of these participants in Zimbabwe, while I interviewed others online.

I took care to secure consent to be interviewed from all of these individuals and made sure that it was safe for them to reveal their identities. This was important because most of them, at some point in their lives, had personally experienced state-sponsored violence. I therefore needed to approach them with care and sensitivity, making sure that they trusted me and felt comfortable enough to participate. To fulfil this obligation, I first called them by phone and then followed up with WhatsApp text messages, again introducing myself.

The research participants could be grouped into four categories: Those who had contributed to nationalist radio stations in the late1970s; those who were part of the pirate radio movement in the early 2000s; those who helped to enable the Community Radio Initiatives (CRI's) of the same era and those who produced content for the CRIs. In each category, there were a maximum of three respondents.

Under the category of individuals involved in nationalist radio, I hoped to find individuals who had worked both for two radio stations, VoR and VoZ. Unfortunately, I managed to interview only one research participant from VoR, a female ex-combatant and former broadcaster. I had originally secured interviews with two individuals who had worked for VoZ, but they changed their minds at the 11th hour. One of them, who had promised to talk to me after the 23 August national elections, later said he was no longer comfortable giving me an audience for personal security reasons. The other individual became too involved in political campaigns and post-election parliamentary diaries to be able to participate in my research, since he became a new member of parliament. I nevertheless managed to interview a ZIPRA ex-combatant who regularly listened to all the nationalist stations, including VoR and VoZ. This interview covered the gap left by the failed VoZ interviews in that the ex-combatant expressed a deep understanding of radio's purpose and how it motivated him and many others to join the liberation struggle. My final list of interviewees included the following individuals:

Perseverance Mazinyane-Legane is the only former VoR broadcaster I interviewed. She is an ex-combatant of ZIPRA, the military wing of ZAPU. I was able to make contact with her through her husband, retired Brigadier-General Abel Mazinyane, whom I approached with the help of a journalist colleague based at the Bulawayo-based state-run weekly newspaper, *The Sunday News*. Perseverance grew up in Gwanda Matabeleland, South Province and joined the liberation struggle in January 1977 under the ZAPU's ZIPRA military wing. She was one of the students from Manama Secondary School who were abducted on 29 January of that year and went to Zambia via Botswana. She told me that upon arrival in Lusaka, she and three other girls she was with were introduced to radio news production at Radio Lusaka, Zambia's state broadcaster (Mazinyane, 2023, p.3). She agreed that her identity could be revealed as part of the research process.

In the same category is ex-ZIPRA combatants' spokesperson Buster Magwizi, whom I contacted in order to ask for his help in identifying former VoR broadcasters. He provided some names and their contacts, but I failed to locate these cadres and returned to him. He then offered to share his experience with me, of listening to VoR and VoZ radios during the liberation struggle and several regional and international such stations, which were beaming into Zimbabwe. Born In 1955 in Gweru and raised in Highfield Harare, Magwizi said it was the messages they got from such radios that motivated him and others in the early 1970s to join the liberation war (Magwizi, 2023, p. 8-9). As a former liberation war veteran and his capacity as the spokesperson of ZIPRA ex-combatants, Magwizi said there was no need to hide his identity as part of this research process.

I hoped to find individuals involved in pirate radio which, as indicated in Chapter 3, included Capital Radio (later SW Radio Africa), VOP and Studio 7. All three radio projects emerged at the turn of the millennium, using SW frequency to broadcast into Zimbabwe after being violently

down by the state. I had some success in this respect and had the privilege, firstly, of talking to David Coltart, one of the directors of Capital Radio, who has just been elected the Mayor of Bulawayo at the time of my fieldwork process. I was able to secure his involvement in my research process with ease because my work as a journalist had for many years placed me in close contact with both him and with the political grouping he belonged to, the MDC, and now the Citizens Coalition for Change or CCC. The media friendly lawyer-turned-politician was raised in Gweru and educated in Bulawayo before proceeding to Cape Town, South Africa, for his university law degree. Coltart has been a lawyer since 1983. He was elected to parliament three times in his political career after the banning of Capital Radio. He was the Minister of Education, Arts and Culture from 2009 to 2013 in the inclusive government. He told me how the police raided his Harare house after seizing Capital Radio's broadcasting equipment in 2000 (Coltart, 2023, p.11). He rejected the idea of hiding his identity in context of this study, arguing that it would invalidate the four decades he had dedicated to the struggle for democracy.

Secondly, there was Tichaona Sibanda, a former producer and presenter for the same station. I have known Sibanda for years as my senior in the Journalism profession. During my time at CORAH we shared the same digital broadcasting platform, ChannelZim, and this made it easy for me to locate him in the UK where he is now residing. The 53-year-old journalist worked for the Zimbabwe Inter-Africa News Agency (ZIANA) in 1990 before moving to the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation in 1993, where he worked for ten years. Sibanda told me that lack of professionalism at the state broadcaster pushed him out and join SW Radio Africa in the UK in 2001 (Sibanda, 2023, p. 16-17). At SW Radio Africa Sibanda was using his real name, and he had no reason for hiding it now as part of this research process.

I ended my SW Radio Africa interviews with Mudiwa Manyeruke (not his real name) who I have worked with when we were both freelancers at a diaspora-based Zimbabwe online newspaper, NewZimbabwe.com. The UK-based Journalism PhD holder has 20 years of experience in print, radio, and online journalism. He has worked as a reporter and editor in Zimbabwe and the UK. As an independent journalist, Manyeruke experienced victimisation by Zanu PF politicians and government officials (Manyeruke, 2023, p.20). He requested not to be named for personal reasons.

Radio VOP was my next port of call, and I had the pleasure of talking to the station's former director as well as his two former subordinates. John Masuku is the former stations Boss and has 49 years of radio journalism experience. I worked under his leadership at VOP for four years and later collaborated with his station for six years when I was at CORAH. This relationship made it possible for me to easily contact him and convince him to contribute to my research. Masuku began his career at the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) in 1974 and worked at the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) until 2000, when he was retrenched. I recruited the veteran broadcaster because

of his experience at VOP when it was bombed in 2003. He also told me about his arrests and his 10-month-long court appearance on charges of broadcasting without a licence. He said these persecutions forced the station to relocate and operate from South Africa while beaming into Zimbabwe (Masuku, 2023, p. 27). Masuku's half a century experience in the media sector in Zimbabwe and the fact that he remained in the country during the years of media onslaught informed his request to me to reveal his name in this project.

Speaking about the same period of clamp down on the station and its relocation to South Africa was Davison Mudzingwa, who worked at the station as a presenter and producer. I located the 41-year-old journalist at his base in Johannesburg, where he had settled in 2003 when the station was forced to close. Because I worked with him as a colleague at the same station, he was quick to respond to my request for an interview. At VOP Mudzingwa was responsible for packaging and disseminating the station's programmes on various alternative platforms (Mudzingwa, 2023, p.34-35). Now a fulltime film producer, Mudzigwa said he was comfortable to have his name published.

Also from this station is Nkosana Dlamini, 46-year-old at the time of our interview. I phoned him and arranged to meet with him at his rented offices in central Harare for the interview. Again, this was possible because of our several years of working together, sharing resources including transport to and from newsgathering assignments in and out of the capital. During his tenure at VOP as a reporter, Nkosana said he operated incognito and was arrested in the course of his work. He told me that he had nothing to hide and would like his name to be published.

The last in this category of pirate stations is Studio 7. I recruited one of its pioneer reporters, Frank Chikowore, who joined the station at its launch in 2003 as a Harare correspondent. Again, Chikowore and I have worked together as freelancers and shared audio interviews, pictures, news sources and transport. In 2017, we were arrested in Rusape, some 180 km East of Harare while when covering a story on the eviction of a white farmer by Zanu PF militia for a prominent pro-Mugabe cleric. This comradeship facilitated Chikowore's willingness to participate in my research. In the interview he explained that he had been arrested on several occasions in his career as a journalist and even held incommunicado and charged with attempted murder (Chikowore, 2023, p. 43). Since the ousting of Mugabe in 2017, all Studio 7 correspondents are now using their real names, even though the station still has to operate from the US. For that reason, Chikowore said he was comfortable to have his name mentioned in this research.

I also succeeded in securing participation from individuals involved in the community radio movement. My participants included individuals who worked with two pioneer CRIs, namely Radio Dialogue and Community Radio Harare. In both instances, my interviewees included former senior managers who were also able to provide perspectives on the establishment and growth of the community radio sector as a whole.

Father Nigel Francis Johnson founded Radio Dialogue at the turn of the millennium in the country's second capital city, Bulawayo. I was able to trace the UK born 78-year-old-catholic priest in Harare because I had interacted with him in training workshops and collaborations with CORAH. This history of collaboration enhanced his willingness to be involved in the interview process. He laughingly described to me how the state attempted to deport him, and how he was subjected to several arrests during his time at the pro-democracy radio project (Johnson, 2023, p. 47). He was nevertheless happy to participate in this research under his own name.

Another recruit from the same station was Kudzai Kwangwari. I have known the 48-year-old media practitioner since 2011 as the station's programmes manager whose duties also included handling cases of state-sponsored violence on the station's staff and negotiating their freedom (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 57). He witnessed several arrests of his staff and raids at the station during his 10-year service and explained that this history, as well as his direct engagement with state agents over the years, has already exposed his identity, hence his willingness to be named in this study.

It was also while working at CORAH that I first spoke to Givemore Chipere, the station's director. I first met him in 2011 when I joined the CRI and worked with him for six years. For these reasons, contacting and securing his consent to partake in this study was simple. Chipere first joined CORAH as an assistant programmes officer. He conveyed how he and his colleagues endured arrests and raids on their station but kept reaching out to marginalized audiences using alternative media platforms. He attributed their resilience to the support they received from civil society organizations they partnered with over the years (Chipere, 2023, p. 59).

Next was the board chairman of CORAH, Munyaradzi Chimwara, who shared with me how he and his compatriots at the station defied authoritarianism and managed to reach out to vulnerable communities with unfiltered information. He was easy to locate and quick to consent to the interview because he had been my superior at CORAH. He relayed the cat and mouse relationship that CORAH had with authorities. He also distinguished between propaganda programming he was used to at his first job at ZBC compared to the audience-oriented messaging at CORAH (Chimwara, 2023, p. 65-66).

Behind the formation of CRIs were the lobbying activities of key advocacy organizations and it was essential to involve individuals who represented these organisations in my interview process. These organisations include the Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwe chapter and the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS). I interviewed two senior officials at MISA-Zimbabwe and one senior ZACRAS former employee to understand their first-hand experiences fully.

At MISA I contacted the former director, Takura Zhangazha, who was happy to give me an audience. He also agreed to have a recorded interview and gave me permission to publish his name

without any reservations. Zhangazha joined the organization in 2002 as an advocacy officer and explained to me the turbulent journey he went through in establishing CRIs and lobbying the state to accept the idea. The 45-year-old political scientist also shared with me how and why they later formed ZACRAS (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 69-71).

Dr Tabani Moyo is also with MISA and works as the organisation's regional director overseeing all its eight SADC chapters. It was easy for me to contact Dr Moyo and ask him for an interview because of the lobbying and advocacy work we conducted together for almost 15 years. Nevertheless, getting his attention took me one month because of the busy schedule he now has since taking over the reign of the entire MISA chapters. When he eventually gave an audience, he outlined to me the multifaceted strategies they used to convince the authorities that community radio would be realised in Zimbabwe (Moyo, 2023, p. 77).

I identified and located the former ZACRAS national coordinator, Vivian Marara in Harare. I have collaborated with the 38-year-old journalist on a number of training projects and she has commissioned CORAH during her tenure. Based on our working relationship she was encouraged to be a participant and shared her personal experience of working for the organisation. She narrated the antagonistic engagements ZACRAS had with the authorities, who at that time viewed CSOs with suspicion (Marara, 2023, p. 79-82).

I also engaged with two human rights activists who were part of the initial negotiations around setting up the community radio sector in Zimbabwe before the year 2000. Over the years, these individuals have worked for several media freedom organizations and development partners. One of these human rights defenders is Simeon Mawanza, who became an activist in 1994 who worked at a senior level for Amnesty International and championed freedom of expression for radio in Zimbabwe, advocating for licensing of community radio stations. I have known Mawanza for many years in my capacity as a journalist when he was with Amnesty International. I contacted him telephonically in Nairobi Kenya, where he is now based, and agreed to grant me an interview using his real name. In our discussion he conveyed that since the late 1990s he has been directly engaging with the authorities about the importance of establishing a community radio sector in Zimbabwe, and encountered frustrating experiences in the process (Mawanza, 2023, p. 86-87).

Rashweat Mukundu is also a human rights activist, now with International Media Support working as the Sub-Saharan Africa advisor. Since 2000, Mukundu has worked in the media industry for local and international media organizations. He has also worked for MISA and the international human rights organization, Freedom House. I started interacting with him as a junior reporter 13 years ago when he was conducting media trainings for journalists. I also worked with him for six years at CORAH when we were implementing freedom of expression programmes IMS was supporting. In our interview Mukundu chronicled the genesis of discussions around the establishment of community

radio in Zimbabwe. He also spoke about how and why the media development organizations he has worked with supported the agenda, and the negative attitude of the state towards the agenda (Mukundu, 2023, p. 90-92).

Finally, I engaged with individuals involved in civil society organisations involved in the production of election programming for community radio. I identified key organisations involved in such work, including the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) and the Election Resource Centre (ERC). From ZESN I recruited Emma Chiseya, the organization's senior Electoral Education and Capacity Building Officer. I first contacted her director, Rindai Chipfunde-Vava, who directed me to their programmes manager, Ellen Kandororo-Dingani, who instructed me to talk to Chiseya, who agreed to speak to me but advised me to write an email of my request to the organisation. Chiseya was the appropriate person for my interview because she coordinates activities around enhancing citizen participation in electoral processes. She plans and implements civic, voter and electoral education and her department produces and disseminates voter education information and communication materials. During our conversation Chiseya spoke about their partnerships with community radio initiatives and their lobby efforts for these stations to be licenced (Chiseya, 2023, p. 96).

I wound up the interviews with the former director and founder of the Election Resource Centre, Tawanda Chimhini, who is now working as an independent election consultant. I traced him through his social media platforms and he agreed to grant me an interview and had no qualms about revealing his name. He said that the Election Resource Centre's serious engagements with CRIs were between 2008 and 2013, when they experienced criminalisation of their activities and a state media blackout. He explained how CRIs helped them to reach out to rural areas which the Zanu PF government had declared as a no-go area (Chimhini, 2023, p. 99).

Through these interviews I succeeded in capturing diverse experiences of, and perspectives on Zimbabwe's radio activism history, shedding light on its intricate dynamics and helped me to better understand the resilience of pro-democracy and radio activists. I am pleased these research participants had no objection contributing to my research, in fact, most of them were enthusiastic about having their identities revealed as contributors to this study. I understand that this was possible due to their long experience of open participation in public discussions of activist radio in Zimbabwe, and their pride in being part of this history.

ii) Managing the fieldwork process

Almost all of the individuals who agreed to participate in the research process were able to contribute, only a few became unavailable at the last minute, without giving reasons. I carried out the interviews

during the national election period between August-September 2023 and the process took me two months to complete. Structured questions to all the interviewees were sent through WhatsApp and e-mail prior to each interview so that they could prepare for the interview process. All of the informants responded positively, confirming their dates and times of availability for the discussions. I met with half of the interviewees face-to-face, only conducting remote interviews with those who are now living in the diaspora, and those who could not for logistical reasons. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and an hour each, including unrecorded preparatory conversations, setting up and testing of recording equipment. I was careful to make time to remind each participant of the aims of my research and to advise the research would be published. I also committed myself to sharing the thesis with them after it was completed.

In the case of physical interviews, I met with participants in their offices where they could feel free to express themselves in private. Towards the end of the interviews, each participant was asked to record the correct dates of the events and correct spelling so that I avoid distorting facts when transcribing the audio interviews.

It took two months to gather sufficient interview material for the research. Some participants had to withdraw due to work commitments related to the elections but interviews from all four categories were secured. Most interviewees held influential positions in the stations and organisations that they were involved with and therefore able to provide sufficient and satisfactory responses to the questions I sought to address.

In reviewing the interview process, the primary success had been in securing interviews with participants in the post-independence developments in the history of activist radio. Most of the participants I had interviewed were associated with two primary traditions: the pirate radio and community radio initiatives that emerged in the new millennium, along with organisations supporting these radio projects. Participants in the previous eras of activist radio were not easily available to me. At the same time, I was privileged to have illuminating access to perspectives on the post-millennium history of activist radio, as some of the participants were involved in the conceptualisation of the idea of community broadcasting in the late 1990s. They nurtured it and engaged with authorities to gain recognition for the concept, ultimately convincing the state to legalise it. Simultaneously, these individuals were actively involved in establishing community radio initiatives. The interviews with them unveiled the conception, development, and realisation of community broadcasting amidst challenging circumstances in Zimbabwe. My assessment was, therefore, that the interviews provided me with rich insights into an important moment in the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 Analysis of the fieldwork

In order to analyse the interview material I transcribed the interviews, resulting in a 104-page document. The process was thorough and cumbersome in that it took me at least one day to listen to each audio recording and transcribe it. Where I could not understand or inadequately comprehend the meaning or context, I contacted the research participant for clarity and hence was able to ensure that my record of the interviews remained true to the intentions of the research participants. The process of transcription and corroboration was beneficial in making sense of the interview material, enabling a rich and nuanced understanding of the content of the discussions. Even at that stage, before commencing with the formal analysis of the material, it was possible to identify common themes and patterns in the participants' responses to my questions.

Recognising the significance of these insights, I decided to present my findings in three distinct chapters, each dedicated to a distinct group of contributors to the activist radio movement. Chapter 5 focuses on the research participants who were involved in pirate radio in the early years of the millennium. Chapter 6 focuses on individuals who worked as "enablers" of community radio, ensuring the creating of an environment in which the CRI's could become established. Chapter 7 deals, finally, with community radio practitioners who contributed to those CRIs.

I understood that these 21st century traditions of activist radio still had their roots in the earlier histories covered in the literature review in Chapter 3. For this reason, in all three chapters, I set out to detail how these traditions drew upon the heritage of activist radio in distinctive ways. Similar to the nationalist radios of the past, the chapters illustrate, through the experiences of the interviewed informants, the methods and strategies employed to establish alternative radio platforms in post-independent Zimbabwe, operating within the constraints of stringent media laws.

Conclusion

In reviewing the process of planning and implementing my research plan, as described in this chapter, I am confident that I have succeeded in completing an empirical research process that is both valid and reliable, and secured responses of direct relevance to the research objectives. In the following chapters I highlight the value of this fieldwork by exploring the insights that emerged from the interview material.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE PIRATE RADIO STATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 3 described how pirate radio surfaced in Zimbabwe as a response to the oppressive political environment that existed in the country at that time. We learned that it was not the first time that activists had turned to radio for this purpose; pirate radio had its precursor in "nationalist" or "liberation" radio in the mid-20th century. That earlier tradition was crucial in challenging social injustice as this existed under colonial rule. Three decades later, in an independent Zimbabwe, this tradition was again taken up by journalists, lawyers and human rights defenders who were still fighting for democracy and freedom of expression. A small group of stations played an important role in reviving this tradition, namely Capital Radio (later called SW Radio Africa), VOP, and Studio 7. We learned that the authorities disrupted their operations, compelling them to operate clandestinely. We also saw that despite such disruption they continued their work for a free media, often from exile through shortwave and later in the digital realm. However, the literature reviewed in Chapter 3 provided limited insight into the individual perspectives of the activists who contributed to this tradition of radio. This next chapter explores such perspectives as offered by research participants who contributed to this tradition. It draws on interviews with nine of my research participants, including two liberation war veterans, a lawyer-turned-politician and six journalists. In the discussion that follows below, I examine the values and beliefs that underpinned their involvement in pirate radio.

The discussion is organised around three levels of analysis: the micro level (focusing on the motivations of individual media activists); the medium level (dealing with the tradition of practice that they established) and the macro level (reflecting on the systems within which their activism was situated). Section 1 deals with the values and beliefs of the pirate radio activists at the micro level, focusing on their critique of state radio and their vision for an alternative tradition of radio in Zimbabwe. Section 2 describes the intervention they made at the medium level within the existing radio landscape through the establishment of pirate stations as a Zimbabwean tradition of practice. Section 3 focuses on the government's attempt to destroy these stations, demonstrating that government officials viewed them as a threat to the legitimacy of state media at a systemic level. Section 4 describes the research participants' assessment of the impact they have made on the Zimbabwean radio landscape.

5.1 Motivation behind radio activism

A review of the interviews that I conducted with the nine research participants convinced me of their ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive public sphere for the benefit of marginalised people in Zimbabwe. This commitment is informed by their first-hand experience of witnessing injustice and involvement in the movement of resistance against such injustice. For these individuals, participation in such resistance focused on the establishment of traditions of media that could contribute to democratisation.

i. Political consciousness and commitment to emancipatory communication

The participants in general explained that the maturation of their political consciousness was informed by their personal experience of injustice and witnessing injustice against people in their communities. Participant Coltart notes, for example, that in the context of his work as a human rights advocate he became increasingly preoccupied with government officials disregard for the constitution. He saw evidence of their participation in state-sponsored atrocities and brutality against ordinary people in Zimbabwe. He understood this to be a history of violence that has for long characterised Zimbabwean politics, dating back to the 1980s. This recognition cemented his own commitment to the struggle for social justice in this country. Other participants, for example Manyeruke, Dlamini and Chikowore spoke similarly about their political views were shaped by their observation of the impact of injustice on minority groups in Zimbabwe. Manyeruke, who grew up in the Matebeleland region, notes that his tribal identity as a member of the Ndebele people locates him within a marginalised community that has long endured neglect from the state. He notes that this history of marginalisation continues today, even while the country calls itself a democracy. This background contributes to his desire for social change:

> I come from a tradition of people who want justice. That has always been me right from school. I've always been a person who wants … justice (Manyeruke, 2023, p. 25).

He also notes that the same regional background, contributed to his dream for a more tolerant society and his resistance to the state's neglect of citizens' constitutional freedoms:

> I always want things to be done in a particular way that is according to the law and the Constitution. No oppression. So that's how I take things, and I took a stand that what was happening was not OK (ibid).

Each of these participants concluded that social justice can only be achieved if Zimbabweans have access to a communication environment in which their right to free expression is protected. Coltart

notes that he has long believed that the brutality he witnessed in Zimbabwe can only be countered if it was exposed and publicly challenged. It is for this reason that he has come to champion the cause of media freedom and came to the conclusion, furthermore, that such freedom can be achieved by making space for radio that aligns with the principles of social justice and democratic values. Coltart arrived at this vision of radio that serves the public good in the late 1990s, when there was a case brought to the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe exploring the ambits of the rights of freedom of expression (Coltart, 2023, p. 11). Manyeruke, Dlamini and Chikowore also speak about their enthusiasm for amplifying diverse voices within the public domain. Dlamini explains that he has for long felt a "…passion to see people speaking out on their issues without fear" (Dlamini, 2023, p.39-40). Chikowore says that he, too, came to believe in the role that the media must play in the establishment of an open society:

> I still believe that for any democracy to function, it must have uncensored news... Information is a human right, and this is why I continue engaging in people-oriented journalism (Chikowore, 2023, p. 44).

It would seem, then, that all of these participants share an awareness of their own marginalisation and oppression, alongside a consciousness of the injustices endured by Zimbabwean citizens. All of them describe how, over time, they became personally invested in contributing to the achievement of a more just society in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, all of them came to believe in the positive role that public communication could play in driving such social change. Viewed from the microlevel, it becomes possible to observe a personal commitment amongst these participants to establish communication platforms that embody democratic and emancipatory principles. It will be demonstrated that this commitment enabled the research participants to remain committed to the achievement of their goals as media activists in the face of severe opposition from the authorities.

ii) Perspectives on state broadcasting

All participants note that their belief in the importance of activist radio was strengthened by their exposure to the ZBC and their consequent realisation that the Zimbabwean state broadcaster failed to match their vision for emancipatory communication. Some of them comment on this from the perspective of listeners. Coltart notes that his belief in the importance of alternative approaches to radio was fuelled by his observation of the misuse of the state broadcaster for the purpose of misinformation. His exposure to such misuse convinced him of the need for an alternative tradition of radio that could break the control that government officials had over systems of communication in Zimbabwe:

> …ZBC was a propaganda mouthpiece of one political party which remains the case today, and it was very important to try and set up a radio station that at very least could allow a diversity of opinions (Coltart, 2023, p. 12-13).

Manyeruke, who also speaks as a listener, describes his growing awareness of the bias of the state-owned broadcaster and the uniformity of voices that dominated its programming. As a result, he stopped listening to the ZBC:

> Radio had become too Zanu PF [and]what we were getting was state or Zanu PF information ... and it got worse during the land reform era (Manyeruke, 2023, p. 22).

Mudzingwa explains that as a listener to the ZBC he was acutely conscious of the prevalence of pro-government narratives and the lack of diverse voices on the state broadcaster. He compared the example of the Zimbabwean media landscape to that of neighbouring countries, in which there was far more evidence of a plurality of voices:

> We asked Zimbabwe, one of Africa's first countries to have radio technology and television, why we still have [only] one voice. Countries … like South Africa … have independent radio stations and television stations. These countries have plural voices and thriving democracy, so why not Zimbabwe? So that bothered me every day (Mudzingwa, 2023, p. 35)

Also speaking from the perspective of a listener of the ZBC, Dlamini, a former reporter and editor at VOP, says that he was increasingly conscious of the glaring discrepancy between the narrative disseminated at the state broadcaster and an alternative perspective:

> There was also a very big gap between a told story and its other side, which could have deliberately been ignored by the state radio (Dlamini, 2023, p. 40).

Dlamini notes that this observation motivated him to envision an alternative radio platform characterised by diverse and inclusive programming.

Other research participants speak from the perspective of working as journalists for the ZBC. Sibanda, Masuku, and Chikowore had previous affiliations with ZBC as employees and speak about their discomfort when witnessing how dissenting perspectives were left out of the official stories presented on the state broadcaster. Masuku explains that he bore witness to such reporting throughout his tenure at ZBC, which spanned 28 years. By the end of this period, he had become intensely aware of the extent to which the broadcaster was stifling government critics and civil society's voices. He started to feel personally implicated in the systematic silencing of dissenting voices, for example in

context of the limited coverage of election-related matters. He suggested that I myself, in context of my work at the ZBC, would identify with this experience:

> Any views which were contrary to the ruling party at that time were silenced … There were other personalities, and I am sure you … have that experience because you worked as a reporter at ZBC, and there were other people you were not approaching to interview (Masuku, 2023, p. 29).

Sibanda, who served as a reporter at ZBC for eight years, observed a subtle yet discernible suppression of opposing viewpoints from journalists themselves during his tenure. He says this trend intensified when Professor Jonathan Moyo assumed the role of Minister of Information in 2000. Sibanda contends that the censure by ZBC of their own journalists' voices and perspectives became fully entrenched under Moyo's leadership of the Information Ministry. Journalists knew their jobs were on the line if they were to resist the controlling narrative of the ZBC:

> You could see from that time that there was no more freedom, even among journalists, to express themselves … if you did a story deemed anti-government, you were fired there and there (Sibanda, 2023, p. 17)

Within this working culture, journalists routinely practiced self-censorship and it became common practice for them to prioritise the perspectives of the top echelons of the ruling party in every news report:

> News-wise, the whole bulletin was now President Mugabe and Zanu PF. Instead of covering development stories like doing rural stories, we were now covering Zanu PF from the first story to the last story. That was the content on both TV and radio stations. It was Zanu PF and nothing else (ibid).

Even Chikowore's short stint at ZBC in 2000 exposed him to his authoritarian broadcast culture. He saw evidence of editorial interference by politicians all around him:

> You would find that most of the programs that we were running were actually being controlled by the ruling elites, particularly the ruling Zanu PF party (Chikowore, 2023, p. 44).

It is of interest to me, as a researcher, that all participants rejected this approach to radio despite the fact that the ZBC remained their only term of reference for what radio could be in the local context. At the micro level, from the viewpoint of the individual activist, they were able to visualise an alternative tradition of radio that was informed by a commitment to independence, truthfulness, fairness, and inclusivity. In the next section we will see that this commitment enabled them to

advocate for the establishment of stations that adhere to core journalistic principles so that they could contribute to the cultivation of a more democratic and diverse media landscape in Zimbabwe.

5.2 Putting the ideas into practice: the establishment of pirate radio stations

In reviewing the research participants' description of their attempts to put their vision for an alternative approach to radio into practice I focus, firstly, on their contributions to the establishment of radio stations. I then move to discussion of the programming that they helped to produce at such stations and their comments about the feedback that they received from listeners about such programming.

i) Establishing alternative radio stations

A number of the participants speak about their involvement in the establishment of pirate radio stations, firstly inside Zimbabwe and then later in exile. The stories that they share about such involvement point to the strong network of relationships that existed amongst these activists. These relationships allowed them to collaborate around the establishment and continued survival of the stations. Coltart explains, for example, that he was part of the group of activists who legally confronted the state, won the court case challenging the ZBC's broadcasting monopoly and established Capital Radio in central Harare:

> We obtained some broadcasting equipment and brought it into the country. We hired offices at the Monomotapa Hotel in Harare and a studio was set up in the bottom and top of the hotel (Coltart, 2023, p. 11)

Masuku, in turn, describes how he was approached by a group of journalists, some of whom had formerly worked for the state media including the ZBC, to help them to established VOP. At this stime, Masuku was still working for ZBC:

> … people who were running Radio VOP called in 2000 and said we want to establish a private station and we want you to head it (Masuku, 2023, p. 28).

Masuku says he rejected the job offer at that time. Nonetheless, later that year, Moyo instigated a mass retrenchment which specifically targeted senior management at ZBC, and which led to Masuku losing his position. Upon learning of his retrenchment, VOP approached Masuku with another job offer, and this time he accepted it.

However, as we know from the history recounted in Chapter 3, Capital Radio was shortly afterwards forced to go underground. It relocated to the UK and resurfaced under the title of, SW Radio Africa. Sibanda explains that the station then operated from exile under the leadership of

Jackson, a journalist who had previously worked with him at ZBC. Sibanda notes that Jackson invited him to join the station as a producer and presenter and he worked there until the folding of the station in 2013. Manyeruke explains that he too found his way to SW Radio Africa's studios soon after his arrival in London:

> When I got to London, I inquired about SW Radio Africa .... then Gerry Jackson (editor) asked one of her reporters to contact me because they wanted to test my voice … I went there for one week, and they gave me a job (Manyeruke, 2023, p. 21-22).

Reflecting on the participants comments about these stations, I conclude that they were involved in what Christians et al. (2009) would call a radical media tradition. As is typical of this tradition, it functioned on the periphery of the established legal system, directly challenging the prevailing norms. Curiously, radical media is not in fact descriptive of their vision for an alternative media, as described in the previous section. That vision invokes a liberal ideal of a media sector located at the mainstream of society, characterised by participatory and facilitative traditions of practice. Unfortunately, these activists were compelled to adopt a radical approach in context of their harsh environment. It is my view that the relationships of loyalty and trust that existed amongst this network of activists help to explain why these stations could continue to exist, even if they could only do so on the margins of Zimbabwean society.

iii) Programming and audience responses

An examination of the participants' description of the programming they were producing at these stations suggests that they were able to produce the kind of radio that they believed in. In the early years of activist radio, these beliefs can be seen to align strongly with that of radical radio. Reflecting on the radio programming Mazinyane and her compatriots produced in 1977 while broadcasting from Radio Lusaka in Zambia, she explains that they were broadcasting counter-colonial propaganda to people back home:

> We were telling the people through our programmes that we are here; that [message] would be included in our news scripts, to say that our freedom fighters have scored so much victory, they have done this and that. We would let people back at home know that we are [active]at the front and that those at the rear are also active… (Mazinyane, p. 4).

Mazinyane explains that one of the central aims was to motivate listeners to join the struggle movement and a strategy they pursued in order to build a connection with their audience was by acknowledging messages from listeners as part of their programme content:

> I remember so many people were writing to us saying their views and we would respond (Mazinyane, 2023, p. 4).

This suggests that an emphasis on the inclusion of a diversity of voices and an emphasis on audience participation formed part of activist radio in Zimbabwe even in these early years. Mazinyane notes that Zimbabweans living in neighbouring countries did indeed respond to such programming by skipping the borders and join the liberation struggle:

> … there was Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA), and people working in the mines (in South Africa) would leave everything and come to join the liberation struggle. So that's how effective the radio was (Mazinyane, 2023, p. 5).

Mazinyane's comrade, Magwizi, reveals that he was one such listener who was inspired by his exposure to radio broadcasts to participate in the liberation struggle. He attributes this motivation to the broadcasts from Radio Maputo, Radio Lusaka, Radio Deutsche Welle, and Radio Moscow, all of which were accessible in Southern Rhodesia at that time. Radio became a resource for convincing young people to join the struggle:

> I listened to radio and [interpreted] the messages that were coming and [going] out into the community and [which we discussed] with others. It was like debriefing others [about] what we had heard on the radio. We would pull a number of youths around the community or households to listen to that radio…(Magwizi, 2023, p. 8).

He stresses the impact of the voices of influential broadcasters associated with these stations and says their powerful messages were inspiring:

> … listening [to] the radio you would want to … [march] straight away into the field and get your own gun and come and kill a Boer who was oppressing us (Magwizi, 2023. p. 9).

Years later, the pirate radio stations would come to set a different tone in relation to the struggle politics of the early 2000s. Even though these stations also existed on the margins of society and served the purpose of radical media, they aligned with more liberal and professionalised journalistic values. Mudzingwa recalls that at VOP, it was a formal policy that their broadcasts should represent a diverse range of perspectives:

> Me and my colleagues … wanted the country to have plural voices, and we were unequivocal about that … (Mudzingwa, 2023, p. 35-36)

Dlamini also emphasises that he strived to include a variety of perspectives in his news productions. However, this commitment was occasionally hindered by government sources, who would refuse to provide their perspectives. For this reason, programming tended to prioritise the voices of the opposition:

> So literally it meant that our messaging tilted in favour of the opposition because they were accessible … when the messaging became somewhat pro-opposition it then brought in the narrative that we are an extension of the opposition (Dlamini, 2023, p. 40).

Chikowore notes that his tenure at Studio 7 provided him with an environment conducive to self-expression, free from self-censorship. In such an environment, he could begin to develop an approach to communication practice that was aligned with his professional principles:

> ....no one would control me. It is just a question of you knowing and doing the job professionally.... (Chikowore, 2023, p. 44).

Similarly, Masuku asserts that he was able, in his role as the director of VOP, to formulate and put into practice an editorial policy informed by his belief in inclusivity and fairness:

> … our editorial policy was not to say we are for the opposition or the NGOs, but we were saying we want a radio that would include everyone. So, we could reach out to members of the ruling party (Masuku, 2023, p. 29).

Coltart, Sibanda and Manyeruke speak in similar terms of their experiences at Capital Radio/SW Radio Africa, a station that gained significant popularity among Zimbabweans. Sibanda argues that this was because the station gained a reputation for inclusivity, making space for voices from across the political spectrum in a way that was not possible in state broadcasting:

> … we became the voice of the voiceless. The opposition had a platform where they would tell us their problems, including when they were campaigning … even the general person on the street, their story that did not make it on state media they would give us, and we ran them (Sibanda, 2023, p. 17-18).

Manyeruke agrees that the station was welcoming to a wide variety of interest groups, including activists, opposition groups, international NGOS and student representative bodies. Coltart explains that at this time the advent of the internet enabled them to amplify the inclusive identity of the station through the affordances of digital media:

> ….there was the explosion of social media, that is, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and the like…which we could use (Coltart, 2023, p. 14).

Participants argued that through such radio they were able to make a powerful impact on audiences. Sibanda says SW Radio Africa left behind a legacy of which listeners would later remind him:

> Everywhere I go here in the UK, or … be it in South Africa, or Zimbabwe, people ask me why did you shut down the radio station? ... I remember meeting some friends at a party here in the UK recently, and he said your radio station was so powerful. People always talk about the radio station and its almost 10 years now since we closed but people still talk about it. That's the impact the radio station had to many Zimbabweans (Sibanda, 2023, p. 19).

The experiences shared by these research participants demonstrate that they were able, even in the marginalised context represented by pirate radio stations, to put into practice at the micro-level their own beliefs about the role that radio should play in a democratic society. They were able, in particular, to demonstrate the pivotal role that alternative could play in amplifying voices marginalised by state radio in Zimbabwe. They were able to put into practice the liberal ideals in which their vision of radio was based. In the final section of this chapter, we will see how the authorities in Zimbabwe reacted to the activities of these stations.

5.3 The government's response: a violent backlash

As discussed in the Chapter 3, the state reacted strongly to the operations of activist radio projects. These reactions were brutal and ranged from intimidation to arrests, detention and torture. Mazinyane and Magwizi, from the nationalist radio tradition, speak of their experiences in the 1970s when they saw the brutality of the colonial regime in response to the dissemination of counterpropaganda from external broadcasts. Mazinyane says that it was her grandfather back home in Zimbabwe who became the target of harassment from the authorities because they were able to trace his relationship to her when she used their family name to sign off in her broadcasts:

> They were saying [to him] that you are sending terrorists out, and they are broadcasting, taking away people from Rhodesia. My grandfather was an elderly person and would say no, I didn't send her; she went on her own (Mazinyane, 2023, p. 5).

Magwizi also witnessed the arrest of villagers back home in Zimbabwe simply for gathering and listening to their programmes that criticised the colonial administration. Listening to such content was considered a criminal offense:

> The Rhodesians also used that … to trace where the people's interests were by listening to those liberation struggle or the voice of the liberation struggle like the Voice of Zimbabwe. They would also trace who was listening in and where and then they would also scare people that it was an offence to be found in groups listening to that particular station (Mangwizi, 2023, p. 9-10).

These authorities also intervened in the broadcast process by manipulating frequencies, which often made it difficult for audiences to tune in:

> [there was] … consistent jamming of … [the] radio signal …to forbid people from accessing information [on] nationalist broadcast from Mozambique, Germany, Russia and Lusaka (Mangwizi, 2023, p. 9-10).

It would seem, then, that the authorities took the nationalist radio stations seriously, regarding them as a threat to their control of the Zimbabwean broadcast environment.

In the early 2000s this history would repeat itself, as the authorities again reacted strongly the the presence of activist radio stations. Coltart describes the police's unlawful intrusion into his private residence following the confiscation of Capital Radio's broadcasting equipment from their established studios in central Harare. He explains that the police had a defective search warrant that also gave them the authority to look for aircraft vessels on his property, which they used as an excuse to search for broadcast equipment:

> It was crazy that they had come to look for aircraft in my one-acre plot. I could see that the police were absolutely determined, they were very threatening. I had nothing to hide, even though their search warrant was defective we allowed them to come in, search and they didn't find anything… (Coltart, 2023, p. 12).

Masuku recounts the disturbing bombing in 2003 of the leased offices that housed their production studios, as described in Chapter 3. The arson attack took place at midnight and on arrival the next morning the entire building was in ashes:

> ...what was destroyed there … was an entire studio and furniture. In my office, the desk was bent but the drawers where I keep my broadcasting books and my Bibles were left intact. Those Bibles and those books still have some smouldering of smoke, and I always say my profession and my faith were preserved (Masuku, 2023, p. 30)

Dlamini and Chikowore were also victimised by state security agents. Chikowore, in particular, endured extended periods of detention and was arrested in June 2005 by armed soldiers for covering operation Murambatsvina in Central Harare:

> I was … arrested and taken to the Harare Central Police station where I was held incommunicado and then released without any charges (Chikowore, 2023, p. 43).

He was again arrested in 2008 on trumped up charges while covering an election protest organised by activists from the Movement for Democratic Change:

> …I spent 17 days in prison without bail … I was initially charged with 89 counts of attempted murder and the charges fell away well before we even went to court when my lawyers protested. The charges were changed to malicious damage to property which charges fell away again and then when we appeared in court I was charged with public violence so that's the charges that stuck… (Chikowore, 2023, p. 44).

Dlamini describes being violently attacked by a Zanu PF mob when he was interviewing opposition supporters from the MDC at a political meeting:

> ... [all] hell broke loose, the meeting literally stopped with everyone baying for my blood. They said I was trying to rig the process arguing why I was interviewing this known MDC person.

Instead of protecting him, the police apprehended and detailed him:

> The police came to my rescue, but it wasn't a rescue as such. They took me into their car and charged me for disrupting the meeting whatever that meant, and I spent a night in the police cells, but the charges were withdrawn next day (Dlamini, 2023, p. 39).

Masuku was also arrested and incarcerated for nearly a year. He explains that the authorities raided their station, climbing onto the roof to search for a broadcasting transmitter, and when nothing was found arrested two female journalists in the office. Masuku was summoned to the police station where he was arrested. He was held for three days, released and granted bail and ordered to report to the police every Friday:

> They also arrested our board members, and we were arraigned before the courts for almost 10 months until the magistrate … threw away the case and said we had no case (Masuku, 2023, p. 31).

Sibanda and Manyeruke also experienced intimidation even though they operated from the UK. They received direct threats from Zanu PF and government officials, particularly when they phoned asking for comments as part of their coverage of news in Zimbabwe:

> It was a weird feeling ... you try to call them, and they say all sorts of stuff to you like sell-outs, working for the Western countries to sell-out your country. At first, I found it very difficult to comprehend but as time went on it was clear that we were fighting a beast. We were fighting a government whose intention was to close down all the democratic spaces. Even today I see fellow journalists finding it very difficult to interview people from Zanu PF (Sibanda, 2023, p. 18)

Sibanda describes this relationship with government sources as "toxic" and it prevented staff at SW Radio Africa from travelling to Zimbabwe. Manyeruke explains that the reporters and sources who shared stories with them from Zimbabwe were also badly affected by this situation, which impacted on their ability to cover stories from rural areas in particular:

> People were … afraid to talk to us and they would say maybe [the authorities] will be able to identify me through my voice, and people would always be scared. They were afraid, and the news was really in the rural areas, and that's what we also wanted to expose ... but the people were afraid (Manyeruke, 2023, p. 24).

Mudzigwa explains that he was not personally subjected to arrests and detentions but he operated under a constant cloud of fear. Seeing the arrests of his colleagues deeply affected him:

> At some point, the CIO operatives raided our office in Harare and three of our producers, including a woman, were arrested and kept in cells for two days. So that was a moment that we really got to fear for our lives and it was more difficult when our colleagues were picked up by the state security agents who also said they could only release them when our station manager Mr Masuku hands himself over to the police, which he eventually did (Mudzingwa, 2023, p. 36).

The research participants provided testimony of a history of violent suppression to the work that they were doing as radio activists. This was evident among the individuals who had experience with nationalist radio stations in the late 1970s, as well as those involved with the pirate stations of the early 2000s. The extreme nature of the responses from police, as described by these witnesses, suggests that the government regarded activist radio as a serious threat to their control of communication within the Zimbabwean media landscape. Harare had an authoritarian administration that was intolerant of libertarian media principles and concepts inherent to these radio projects. Nevertheless, these activists remained resilient amid these adversities, maintaining their professionalism by providing comprehensive coverage to their audiences.

5.4 Participants' reflections on the current radio landscape

Reflecting on the radio landscape in Zimbabwe as it existed in 2023, when this research was conducted, participants remarked on the government's recent allocation of commercial and community radio licenses. In their view, this seeming diversification of the radio landscape has not resulted in the liberalisation of the airwaves. Masuku, for example, acknowledges the recent emergence of commercial radio as an alternative to the ZBC but expresses scepticism about the autonomy of the stations that have been awarded commercial licenses. He argues that government officials are involved in controlling these stations, and this impacts on their independence:

> It would be nice to see those private stations entirely being private and run by private players, but so far when you look at them, most of them, in one way or another are connected with government people. What I can say is let's have a better complexion than what we have now (Masuku, 2023 p. 33)

Dlamini suggests that the proliferation of commercial stations in Zimbabwe may create an impression of diverse ownership, but a closer examination reveals the continued control of these stations by government. This necessarily impacts on the programming content of such stations:

> Radio still remains in the hands of personalities who are regarded as pro-government. So in other words we may have managed to have the proliferation of radio platforms, but the messaging component suffers. This is so because it means that for you to get a radio licence you must have some alliances to the government of the day, and the state is still possessive [of] the airwaves (Dlamini, 2023, p. 41).

Coltart notes that the licencing of commercial stations represents a pretence at the liberalisation of the airwaves in Zimbabwe when in practice the governing party's control of the radio landscape continues:

> There are other radio stations but if you look at their ownership and their structure you will see that [they] have ties to the military and all of them in one way or the other they have ties with Zanu PF. So in practice we have a mirage, we have a pretence of independent radio stations but the fact of the matter is that there's not a single radio station ... that is genuinely independent (Coltart, 2023, p. 14).

Chikowore observes similarly regarding the awarding of community radio licenses because the government continues to dictate editorial policy. As a result, the only stations that provide space for alternative voices to that of the governing party continues to exist on the margins of society, and often beyond the country's borders:

> The radios that we have in Zimbabwe are still controlled by the state, save for those that are operating from outside Zimbabwe like Studio 7 and other online stations that we have (Chikowere, 2023, p. 45).

Sibanda concludes that his desire to witness a genuine liberalisation of the radio sector in Zimbabwe has not been realised, despite its longstanding claims of being a democracy. Radio still does not mirror what has been achieved by radio in democratic spaces elsewhere in the world:

> I've lived in a democracy for the last 20 years. I hear on radio British citizens criticising the government, criticising the Prime Minister, whether it was Theresa May, Boris Johnson, David Cameron, or now Rishi Sunak … reporters on a daily basis report without bias. But in Zimbabwe, it's all one sided and people get fed up (Sibanda, 2023, p. 19).

Conclusion

We witnessed the resilience and dedication of radio activists in Zimbabwe who, despite facing severe repression from the state, remain committed to principles of independence, truthfulness, fairness, and inclusivity in their journalistic practices. Despite the dominance of the state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), these activists defied its narrative and instead envisioned a tradition of radio that upholds core journalistic values. Their commitment to these principles inspired advocacy for the establishment of alternative radio stations that would challenge the prevailing norms and contribute to a more democratic and diverse media landscape. These stations operated on the periphery of Zimbabwean society, functioning within a radical media tradition that directly challenges the state's censorship and control. The individuals who established them maintained professionalism amidst adversity, providing comprehensive coverage to their audiences. Through their resilience and dedication, these activists not only challenge state-controlled narratives but also contribute to the democratisation of communication channels and societal transformation in Zimbabwe.

The experiences shared by these activists underscore the crucial role of alternative radio platforms in amplifying marginalised voices and facilitating diverse discourse in Zimbabwe. Despite operating under tight scrutiny and facing forceful responses from authorities reminiscent of colonial-era tactics, these activists persisted, buoyed by relationships of loyalty and trust within their network. Their comprehensive programming, characterised by inclusive news coverage and professional journalism, garnered positive feedback from audiences and triggers social change. However, this positive impact also drew the ire of authorities, highlighting the authoritarian administration's intolerance of libertarian media principles.

The reflection on the perspectives shared by the research participants draws on the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2, which enabled me to explore the role that beliefs and values play in shaping traditions of media in a particular social context. It achieves this purpose at a macro level, by enabling examination of the relationship between norms and media systems. It also allows for an examination at the medium level of the way in which norms inform the emergence of traditions of media. Finally, it enables an exploration of how the beliefs of individuals impact their involvement in media traditions at the micro level. Section 1 dealt with the research participants description of their involvement in pirate radio at the micro level, focusing on their individual reasons for contributing to such radio. Section 2 demonstrated the impact of their interventions at the medium level in ensuring the establishment and survival of traditions of practice. Section 3 focused on how the Zimbabwean government responded by lashing out at them. Section 4 assessed their views about the contemporary radio sector, in which they expressed concern about the perpetuation of dictatorship and the state's grip on it, including the militarisation of this sector.

I argue that the government saw the intervention of these individuals as a serious threat to media systems that exist in Zimbabwe at the macro level, challenging the power relations that underpin them and evidenced its heavy-handed response to the activists. What particularly threatened the authorities was the integration of alternative perspectives and narratives opposed to the ruling elite's agenda, notably those of the opposition, into the radio broadcasts. These stations' capacity to connect with the Zimbabwean populace while operating within the periphery of conventional legal frameworks posed another formidable threat to the state.

CHAPTER SIX: THE COMMUNITY RADIO ADVOCATES

Introduction

The literature review in Chapter 3 explained that community radio initiatives emerged in Zimbabwe in the early 2000s at the same time as pirate radio stations. However, the literature provides only cursory information about the people and organisations involved in establishing these initiatives. There is, as a result, little in the literature about the history of ideas and values that informed their establishment or about their experience of putting these ideas into practice. The next two chapters aim to address this gap in our knowledge, drawing on interviews with research participants who contributed to the establishment of the community radio movement in Zimbabwe. This first chapter focuses on people who were not directly involved in managing community radio projects, but nevertheless played an important role in advocating for their establishment, and hence will be referred to as community radio advocates.

As in the case of the discussion of pirate radio in Chapter 5, my analysis is structured across three levels: the micro level (pertaining to the contributions of individual media activists), the medium level (addressing the traditions of practice they established), and the macro level (encompassing the broader media ecosystems within which their activism and advocacy are situated). Section 1 scrutinises the motivations of the community radio advocates at the micro level, exploring the ideas that informed their belief in the value of community radio. Section 2 examines the impact they made at the medium level, through the establishment of community radio as a tradition of practice in Zimbabwe. Section 3 focuses on the government's response to their involvement in the establishment of this tradition of radio in Zimbabwe. As in Chapter 5, I attempt to demonstrate that the severity of this response suggests that the radio advocates' actions were perceived by government to pose a threat to the legitimacy of state media at a systemic level. Section 4 describes participants' assessment of the radio landscape, as it currently exists, and their reflection on how their own interventions have succeeded in shaping that landscape.

The discussion draws on interviews with five individuals, two of whom have worked as "freelance" defenders of human rights, namely Mukundu and Mawanza. The remaining three, Zhangazha, Moyo and Marara, have worked with organisations closely associated with the establishment of community radio in Zimbabwe. These organisations include MISA-Zimbabwe and the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS). The commentary that these activists provide regarding their involvement in advocating for community radio in Zimbabwe is presented chronologically, making it possible to demonstrate how their contributions align with particular periods in the history of activism in Zimbabwe.

Throughout the discussion, I keep in mind that the history of community radio in Zimbabwe emerged in parallel to that of pirate radio. It is therefore of value to compare these two histories in order to consider how strategies employed by individuals involved in them may have differed or overlapped. Furthermore, it is important to compare how the Zimbabwean government responded to the actions of both groups.

6.1 The motivations of the community radio advocates

Mawanza and Mukundu, who both primarily worked as "freelance" defenders of human rights, explain that they have for long been preoccupied by the constraints that exist in Zimbabwe on freedom of expression. They describe this interest as the driving force behind their decision, in the late 1990s, to become involved in advocating for community radio.

Mawanza says that he has for long been witness to the extent that the citizens are curtailed from freely expressing themselves in the public domain and came to believe in the role that radio could play in providing Zimbabweans with the power to speak out:

> It was always about expanding freedoms, allowing people to…use radio in development, in crisis response and in everyday life (Mawanza, 2023, p. 86).

He became conscious, in particular, of the lack of opportunity for such expressions on the state broadcaster. He observed a "partisan approach to freedom of expression" in context of the ZBC and became convinced of the importance of an alternative tradition of radio.

Mukundu, from a young age, observed the marginalisation of the voices of the Zimbabwean people. Growing up, he yearned for media freedom and democratic communication platforms:

> [It can be] the platform that enhances the inclusion of the voices of marginalised groups in the rural and peri-urban areas and … also the platform that plays a watchdog role on the centers of power (Mukundu, 2023, p. 94).

The participants who aligned themselves closely with media advocacy organisations explained that they were similarly motivated by a vision for media freedom. Zhangazha notes that his experience as a student activist fuelled his desire for a society with open communication spaces, allowing people to engage freely:

> …because of the democratic principle of freedom of expression, we needed that, and the more [media] the merrier (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 70).

These comments suggest that the values and beliefs that motivated these research participants' involvement in community radio are very similar to those identified in context of the media activists that contributed to pirate radio, as described in Chapter 5. However, there are also some important differences, particularly in context of the community radio advocate's preoccupation with the living conditions of rural communities. This becomes apparent in the case of Zhangazha, who notes that the state controlled radio that he grew up with in Zimbabwe was limited in its reach and access, and as such did not do justice to the needs of audiences in rural communities. He came to understand that community radio could make a far more impactful contribution to progressive change in society because it enables a much closer relationship with audiences:

> Community radio is an access to information service for people who would otherwise not know what's happening either within the immediate vicinity or at a national scale and how it affects people at a local level (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 71).

Moyo speaks in similar terms, attributing his commitment to community radio to his interactions with marginalised communities. He notes that over time he had become preoccupied with the role that the media could play in drawing such communities into public discussion:

> …the real focus on advocacy and expression took full grounding around 2000. It took root through writing, debates and trying to shape public discourse around the same in the popular press. It also came about through accepting being part of various debate clubs and communities (Moyo, 2023, p. 73).

Moyo explains that as part of his activist work he witnessed the economic crisis in Zimbabwe and the severe crackdown on opposition, civil society and church leaders by the Mugabe regime:

> It was … soon after the opposition, civil society and church leaders had been bashed by the regime while marching in Highfield … the brutal attacks on the MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara and Lovemore Madhuku the National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) leader in Highfield by the police (Moyo, 2032, p. 79).

He argues that community radio would provide an important platform for holding the government to account for such acts of violence, since it offers communities the possibility of freedom of speech

It would seem these community radio advocates share the libertarian ideals and values of the activists described in Chapter 5. Both have a common motivational goal: to create an inclusive, participatory, and liberating radio industry. However, the community radio activists add their commitment to developmental communication, with a particular emphasis on the benefits to rural

communities. In the following discussion, I will explore how these activists turned their motivations into action, working to establish the radio tradition they envisioned.

6.2 Putting the ideas into practice: creating an enabling environment for community radio

In contrast to the pirate radio activists, community radio advocates did not accept radio that they believed in could only exist on the margins of society. They sought, instead, to secure legal recognition for such radio by the authorities. Mawanza and Mukundu both explain that public discussions about media freedom hosted by civil society organisations presented them with opportunities to pursue this goal. They note that some meetings involved the participation of government officials and they could engage face-to-face in order to argue the case for alternative media. Mawanza remembers attending a meeting in 1998 in the eastern border town of Nyanga where prominent government officials were present and it seemed possible that they would accept the legitimacy of their arguments:

> There was the late Bornwell Chakaodza who was the Director of Information in the Ministry of Information … There was also a senior official from the President's office, George Charamba … It was an amicable discussion were MISA-Zimbabwe was engaging with big media practitioners in Zimbabwe. I was representing the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association, and we were all plotting and seeing how we could expand freedom of expression (Mawanza, 2023, p. 86).

Mukundu recalls similar where former Vice President Mujuru and several cabinet ministers, including Chenhamo Chimutengwende, participated. He suggests the deliberations that took place at these meetings between government officials and media activists led the government to consider reforms in the broadcasting sector. One example was the government's decision to partner with a German satellite television provider in order to diversify the media sector and provide a wider choice to the Zimbabwean audience. The German satellite TV, according to Mukundu, was interested in covering developmental projects happening in rural areas. He also refers to the reform of the Post and Telecommunications Act, which would have enabled the licensing of new radio stations and a new television station. Thus the activists were able to achieve some gains for alternative media, however these gains tended to be of limited value because they were not informed by a wholesale shift in approach on the part of government. Instead, they acted as small concessions:

> …this discourse and advocacy efforts were not coherent, there was no policy directives or vision statement from the government in terms of how the sector would be reformed (Mukundu, 2023, p. 90).

Advocates for alternative media nevertheless persisted, looking for ways to build on their gains. Mawanza and Mukundu both explain that they joined Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) with this purpose in mind. They believed that these organisations provided them with a vantage point from where to articulate and implement their vision for alternative media platforms. From within these organisations they could lobby for the advancement of a diversified broadcast sector, which made space for a community radio movement:

> We were then pushing for a three-tier broadcasting system: broadcasting for community radio, commercial radio and television broadcasting for the public sector… (Mukundu, 2023, p. 91.)

Mawanza assumed a senior position within Amnesty International, enabling him to engage with various relevant government offices in order to champion the licensing of community radio stations. Amnesty International regularly petitioned both Parliament and relevant government departments, directing their efforts towards persuading authorities to liberalise the airwaves. As part of his responsibilities he could approach high-ranking officials in order to advance his agenda for media freedom. He purposefully and continuously knocked at the doors of Dr. Tafataona Mahoso, long-serving Chairperson of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe and nicknamed Mugabe's 'media hangman'. He tried to convince Mahoso to see the sense behind the licencing of community radio stations. He could do so because the establishment of community radio was also high on the agenda of Amnesty International:

> Amnesty members were [also] writing the letters, encouraging and trying to persuade the authorities to … understand the potential impact of radio in terms of the development agenda in Zimbabwe and the ordinary people (Mawanza, 2023, p. 87).

The research participants commentary suggests, however, that by the early 2000s, the political climate was changing so that it became increasingly difficult to know what strategies they could successfully pursue. Mukundu explains there were both positive and negative signals about what they could achieve regarding the legalisation of alternative approaches to radio. In 2000, the Supreme Court had ruled against the ZBC's monopoly of the radio sector based on the principle of freedom of expression, however, in that same year, the government disrupted the operations of Capital Radio. Furthermore, soon after in 2001, they introduced the BSA law which was intended to curtail the challenges that media activists were launching against the hegemony of state-owned media. Mukundu observes that media activists understood themselves to be operating in an environment characterised by contradiction. On one hand, they still felt that there was a point in calling for the recognition of
citizens' rights:

> We were anchoring our advocacy [by invoking] the rights that the citizens of Zimbabwe had … to share and receive information and arguing that … people had that right to exercise freedom of expression.

On the other hand, the government was demonstrating that it was prepared to disregard such rights altogether:

> The government had banned Capital Radio and had essentially came up with a broadcasting law that was inimical to the demands that civil society and the other media players were making (Mukundu, 2023, p. 91).

In context of these contradictions, activists pursued a cocktail of strategies designed to persuade the authorities to expedite radio sector reforms. These strategies included creating public awareness, presenting advocacy papers placing key issues on public agendas, and conducting training sessions designed to empower stakeholders in media freedom. These activists understood that, in order to make any progress at all, they needed to fight for the media that they believed in on multiple fronts:

> First, there was a direct engagement with the … Minister of Information in the President's office … We [did awareness raising work] with members of parliament and [invited] experts from … outside of the country to engage them in how [countries such as] South Africa [and] Zambia were managing their broadcasting sectors (Mukundu, 2023, p. 92).

The activists exhausted all avenues possible to have the community radio sector recognised by the state:

> There was no office that we could not attend. There was no one whom we excluded from our engagement meetings. There was no-one of the authorities we did not reach out to, to be part of this agenda (Mukundu, 2023, p. 94).

According to Zhangazha, the efforts of these activists were not in vain. By the time that he joined MISA-Zimbabwe in 2002, Mukundu and others had established a well-articulated framework for engaging government officials and lawmakers about the potential value of community radio. They had also successfully pushed for the legal foundation that would in future make possible the licencing of community radio stations.

> …work on community radio was essentially putting it out in the public domain because at that time Zimbabwe did not have any community radio stations, let alone commercial radio stations. It just had the monopoly of ZBC (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 74).

In the years that followed, Zhangazha and his co-workers at MISA built on this foundation by facilitating the establishment of the first Community Radio Initiatives (CRI's) which they did on the assumption the government would soon be calling for license applications from aspirant community radio stations:

> This was because … community radio stations were already recognized [by] law as being able to exist in terms of the Broadcasting Services Act, but the government had not yet called for their applications [for licenses] (Zhangazha, 2023: p. 71)

Their aim was to ensure that, once the government called for such applications, there would be initiatives who were ready to take on the challenge. With this purpose in mind, MISA reached out to community organisations who had the potential to become broadcasters. They provided them with the training and education that enabled them to establish themselves as CRIs:

> [We worked with] a mixture of community activists, development activists and journalists who … set up initiatives in preparation for licensing of community radio stations. (Zhangazha, 2023. p. 69).

They understood, furthermore, that if the CRIs were to succeed in their goals, they would need to band together, becoming the basis of a community radio movement. Moyo teamed up with Zhangazha at MISA-Zimbabwe to build such a movement in Zimbabwe:

> Zhangazha went across the whole country, meeting communities in beer halls, farms and mines. Moving forward we launched a big campaign called Free-The-Airwaves … and Zhangazha was now the Director and I was the Advocacy Officer. Under this campaign we went to the whole country's provinces and all districts calling for this discussion to gain traction (Moyo, 2023, p. 75).

Zhangazha's spearheaded the establishment of the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) in 2003. He nurtured ZACRAS within MISA-Zimbabwe for five years before it weaned off and gained its autonomy (ZACRAS, 2014). Zhangazha says they were inspired by the presence of comparable entities in neighbouring SADC countries, such as South Africa. The understood, from observing these international examples, that a formal community radio network would provide individual stations with a crucial support system:

> We realised it was [an] important advocacy and lobbying platform to bring all the CRIs together so that when they're talking to government, they don't speak separately and they speak with one national voice … Also because we now had a number of CRIs that we had established, we felt that it would not be in their best

> interest for them to work in isolation from each other. Also for sustainability of CRIs because if they were to get licences they would definitely need a structure that helps them look for finances (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 71).

The radio advocates also knew that the CRIs would only gain legitimacy as community radio stations if they could gain their independence, existing separately from organisations like MISA-Zimbabwe and instead embedding themselves within local communities. With this principle in mind, they set out to prepare potential audiences for community radio. Their hope was that when stations started broadcasting, there would be listeners who recognised the value of what they were setting out to do. Moyo and his colleagues engaged with communities to share the concept of community radio with them, making it easy to understand and relevant to their everyday concerns:

> We built awareness on complex media issues ... so we reduced it to a bread-and-butter daily issue and that was the first strategy (Moyo, 2023, p. 77).

Zhangazha refers to these educational ventures as a "people-centered advocacy" that was crucial to the future of community radio because for stations to have legitimacy, communities needed to claim ownership of them. He was inspired by the positive response from local communities:

> We … did some public information campaigns and it was accepted that community radio stations are important … [we] were motivated by the way the public accepted the principle and wanted to be part of the project (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 70).

Moyo and his colleagues at MISA appreciated that the support of communities were crucial to the legitimacy of the community radio movement, and would assist ensuring the CRIs succeeded in their bid for licenses:

> We did not pitch ourselves as an elite group [and] we had membership [and] this allowed us when need be, and when the government said who are you speaking for our community members would support us (Moyo, 2023, p. 77).

By 2008, ZACRAS existed independently from MISA-Zimbabwe but the organisation was still working hard to capacitate the CRIs. I was able to interview Marara, the inaugural head of ZACRAS who joined the organisation at this time, who explains her task was to strengthen the relationship between ZACRAS members and their target audiences by building their capacity to provide them with content even before they were on air:

> On the one hand, we were pursuing the lobbying and advocacy agenda working with CRIs that we had. On the other hand, we were also promoting access to information through exploring different information distribution platforms such as

> bulk SMS, listener groups, Kombi-casting, etc. We were saying [that], as much as there was an absence of licenced community radio stations, communities could still have access to information (Marara, 2023, p. 80).

Under Marara's leadership, MISA-Zimbabwe extended their lobby and advocacy initiatives to traditional leaders, seeking their endorsement. This approach, she says, was informed by an acknowledgement of the historical significance of traditional leaders in influencing the contemporary trajectory of the country:

> So we engaged them so that they understand what community radios were so that they would ultimately lobby and advocate for their licencing (Marara, 2023, p. 81).

At the same time, these advocates continued to negotiate for the consolidation of a regulatory environment that would be supportive of a community radio sector in this country. Zhangazha explains that one component of their strategy was to build on the momentum towards the liberalisation of media sectors that had been achieved elsewhere in Southern Africa:

> We … introduced the campaign which we called a Three-tier-broadcasting system which is recognized by the African Union and African Commission on Human and People's rights. This was also in tandem with the Windhoek Declaration on media freedom and also the African Charter on Broadcasting which was approved by the AU (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 69).

Indeed, Moyo acknowledges that regional and international support played a significant role in their success. MISA-Zimbabwe's status as a regional media freedom organisation allowed them to utilise their membership to advocate for community radios in Zimbabwe. This was because the Zimbabwean government still responded to regional pressure for democratic change:

> Also remember, the late President Mugabe was keen at having a positive light at regional and international stage, and that allowed us to filter through complex media negotiations from that level of pressure (Moyo, 2023, p. 82).

At the same time, the government set out to ambush the advocates' negotiations by deploying individuals well-versed in principles of community radio to public meetings where enabling regulation for community radio was under discussion. They would attempt to discredit the views of the community radio advocates but the advocates were ready to fight back:

> [We had] the technical expertise [for] high level conversations like analysing the law as experts and [we could do that] without any emotion (ibid)

Zangazha and his fellow advocates also had to push for the repeal of draconian laws enacted by the Zimbabwean state, designed to curtail the campaigns of local citizens for their right to freedom of expression, although they did not succeed:

> We were also trying to stop the then Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act from being passed into law, but we did not succeed (Zangazha, 2023, p. 69)

It is clear from the testimony of these community radio advocates that they were striving to transform the Zimbabwean radio landscape by creating an enabling environment for community radio. They succeeded in setting in motion a locally grounded community radio movement, thus making an important strategic intervention at the medium level. At the same time, they continued to lobby for change at the macro-level by attempting to consolidate recognition for community radio in regulatory policy. In my judgement, by doing so, they were able to make progress in setting up the conditions that can allow activist radio to move from the periphery of Zimbabwean society to the mainstream.

6.3 The government's response: evasion, verbal harassment and intimidation

The community radio advocates pointed out their achievements did not escape the attention of the Zimbabwean government. Mukundu suggests that the Mugabe administration was worried about a possible connection between the work of the activists and the recently established opposition MDC party. Mawanza agrees that the advocates' campaigns for community radio were understood to be motivated by party politics:

> It's unfortunate that whenever people spoke about human rights and freedoms, [those days] then it was always interpreted along the political happenings of the time (Mawanza, 2023, p. 85).

Marara notes that state officials saw the community radio advocates as a direct threat to the authority of the Zanu PF:

> We were also called a pressure group, because the issues that we were speaking about were viewed to be antagonistic to the government … the fear was that the community radios were seeking to weaken Zanu PF propaganda at a community levels. So, there was that unwillingness to licence community radios because if communities were able to access information and express themselves then that would ultimately affect the voting patterns so they said. (Marara, 2023, p. 82).

Within this political climate, activists made little headway when they pointed to the important role that community radio could play in the achievement of social development goals or the realisation of human rights principles:

> Government was seeing media not only as a platform … [that should put into practice] people's rights. It was seeing media as a tool in the political struggles for its own survival (Mukundu, 2023, p. 93).

By the end of the first decade of the 2000s, there was no doubt that the government was responding to the CSOs with suspicion and as a result, government departments were increasingly unavailable to the advocates:

> They would not just commit to meetings. They would come up with all sorts of excuses of not willing to engage. (Mawanza, p. 87).

This led to the deliberate dragging of negotiations regarding community radio licensing:

> [That took] several years until we had the constitutional reforms in around 2008, with the first licencing of commercial radios happening around 2011-2013, (Mukundu, 2023, p. 91).

Marara cites additional hurdles in reaching consensus with the government during meetings specifically in defining the concepts of 'community' and 'community radio’. She says the government would profess ignorance regarding how best to determine and distinguish these terms:

> That was one of the reasons which … led to the delays in the licencing of community radios because there wasn’t that clear definition of what a community … radio is despite the existence [of these words in the] Oxford Dictionary (Marara, 2023, p. 83).

Officials also consistently advised them that their advocacy efforts were misguided, and disconnected from public sentiment:

> Dr Mahoso [repeatedly] said “we carried a study and the people of Zimbabwe said they want commercial radio stations ahead of community radio stations”, yet the whole country was yearning for community radio stations (Moyo, 2023, p. 75)

Marara encountered a similar situation when she joined ZACRAS and started partaking in lobbying meetings. Her interactions with the state during similar engagements were characterised by discomfort, lack of trust, and hostility and often, the meetings ended abruptly, or became entangled in heated disputes, as the authorities consistently maintained a hostile stance:

> I remember in one of the meetings Professor Jonathan Moyo saying that in urban areas there are no community radios because there are just cosmopolitan entities. At that time, the government was pushing for an agenda where community radio should be established in the rural areas with the chiefs … leading the stations, and it was really a challenging time. I also remember even the permanent secretary at that time, George Charamba, outrightly stating that there was no broadcasting spectrum to award community radio licences (Marara, 2023, p. 81)

Furthermore, whereas the activists were acting with extreme diplomacy, government officials were quick to throw insults, accusing activists of advocating for a regime change financed by international donors:

> It even went to levels of hate messaging, rallying dogs of imperialists, and all those kind of derogatory words and language that was being used," (Mukundu, 2023, p. 93).

They were also told that they were acting in support of opposition parties and promoting Western ideologies:

> At some point he [Professor Johnathan Moyo] was really against this whole talk of media freedom and community radio broadcasting where the government accused us of being foreign funded and therefore not having a national agenda (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 69-70).

The government could brand ZACRAS with negative terms so that the activists feel discouraged and intimidated:

> We were called all sorts of names. We were called a regime change entity mainly because of funding that we were getting from donors (Marara, 2023, p.101).

In some instances, activists also experienced intimidation. State actors cautioned them against engaging in discussions related to the broadcasting sector because this posed a threat to national security and viewed as a subversive act against the state. These warnings often prompted the activists to reconsider initiating meetings with authorities to discuss the community radio agenda. Moyo says some of these threats were indirect, evident in the treatment of other freedom of expression advocacy groups by the state. He cites the Save-Zimbabwe campaign whose activists faced regular arrests for petitioning the government:

> The information industry was highly subdued as newspapers were being closed … It was a taboo and unthinkable to mention that you want a community radio. It was

> bordering on trying to postulate treasonous positions, they (the state) would say that it is a security concern (Moyo, 2023, p. 74-75).

The discussions with the participants highlighted the negative responses encountered by the activists while advocating for reform of the legislation governing the broadcasting sector at the macro level. It is evident the state dismissed the practical efforts of these activists attempting to foster a more inclusive community-based radio sector. The state's reaction was characterised by suspicion, resistance, and hostility, as government officials perceived both the discussions and their activities in the form of CRIs as threats to their authority and stability. The lobbying tactics employed by the activists to engage the government in conversations about community radio and their actions in establishing CRIs demonstrated libertarian principles, which prioritise openness and inclusivity. Despite resistance from the state, including allegations, these activists persisted in advocating for community radio licenses and media freedom.

6.4 Participants' reflections on the current radio landscape

The community radio advocates make similar observations to those shared by the pirate radio activists in Chapter 5 with regarding the current state of the Zimbabwean radio sector. They too are sceptical about the government's recent willingness to allocate licenses to stations. However, despite these reservations, they argue that the interventions that they have made as media activists into this radio landscape has led to gains for democratic progress. Mawanza notes that even the smallest of accomplishments should be celebrated:

> Well there's always room for improvement, but we have to acknowledge that you start from somewhere. for me, you start from somewhere (Mawanza, 2023, p. 89).

Mukundu argues that the government now accepts that it cannot maintain exclusive control of the radio sector in this country:

> If you look at Zimbabwe from 1980 to about the year 2000, and where we are now, one can say that, yes there is some positive development. Whether that is the ideal? Certainly not! We have achieved a lot in setting up a firm base in terms of the acceptance… by Zanu PF that there can be other media other than ZBC (Mukundu, 2023, p. 96).

Zhangazha argues that progressive change in the Zimbabwe radio landscape has been slow, but certain improvements can be observed. He predicts that, given time, the radio sector will eventually undergo genuine reform:

> We have to accept that things cannot happen as you want them all the time, and incremental change is progressive change anyway. So you cannot be 100% happy, but you can recognise progress and move forward (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 72).

Marara, however, argues that the government's current licencing strategies are fundamentally undermining the purpose of community radio. When licenses are awarded to Zanu PF politicians, it is at the expense of the CRIs that can legitimately claim the status of community-based projects:

> This is of concern because you would find that a chairperson of a particular community radio station is a wife to the MP, etc. Those are worrying issues because when it comes to community radio they should never be room for politicians (Marara, 2023, p. 84).

Mukundu does not believe that the state should be trusted to facilitate progressive change, even in the longer term due to their continued insistence on determining who should receive licenses and how these awardees should operate their stations:

> I think we still have a lot of work to do in terms of ensuring that the sector is not politically captured, which I think it is. Most of our new [radio] stations are linked to the ruling elite (Mukundu, 2023, p. 96).

Moyo suggests, similarly, that the licensing process, as it currently exists, is a deliberate attempt by the state to confuse and impede the progress of community radio initiatives. He too suggests that change can only happen if they are held to account for these strategies:

> [There is] lack of transparency around who else will be awarded the license all these things require a review of the procedures that lead to one lending a licence (Moyo, 2023, p. 78).

Conclusion

It is evident that the community radio advocates' motivations in seeking alternative communication platforms were similar to those of the pirate radio tradition described in Chapter 5. Like the pirates, they sought to counter the control of public communication exercised by the state-controlled broadcaster. Instead, they advocated for democratic and inclusive radio that spoke to the interests of Zimbabwean citizens. At the same time, the community radio advocates placed a stronger emphasis than the pirates on the role that radio can play in the development of rural communities. It is not by chance that, in their search for organisations that could be turned into CRIs, they prioritised civil society groups dedicated to serving the needs of rural communities. In this way, they ensured that

these organisations became the building blocks for the establishment of a community radio sector in this country.

Furthermore, there is a notable distinction between the approaches taken by community radio advocates and pirate radio activists in their efforts to establish alternative radio platforms. The pirate radio activists operated from the margins of society, in hiding from the authority of the state. In contrast, community radio advocates initiated their campaign from within mainstream society, engaging directly with government officials on questions of media freedom, diversity and inclusivity. Unlike the radical approach of pirate radio activists, these advocates were diplomatic, inviting government officials to act in partnership with them. When measured against the analytical frameworks presented in Chapter 2, these approaches can be seen to be representative of a democratic corporatist mindset, in which the emphasis is on fostering collaboration between civil society and the government.

It also is possible to argue that as a result of this approach, the advocates were able to facilitate a modicum of social change at a systemic level in a way that had not been possible for the pirate radio activists. Firstly, they achieved shifts in the legislation guiding the broadcasting sector at the macro level. Secondly, they also created momentum in the establishment of community radio movement at the medium level. This was achieved through the establishment of CRIs, the building of a community radio network and the nurturing of media literacy amongst communities that created the possibility of audiences that could be receptive to community radio.

It is apparent that the treatment meted out to the community radio advocates by the state differed from that experienced by the pirate radio regime. They may have had to deal with unwillingness and suspicion, verbal abuse and sometimes even veiled threats, but they were not targeted with physical violence. It is possible, however, that the government simply did not view these activists as a serious threat to the destabilisation of their control of communication systems as the pirate radio activists had been.

CHAPTER SEVEN- THE COMMUNITY RADIO PRACTITIONERS

Introduction

Chapter 6 explored the role of community radio advocates in establishing the foundations for community radio in Zimbabwe in the late 1990s. They raised awareness about the idea of community radio; negotiated for regulatory changes that could allow legal recognition for such radio; helped to establish CRIs and created an enabling environment that would eventually result in these initiatives materialising as fully functioning radio stations. This final chapter of the study focuses on activists who became directly involved in these CRIs and fought for their establishment as broadcasting stations. I refer in the study to this category of activist as the community radio practitioners.

The literature review in Chapter 3 does not sufficiently cover the contribution these practitioners have made to the establishment of community radio in Zimbabwe as one is only briefly informed about the programming of the CRIs, without accounts of the people who produced this content and what they achieved in this regard. To fill this knowledge gap, this chapter engages with four research participants who were instrumental in the establishment and operation of two pioneering community radio initiatives (CRIs) in Zimbabwe. They are Johnson and Kwangwari, who were based at Radio Dialogue in Bulawayo, and Chipere and Chimwara, who worked for Community Radio Harare (CORAH).

It is important to note that these practitioners continued to work closely with advocates from MISA-Zimbabwe and ZACRAS, and for that reason, the chapter references the community radio advocates as external stakeholders who supported the CRIs, and collaborated closely with the practitioners. These advocates include Mukundu, mentioned in Chapter 6, who participated in the initial stakeholder meetings with the government regarding the concept of community radio in the late 1990s. He later joined MISA-Zimbabwe to further champion the cause of community radio. A decade later, he transitioned to International Media Support (IMS), where at the time of writing he was overseeing the organisation's programmes spanning across Africa. Reference is also made to Chiseya who worked with the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN) as a Senior Electoral Education and Capacity Building Officer. Finally, I draw on my interview with Chimhini, who worked for the Election Resource Centre (ERC). Both the ZESN and the ERC focus on pro-democracy and electoral education programs, and have longstanding partnerships with CRIs, They produced and shared educational materials with CRIs for distribution to their constituencies and played a crucial role in the operation of the CRIs as described in this chapter.

Section 1 deals with the micro level of analysis by exploring the formation of the individual and personal beliefs of these research participants. Section 2 deals at the medium level of social analysis with their involvement in the establishment of traditions of practice. Section 3 considers

analysis at the macro-level by examining the extent to which their work impacted systemic relations of power that define the broadcasting sector in Zimbabwe. As in the case of the previous two chapters, I explore such impact by considering the way the government responded to their interventions as media activists. Section 4 presents a summary of the participants' assessment of the radio landscape in Zimbabwe at the time when the fieldwork for this study was completed, in 2023.

7.1 The motivations and ideals of the community radio practitioners

The commitment to the ideal of social justice and its realisation in the Zimbabwean context appears to be the central motivation for the research participants. Jonhson, a Catholic cleric, explains that for him this commitment was informed by his Christian beliefs, which in 2001 led him to collaborate with like-minded individuals in Bulawayo to establish Radio Dialogue. He explains that their primary purpose was to provide local communities with a vehicle for self-expression, and hence coined the slogan "Radio Dialogue, giving you a voice" that soon became closely associated with the CRI:

> It was trying to give the people of Bulawayo, to bring freedom of expression to the people of Bulawayo and they had plenty of things they wanted to say (Johnson, 2023, p. 48).

Kwangwari became the station's programs manager when he joined the CRI in 2003, shortly after moving from Masvingo to Bulawayo. He notes that in Masvingo he grew up within a politically charged community where critical engagement with questions of social justice were part of daily debate, which shaped his political consciousness:

> I just had a critical consciousness and the issues that they were talking about, how to make people free and be able to express themselves … I was also politically conscientized because I was interested in what was happening in the country in general (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 50).

He applied critical engagement to the state broadcaster, who in his view exhibited a bias towards the ruling elite and became convinced of the need for alternative communication platforms where opposing views could gain expression:

> My motivation was to bring new platforms for citizens to be able to engage and share information (ibid).

Chiwara, the Chair of the CORAH Trust, has similar motivations, and revealed motivations comparable to those of both Johnson and Kwangwari. Like Johnson, he is a devout Catholic whose involvement in alternative radio was propelled by Christian values, which informed his belief in

justice and equality. He became convinced of the need for media platforms where these principles could be put into practice:

> I … developed a passion as a Christian to also create a platform where the church in Zimbabwe would come in and provide alternative voice (Chimwara, 2023, p. 65).

His first stint with alternative radio was in 2004 when he transitioned from ZBC and joined the Far Eastern Broadcasting Association (FEBA Radio), a production house involved in producing content on Christian and social issues. He explains that his experience at ZBC, where he was expected to produce one-sided news content that favoured only the perspectives of the government, contributed to his desire for a more inclusive approach to radio:

> All programming was tailored based on what government wanted to dish out to the masses (ibid).

Chipere, the director of CORAH, says that he was raised in an environment characterised by inequality and economic hardships where intolerance was rife:

> I was … coming from a poor background and I have always been concerned about how marginalised communities were excluded, how they were treated and how they were not given equal opportunities (Chipere, 2023, p. 57).

Having migrated from a rural area to the capital, Chipere observed first-hand the inequality that existed between the impoverished citizens of Zimbabwe and the powerful elite. This was of great concern to him and intensified his desire for social justice:

> Moving to the urban areas showed me the disparities that exist between the rural and urban setup, when it comes to access to social service delivery and even participation in economic and political issues (Chipere, 2023, p. 57).

While in Harare, Chipere enrolled at the University of Zimbabwe and became a member of the student's representative body where he engaged in student activism:

> My enrolment at the UZ brought political consciousness in me and inspired me to want to take an active role in social change (ibid).

Mukundu, who featured in Chapter 6, remained an advocate for community radio:

> From the Capital Radio case up to the time that we decided to support the non-registered media, the message that had been coming from the likes of MISA-Zimbabwe, ZACRAS, and various communities in Zimbabwe was that they want to exercise their right to free expression by broadcasting as community media. We also consulted public bodies including government officials, and there was growing

> consensus even within the political circles, within the regulatory authorities that the question of opening the broadcasting sector can no longer be pushed backwards (Mukundu, 2023. p. 93).

Numerous civil society organisations (CSOs) shared the vision of actualising alternative radio in Zimbabwe and many were dedicated to civic and human rights education. Since their establishment, these civic groups have encountered difficulties disseminating their programming to marginalised communities through state media, which often either censored or rejected the broadcasting. Chiseya, who is currently involved in electoral education, believes that community radio can play a key role in voter education. She explains that her commitment to reach marginalised communities with education increased her desire to see the establishment of community radio stations:

> We realized that they are closer to the people, and people can easily be accessed through participation because they are locally based. The other reason is that community radios deal with local and community-based issues which people can easily identify with. They also use … the languages that the various communities understand (Chiseya, 2023, p. 96).

Chimhini, the former director of the Election Resource Centre (ERC), speaks similarly about the importance of community radio for election-related programming. His critique of state-owned media is not only informed by its one-sided bias towards the ruling party, but also its inaccessibility to rural audiences, which does not permit the inclusion of alternative voices in its programming:

> We were looking at situations where the media was not only polarised but also the state sponsored media was difficult to access. Hence, the preference to then say can we move towards alternative media as a platform through which we could use to reach-out to communities across the country (Chimhini, 2023, p. 99).

Throughout these statements about the values that inform their involvement in community radio, these research participants can be seen to return to shared concerns. They speak, firstly, about the role that media should play in the pursuit of social justice for all people in Zimbabwe. They refer, secondly, to the failure of the state broadcaster to fulfil this purpose and its tendency, and instead to operate only in the interest of the ruling party. They point, finally, to the role that community radio can play in providing alternative communication platforms that offer communities spaces in which to express their own views and engage with their own social experiences. This is of particular importance to the needs of peri-urban and rural audiences.

7.2 Putting the ideas into practice: building community radio practice

The research participants felt strongly that despite the challenges that they face within the Zimbabwean context, they have been able to translate their vision of community radio into tangible reality. Johnson explains, for example, that soon after it first became established, Radio Dialogue was able to deliver content to communities even without the benefit of a radio license or transmitter. The project began as a campus-based discussion forum established in collaboration with a group of National University of Science and Technology (NUST) students in Bulawayo. Originally named Bulawayo Dialogue, this forum hosted discussions dealing with developmental and social issues facing the city, such as service delivery. Participants produced audio recordings of the conversations, packaged them, and distributed them to communities:

> We gradually developed a series of alternative [distribution] methods, mainly by doing road shows in the Bulawayo high density suburbs and making cassettes or CDs. We used music to attract people and entertain people during road shows (Johnson, 2023, p. 46).

They succeeded in integrating local transport operators' associations into their community membership structures. Taxis became crucial to distributing their recordings to the broader Bulawayo community and surrounding areas:

> We were … encouraging freedom of expression through some serious discussions which we would package on CDs and gave to the local minibuses to play in the public transport system (Johnson, 2023, p. 47).

Radio Dialogue also collaborated with community-based art groups as a component of their programming and as a means of fostering local ownership of the project. They actively sought out and showcased talent within the Bulawayo community, incorporating it into their radio project as valuable content:

> We had a bunch of guys, young men and young women, who were very enthusiastic about what we were doing. Also all the people of Bulawayo were very enthusiastic about it, especially the youth, because we gave the youth opportunities to perform. I mean, Iyasa [an Arts performing group] that was in its early days, we always got them up on the stage, other groups that did dancing, singing, a comedy acts and all the rest of it (Johnson 2023, p. 48).

This strategy significantly enhanced their popularity among communities, increasing interest in the content that they were distributing. In response to this growing demand, Radio Dialogue adopted a programming approach similar to the tactics employed by the pirate radio tradition discussed in 110

Chapter 6, when they ventured into broadcasting on shortwave. However, unlike the pirate radio stations, they did not start broadcasting illegally because their aim was to operate within the letter of the law, and to wait until it became possible to apply for licenses. In the meantime, their road shows and their presence on public transport systems provided them with a way of distributing content to their audiences. They sustained such programming for the first decade of the millennium:

> So we managed to carry on and for 10 years or so we became very popular in Bulawayo. This was because people there have a single ethnic background or tribal background and they also feel marginalised. So the fact that they could have their own means of communicating among themselves made us very popular (Johnson, 2023, p. 47).

Two years after the establishment of the project, Kwangwari joined Johnson, driven by his commitment amplifying community voices. He was tasked with steering the evolution of Radio Dialogue from a mere discussion forum to a fully-fledged radio project. He began by focusing on institutionalising and providing direction to the project, taking on the role of a strategist:

> I was actively involved in making sure that their policies are consistent. Reviewing our strategic plans, and say are we really in line with our strategic plan After six months, we had to come together and say, where are we in terms of the implementation of the strategies? And where do we need to change? I was also responsible for engaging different stakeholders and donors, making sure that proposals were developed, maintain relationships with funders, making sure that reports were produced and shared with donors (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 54).

Kwangwari‘s shifted his attention to human resources, focusing on ensuring that staff members were adequately trained, resourced and remunerated. His succeeded in establishing a well-organised team with the necessary skills to provide communities with relevant content. He was also able to establish a community-based distribution system:

> We were using production studios to produce programmes … put them on tapes, before we went for Compact Discs … we also had community structures which were ready and available to receive and distribute the productions that we were doing (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 52).

Along the way, he ran into trouble with local officials, who questioned the legality of distributing material on local taxi services:

> Those tapes were … played in the public transport. We were approached by Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) and said, what you're doing is actually road-casting and it requires a licence (ibid).

This complaint did not deter Radio Dialogue and they took care of it by securing the endorsement of their distribution system by the transport companies, which provided them with legal cover, and ensured its practice remained within the bounds of Zimbabwean law:

> We had to mobilise the Public Transport Association to become a member of Radio Dialogue. When they become our members we were able to continue and said that we are distributing (tapes and CDs) not to the public (ibid).

Chiseya, from ZESN, notes that her organisation was able to share recorded content with Radio Dialogue. They did so because they, too, understood that the project provided them with a crucial access point to listeners who travelled on public transport:

> We were using them to dissemination information of our programming … we would produce our podcasts and then they would disseminate those through their community structures. They would also do what we call road-casting using, local transport like Kombies (Taxis). In this they would play our programmes in public transport where people would listen to those programs (Chiseya, 2023, p. 97).

Kwangwari says that there next step was to find ways of gaining legal status for Radio Dialogue in the form of a broadcast license. Drawing inspiration from the practices of MISA and ZACRAS, they mobilised community members and listeners groups to petition the government for a licence:

> In 2007, we did our first application to BAZ which was turned down. We did that application even though we were aware that the call, which BAZ had made, was for commercial narrowcasting. So we did an application just to prove that we are there and we needed a licence (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 52).

Chipere describes the process of establishing CORAH in similar terms. He explains that this project was founded by a group of journalists and Roman Catholic Christians who registered the organisation as a Trust to ensure legal compliance within the Zimbabwean regulatory environment. The Trust operated as a content production house, and distributed its content to local communities. Chipere adds that they were able to distribute this content legally by making use of community structures that the authorities did not understand to be located within the public domain:

> In terms of avoiding breaking [laws] that restricted citizens from gathering without the authority of the police, our outreach programmes in most cases were very

> informal. For example, we would gather at one of our community members' house in the high-density residential areas, listen to a programme and then interrogate the content (Chipere, 2023, p. 59).

CORAH also created civil society networks that could be used for content generation. Chimhini notes that the ERC was one such group who produced voter education materials for distribution by CORAH:

> They were not only waiting to produce content but they could do their own stories and bring them to us for verification to ensure accuracy. So we viewed that as a partnership much more than we did from the commercial arrangement we had with the state media (Chimhini, 2023, p. 102).

CORAH also identified community volunteers to assist with such content generation and capacitated them to the level where they became citizen journalists:

> They would now identify news in their communities send it to our studios for editing. In addition to that we also utilised professional journalists who would also bring in content into our programming (ibid).

Like Radio Dialogue, CORAH leaned heavily on public forums and public transport systems for disseminating such content:

> We used the platforms such as community meetings, and roadshows conducted in a live radio format. For example, we could organise a road-show and bring a local councillor who would interact with residents in service delivery issues (ibid).

Chipere notes that during such public gatherings, CORAH would solicit phone numbers of participants and in this way created a data base. They could then send news teasers to everyone on their data base:

> We … developed a bulk SMS system that enabled us to send news headlines to those citizens who had mobile phones but [who were] still not able to access internet. We also used the freedom-phone platform in partnership with an organisation called Kubatana. On that platform citizens would call or phone-in for free and listen to community news of the day (ibid).

Like Radio Dialogue, they were able to extend their reach throughout Harare and the peri-urban centres by forming strategic partnerships with local taxi operators. They utilised this network to distribute their programming on cassettes and CDs, which the drivers would played in their taxis.

Such content could only be played legally on public transport with the agreement of transport owners, hence CORA succeeded in securing such permission from transport companies:

> They would say you are road-casting and for us to avoid that, we had partnerships with a number of CSOs including the Commuter Omnibus operators whom we would use to play our programmes in their cars and we would tell the authorities that these are our members we are serving (ibid).

In 2008, again using similar strategies to Radio Dialogue, CORAH used its membership and alliance partners to petition the government to acknowledge the radio project by granting them a broadcasting licence. The move to drag the government to court was initiated by their community members yearning for the legal recognition of community radio. Although they did not succeed in securing a license, participants felt that they had drawn attention to the legitimacy of their claim:

> We did that, using the law, which says they should call for applications for licences. Our issue was dismissed on technicalities, but we had managed to put our issue to the public to see that the government was not implementing an existing law (Chipere, 2023, p. 60).

When Chimwara joined this initiative, he saw many similarities to the practices with which he had gained familiarity at FEBA Radio. FEBA had placed a strong emphasis on people-oriented programming. This was in direct contrast to the approach that existed at ZBC, his previous employer:

> We … had to look at the audience and design content responding to the needs of the audience based on what we were seeing in the communities. So the transition was really unique in that you are coming from a perspective where radio production was based on the demands of the state, we were now crossing over to doing programming that was focused on the needs and expectations of the listening audience (Chimwara, 2023. p. 65).

Chimwara says that even though FEBA Radio operated as an independent production house, its content was subject to ZBC's influence. They could create radio programs, but had to submit the content to the state broadcaster and pay for broadcast slots. However, ZBC would censor the content before airing it. He says this was disheartening, leading him to abandon FEBA and take up a position at CORAH.

Chiseya explains that the Zimbabwean Electoral Support Network (ZESN) had a longstanding relationship with CORAH, similar to its connection with Radio Dialogue. ZESN used the CRIs to publicise their community engagement programs, and would sponsor a roadshow so that they had the opportunity to address the community they served. They would pay a nominal fee for the production of CDs, which the CRIs would distribute through their network:

> Since inception we have been having the idea of working with community radios … We were also producing CDs which were being disseminated in communities and others were using memory sticks (Chiseya, 2023, p. 97).

ZESN also advocated for the licensing of the CRIs by endorsing their legitimacy and preparing reports for the donor community and other stakeholders:

> …we were also recommending other organisations through sharing the reach we were getting [by] using these CRIs. We were … sharing our experiences and the impact that we were making in communities through these CRIs. We would actually put all these in our reports as recommendations that community radios are important (Chiseya, 2023, p. 98).

According to Chimhini, ERC serves as another example of an organisation focused on election-related programming that partnered with CORAH and the community radio movement more generally. Their programs faced interference from state media during his tenure at the organisation, which differed from the experience with CRIs. The censorship was severe to the extent of abruptly cut in the midst of a live paid broadcast when they addressed critical issues concerning the government.

> We had numerous instances where our communication products or programmes were literally censored by state media, which we did not experience when we engaged and take the same to CRIs. Further to the issues of editorial what we experienced was that CRIs were more willing to take up our content and they were even creative in content production. (Chimhini, 2023, p. 102).

Mukundu adds that, alongside MISA-Zimbabwe and ZACRAS, there is IMS, which he currently leads in the region. IMS enabled the CRIs to function effectively as alternative news platforms while awaiting the acquisition of licenses:

> The solidarity with the CRIs was based on our assessments and engagements with the local media actors in terms of their needs. So our support to the non-licenced community radio stations was to prepare them to apply for licences. To offer them training on how to operate as a broadcasters. To support them on their vision when the ultimately were to be operating as a community broadcasters or commercial broadcasters. So the starting point of broadcasting reforms in Zimbabwe was essentially to prepare the communities to be aware of how a broadcasting station operates. Its purposes and how do you organize yourself

> around managing a broadcasting station. This was the reason or the justification of our support to the non-licenced community radio stations (Mukundu, 2023, p. 95).

We see, within the above descriptions of practice, a repeated reference to the use of public transport systems as an infrastructure for the distribution of content. This distribution system was able, to an extent, 'stand in' for a broadcasting system, in the absence of the availability of broadcast licenses. In this way, the community radio practitioners created a media ecosystem that was, at least to an extent, equivalent to that of radio. However, it was a system based on a highly complex set of alliances with content providers and transport companies. In the view of this researcher, time and effort required for managing this system was not sustainable in the long term; it only existed because the simple act of broadcasting on a transmitter was not available to these practitioners.

The research participants explain that beginning from 2010 onwards, it became possible to leverage widespread availability of the internet in Zimbabwe for the purposes of alternative radio. The radio activists soon realised that digital media provided them with another avenue for the legal distribution of content to their listeners that could augment what they had achieved in context of road shows and road-casting. In October 2011, IMS, under the leadership of Mukundu, organised both the community radio sector and the pirate radio regiment to create a unified digital platform known as ChanelZim. In Chapter 3 it was noted that this platform operated from a base in South Africa, and both community radio practitioners and pirate stations benefitted from it. Mukundu explains that ChanelZim brought together partners from across these two traditions of radio to pool their resources so that, through their combined strength, they could make the most of this digital platform. They tasked Masuku from Radio VOP with co-ordinating the platform so that some partners could produce their programs in Zimbabwe and then transmit them to South Africa for dissemination via satellite. This content could then reach audiences through Free-to-Air decoders. Masuku elaborates on the programming strategies employed on this diasporic digital platform:

> So we were saying in order to improve our signal why not put it on the facility on TV where people just listen to the radio while we put pictures, that is how we came up with the idea of Channelzim. We then said lets make it a 24 hour channel which would incorporate all community radio projects including Radio Dialogue, SW Radio Africa, Studio 7 and Community Radio Harare. We had formed a hub where the programs would go and then they would automatically be broadcast as long as they were uploaded. We continued with our own policies but all working towards and fighting for the opening up the airwaves (Masuku, 2023, p. 32).

Kwangwari notes that the platform augmented Radio Dialogue's listenership, enabling them to elicit feedback, and assisting them in the reorganisation of their content:

> It was an opportunity that gave these organisations that came together an opportunity to learn how to produce a real radio programme, to learn how to run a radio station because of the time period or sessions which were allocated to different players in the consortium. So it was a very good experience … the platform was popular and people were very much interested in our programming (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 52).

Chipere says the platform helped them to expand their programming and their membership and listenership. Furthermore, radio practitioners gained valuable experience in what it means to run a continuous programming stream that needed to remain of relevance to its target audience:

> I would say the focus was on the nitty gritty needs of ordinary citizens and was the core of our programming. Channelzim gave us a good experience of feeling how it would be when running radio because we were given four hours of broadcasting every day. So our experience on Channelzim was very useful when it comes to then to prepare us as CORAH to be a real community radio station that would broadcasting say 24/7 (Chipere, 2023, p. 61).

The accounts presented in this section underscore the lengths to which the radio practitioners were prepared to go in order to establishing systems for the distribution of audio-based content that could approximate what can be achieved by a community radio station. Within such systems, they were able to breathe life into a tradition of community radio without having legal access to community radio licenses, while avoiding any breach of the law. As such, they remained true to their commitment to establishing a tradition of radio that could exist in the mainstream of society rather than the margins.

The media tradition that they established in this context in the first two decades of the millennium can be seen to align with the conceptual framework of participatory communication as described by Christian et al. (2009). This tradition accentuates the active engagement of community members in communication processes, granting them the agency to contribute meaningfully both to the formation and dissemination of their narratives. This tradition can be observed, for example, in Johnson's account of the creation of a discussion forum that evolved into a community radio project, utilising alternative broadcasting approaches such as road shows, CDs, and partnerships with local transport operators. His emphasis on substantive discussions, local artistic collaborations, and youth involvement reflects a steadfast commitment to engaging the community in content creation. Kwangwari's strategic responsibilities, institutionalisation efforts, and collaboration with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) further underscore the participatory nature of their approach. Similarly, Chipere's initiatives at CORAH, involving community structures, citizen journalists, and strategic partnerships, align with a participatory model. The emphasis on community engagement, 117

local content creation, and advocacy for licensing collectively manifests a dedication to establishing community-based media practices at the medium level per the principles of the participatory communication tradition.

The discussion further reveals that in the second decade of the millennium the participants were able to recreate this tradition of participatory communication in the digital realm, in context of the cooperative online platform represented by ChanelZim. This enabled them to create a media space that more closely approximated the dynamics of a broadcasting radio station than had been possible in context of their road shows and road-casting enterprises. It was now possible to facilitate a systematic and continuous rotation of content and to build audience engagement consistently. These findings affirm the crucial role played by the digital realm in contributing to the establishment of community-centric media sphere amongst community radio practitioners in Zimbabwe.

We have seen that the pirate radio activists also partnered with CRIs on the digital platform. In this way, the tradition of radio that they are responsible for intersected with that of the community radio activists, even though these two groups had historically pursued very different strategies. On one hand, the pirate radio activists had historically adopted a radical approach, operating from the margins of society and adopting clandestine practices of broadcasting when necessary. On the other hand, the community radio activists did their utmost to claim a space for community-based radio within the mainstream of Zimbabwean society, by negotiating directly with the state. Nevertheless, in context of Channelzim, these two traditions of radio could co-exist, presumably because their ultimate goal remained the same – to provide Zimbabwean audiences with access to radio that serve the interests of social justice and the public good.

7.3 The government's response: obstruction, arrests, raids and violence

As detailed in the previous section, the community radio practitioners set up production facilities, created content, and distributed it to local communities through unconventional channels. They did so despite the state's resistance to their activities. Simultaneously, their representative organisations and membership constituencies were involved in governmental engagements, seeking broadcasting licenses for these CRIs. Kwangwari notes that authorities felt threatened by these activities. He recalls several occasions when authorities denied them permission or disrupted their public gatherings, invoking laws such as the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which required members of the public to obtain clearance from local police for activities involving more than four people. Government officials would refuse such clearance on logistical grounds:

> The government would use that law to … say you cannot go ahead with your activity because the police are not ready, they don't have human resources to deploy to your event. They would use that law very selectively (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 51)

Johnson says that using the same law, the police would arrest citizens suspected of holding unsanctioned meetings. He experienced such an arrest on 14 February 2002, the Day of Love, while attending a local peaceful march organized by Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) in central Bulawayo.

> On Valentine's Day, they [WOZA] were marching around the city giving out the roses to all the men and saying, peace and love to all. They asked me to film them, and I filmed them with a small video camera. So as I was doing that, the police came and arrested them and they arrested me as well and we all spent a night in police cells. The next day we were released and you know what, although we were charged we never went to court (Johnson, 2023, p. 48).

He mentions another occasion when he was arrested during a public gathering where he and his production team were providing media coverage:

> I got arrested … and locked up overnight for filming a video of a Music Group, of young guys doing their music, such stupid things that the police got nervous and nobody was ever charged. Zenzele Ndebele [Radio Dialogue senior producer] also got picked up and he was locked up for about almost a week but again he was never taken to court and he was never charged (ibid).

Kwangwari says that such arrests became the order of the day for his staff:

> Sometimes our reporters would be picked and arrested on charges that were not applicable (Kwangwari, 2023, p. 54)

Chipere says that in the capital, staff at CORAH received the same treatment, especially when they were on assignment to gather content at public meetings:

> [We had] such incidences involving cases where our journalists were arrested and even beaten up by the police, while gathering content (Chipere, 2023, p. 60).

Chimwara also refers to instances when state security attempted to interfere with their operations at CORAH:

> I recall once or twice the CORAH offices were investigated by state security agents so it was a very difficult time that we're operating in (Chimwara, 2023, p. 66).

Johnson says his staff also experienced studio raids by state security agents:

> The Broadcasting Authority people came to look for the equipment to see if we were broadcasting which we were not and what we had was just a recording studio (Johnson 2023, p. 48).

These studio raids resulted in the confiscation of broadcasting equipment by state security, who would scrutinise the recorded content to look for incriminating evidence. Chipere says this was also their experience at the CORAH recording studios:

> We had a number of such cases … at one time, the police had an unsolicited visit to our premises where they intended to interrogate us (Chipere, 2023, p. 60).

Johnson says the worst experience he had as an attempt by the authorities to deport him:

> The immigration people came down to see if there was anybody they could deport. They tried to deport me but they couldn't because I had by then become a Zimbabwe citizen, although they did deport one guy who was not a Zimbabwean citizen and they gave him 24 hours to leave the country (Johnson 2023, p. 48).

Every time arrests happened, not only at Radio Dialogue and CORAH but also at other CRIs, station managers would inform ZACRAS. ZACRAS would then advise MISA-Zimbabwe to provide legal advice and representation for the individuals involved. Marara notes that he received and documented numerous such reports from their members in Bulawayo and Kwekwe, which they would escalate to MISA-Zimbabwe:

> There were several such cases and I remember at one time a Radio Dialogue representative being arrested because of the radio sets [ZACRAS] was distributing at that time. We had also purchased studios for some of our members and I remember Radio Kwelaz being harassed by the police and accused of broadcasting without a licence. This saw the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe visiting the station [Radio Kwelaz] so that they [could] ascertain that indeed the station was not broadcasting (Marara, 2023, p. 83).

She also speaks of the persecution of one of their members in Masvingo, some 300 kilometres south of Harare, who was arrested while covering an event. This was not unusual:

> I also remember in Masvingo one of the community radio activists being arrested for taking pictures which the authorities did not want him to take. So we had several incidences of arrests and intimidation of community radio activists and advocates (Marara, 2023, p. 83).

Zhangazha says when they received such reports, MISA-Zimbabwe would swiftly intervene by engaging with law enforcement agents in order to negotiate for the freedom of the activists:

> We would ask our lawyers to intervene or follow up with the police on particular raids. We would try and go to court or also engage the police on that. We had a media defence fund and a media lawyers network where if anything happens to either journalists working at a CRI or a community radio activist, we would deploy lawyers (Zhangazha, 2023, p. 71).

In addition to providing legal representation, MISA-Zimbabwe would also offer paralegal training to CRIs activists to help them navigate legal boundaries and avoid violating laws in the course of their operations:

> We would also give them [community radio practitioners] information on what existed at law, and what is permissible at law (ibid).

It is of interest to consider the way this group of radio activists were treated by the state, when compared to the previous two groups mentioned in this study. We saw that the pirate radio activists, as described in Chapter 5, suffered violence perpetrated in the name of the law. The community radio advocates discussed in Chapter 6 were treated more carefully, experiencing only intimidation and disruption. This is most probably because they remained more diplomatic in their approach and called the government to account for their legal commitment to community radio. The community radio practitioners and advocates discussed in this current chapter are in the middle of the state's backlash spectrum. They experienced some physical violence and incarceration but not at the same level of brutality as could be observed in the case of the pirates. It is possible that the state attacked these activists and their radio projects with direct violence even though they were acting with diplomacy because, in putting the vision of community radio into practice, they came to threaten the prevailing order.

7.4 Participants' reflection on the current radio landscape

In commenting on progress with the diversification radio in the contemporary media landscape in Zimbabwe, the community radio practitioners express mixed feelings, mainly citing the partisan approach taken by the authorities to awarding licences. Johnson expresses a sense of achievement when he reflects on the role of the radio practitioners in compelling the authorities to recognise the community radio sector, even though such recognition was slow to emerge:

> I would say that through Radio Dialogue and through ZACRAS we did put pressure on the government to catch up with the rest of Africa, and the rest of the world, in

> terms of community radios … you've got something other than simply ZBC, state monopoly (Johnson, 2023, p. 49).

His counterpart, Kwangwari, also expresses optimism about the advances that have been made in context of the establishment of regulation that opens up space for both community radio and commercial radio to exist as alternatives to state radio:

> I think what has changes is the attitude and the appreciation of a three tier broadcasting system which we now have in Zimbabwe (Kwangwari, 2023, p 56).

However, Chipere is of the view that the government has failed to ensure that community radio licenses are awarded to initiatives that can legitimately claim to exist in service of local communities:

> The community radio initiatives that were in the forefront of lobbying for licences have not been licenced and this is worrying. We need licences for those who have been in the trenches for two decades or so, we need them licenced Chipere, 2023, p. 63).

Chimwara is of the view that the licensing procedure for community radio, as it has been applied so far, has not succeeded in ensuring that licenses are awarded to stations that have a proven record of having established themselves as community-based initiatives:

> I think enough due diligence was not done. There are stations where if you scrutinise the people who are in the boards of trustees you can see some politically connected people within those boards. This really questions the agenda behind the government licensing certain community radio stations (Chimwara, 2023, p. 68).

The community radio advocates amongst this group of research participants also express dissatisfaction with the current licensing procedures. They view the process as a superficial gesture by the authorities intended to mislead the public into believing there is diversity in the radio sector. Chimhini asserts that the state is consolidating its control by granting licenses to stations that merely claim the status of being community-based, when in fact there is no evidence of this. In fact, these licensees have strong connections to government officials and therefore the awarding of licenses simply extends the government's control into the community radio sector:

> What we are seeing at the moment is an attempt to create a facade of an independent media which is almost wholly owned by the same people that enjoy their coverage by the public media. So currently a lot of what we are seeing as community radio stations in terms of those that have been licenced is simply an expansion of the

> public media with a sort of a façade that is meant to create an impression that these people are part of the new independent media (Chimhini, 2023, p. 103).

Chimhini also views the licensing procedure as a way of continuing the government's control over the radio landscape. He views this situation as a betrayal by the state of its commitment to the democratisation of the media:

> I'm not sure we are getting what we signed up for when we say that we needed to open up the media. What we're seeing is not an opened up media, what we're seeing is an expansion of the current media under the guise of licencing new radio stations (ibid).

Chiseya suggests that the government has a duty towards facilitating the establishment of potential licensees with a proven track-record of community ownership. This is essential for the overall development of a strong community radio sector:

> We need to have as many community radio stations as possible. So we can actually recommend that more community radios must be licenced because people can easily engage and articulate their issues in their local languages (Chiseya, 2023, p. 98).

The research participants' assessment of the current circumstances within the Zimbabwean community radio sector, as captured in these comments, have much in common with the statements made by the community radio advocates in Chapter 6. Both groups speak about the frustrations of working as community radio activists based within an authoritarian regime where state control persists. Both groups express dissatisfaction about the consequent lack of genuine change in the radio landscape. They refer, in this context, to the intertwining of political affiliations with media ownership and describe this as a continuation of historical patterns rather than a shift towards a more pluralistic or liberal media environment. Overall, their assessment of the radio sector highlights their frustration with the persistence of an authoritarian regime where state control continues to dominate, to the detriment of social justice and democratisation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we see the motivations of community radio practitioners revolving around the role of media in promoting social justice in Zimbabwe. They criticise the state broadcaster for serving the ruling party's interests rather than the public good, and see community radio as a crucial platform for alternative communication that empowers communities. This commitment to rural audiences and local content reflects their dedication to participatory communication.

The strategies that they pursue in putting this vision into practice is demonstrative of a collaborative effort to build a media tradition grounded in community participation. They achieved this in the first ten years of the millennium in context of road shows and through the distribution of content on public transport systems. They then built on this tradition in the second decade of the millennium in the digital domain, solidifying and enhancing their traditions of practice through the successful establishment of streams of content, thus enabling them to increase audience engagement.

The state's response to these activities is characterised by authoritarian control, disrupting community radio projects perceived as threats to the established media system. Practitioners' experiences, supported by MISA-Zimbabwe's legal interventions, underscore their commitment to social justice despite facing state repression similar to pirate radio activists. However, we see these practitioners facing more threats than physical violence, possibly due to their high degree of success in implementing their vision for community radios

It is significant, as explained in Chapter 4, that SW Radio Africa ceased operations on 10 August 2014, while VOP closed in January 2017, indicating the era of Zimbabwean pirate radio drawing to a close and giving way to community radio. Furthermore, as we also saw in Chapter 4, the pirate radio activists did not find a home for themselves as licensed radio station once the Zimbabwean state began to issue licenses in 2021. In contrast, the community radio activists persevered until these state-issued licenses became available. As noted in Chapter 4, at the time of writing this thesis, four out of the fourteen CRIs that came into existence in the early years of the millennium were awarded licenses by the state.

However, it is equally important to note that Radio Dialogue ceased its activities in 2016 due to funding challenges, whereas CORAH was still operational at the time of writing this dissertation, albeit without an official broadcasting license. The closure of Radio Dialogue may point to the enormity of the demands that are placed on community radio practitioners in Zimbabwe, in responding to the requirements of building a community radio sector that truly serves its purpose. The government is awarding community radio licences to applicants but not always to those that meet the requirements for empowering local communities. The presence of such licensees may create the semblance of growing diversity ownership within the Zimbabwean landscape when this is not in fact the case. In the meantime, CRIs continue to struggle to survive, without proper support from government. In the longer term, their attempts to do so may not be sustainable. It remains questionable whether the Zimbabwean community radio sector has been successfully constituted. In particular, greater effort is required before this sector can claim independence from the authoritarian control of government.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The dissertation in brief

In Chapter One of this dissertation, I outline developments over time within the Zimbabwean media landscape, demonstrating their location in the socio-political history of this country. I trace this history from the mid 20th century onward because this is the time when activist radio first emerged in this country. My discussion identifies five distinct phases in Zimbabwean socio-political history since this time and explores the way in which each moment shaped the media landscape. The first moment is represented by the final stages of colonial rule in the 1950s; the second falls in the 1960s and 70s when colonial governance became challenged by a nationalist resistance movement; the third finds its place in the 1980s and 90s, in the first two decades of Zimbabwe's independence; the fourth spans from the year 2000 to 2010, with the rise of organised opposition to one-party rule and the emergence of multi-party democracy; the fifth phase falls between 2010 and the contemporary moment and is characterised by a power-sharing government and then by a military coup. It is apparent, from my description of this history, that each of these moments is representative of a change in regime. Each, furthermore, is characterized by a disruption of hegemony followed by the re-establishment of authoritarian relations of power.

In discussing the role that media came to play at each of these moments, the chapter notes that each successive government typically claimed to act in the interest of the establishment of an independent and diverse media. However, in reality, there was an ongoing struggle between government and pro-democracy activists around the establishment of access to the media for members of civil society. This struggle is marked by intense conflict, spanning from the colonial period to the contemporary moment. Throughout this history, from one regime change to the next, authorities sought to maintain control of the media in order to consolidate authoritarian state power. On the other hand, activists engaged in persistent resistance to such control by building media traditions that could serve the interests of democracy. I propose in this chapter that these traditions typically existed on the margins of the society, evading the repressive legal frameworks of the state in order to amplify voices of protest that make demands for equality, social justice and democracy.

In Chapter Two I establish a theoretical framework that can underpin my reflection, in this study, on the values and principles that motivated pro-democracy activists in their efforts to ensure the ongoing survival of media dedicated to the empowerment of the Zimbabwean people. For this purpose, I review literature dealing with analytical tools designed to engage with the normative foundations of media. Firstly, I consider analysis that deals with media at a macro-level in order to broadly examine media systems and how they are shaped by norms and principles. Secondly, I focus

on conceptual tools for the analysis of media at the medium level, focusing on traditions of media practice that emerge within media systems. Finally, I draw on analytical concepts of relevance to the micro-level where the focus is on the beliefs and values that animate individuals who participate in such traditions of media practice. In this way, I establish a framework that allows me to trace relationships between these different levels as they apply to the Zimbabwean context.

Also in Chapter Two, I apply this framework to a discussion of the role that ideals and values of relevance to democracy have play at each of these levels within the history of Zimbabwean media. I focus in doing so on analysis of the relationship between the Zimbabwean media landscape and its socio-political context within each of the five moments in history identified in Chapter One. At each stage we see activists (operating at the microlevel) establishing traditions of media practice (at the medium level) that challenge the existing state-controlled media systems (at the macro-level). Throughout this history, the state responds with varying degrees of violence to such activism. I propose that the intensity of the state's response demonstrated that they understood the successful establishment of alternative traditions of media practice to be a threat existing relations of power.

Against this historical and theoretical backdrop, Chapter Three presents a review of literature dealing with the history of pro-democracy radio as this formed part of the broader history of media activism in Zimbabwe. I engage with this history at each of the five moments in the development of the Zimbabwean socio-political landscape referred to in previous chapters. In the first moment of the 1950s, we see that the emergence of such radio coincided with the heightened organisation of nationalists and their challenge of colonial powers. The presence of such radio then continued to grown in the second moment of the 60s and 70s amidst escalating resistance to colonial rule, with stations primarily operating from outside the country's borders. At the same time, we begin to see a backlash from government, with attempts to disrupt these traditions of radio. Then, in the third moment, with the establishment of independent Zimbabwe, the power of activist radio appeared to diminish. I note that this may be because the state successfully crushed such radio in the 1980s in context of the power struggles that formed part of the era of Gukuharundi, as part of their elimination of voices that challenged the state. However, a resurgence of activist radio took place in the early 2000s as part of the fourth moment when pro-democracy activists became impatient with the post-independent government's failure to fulfil promises for media reform. We saw that there were two traditions of such practice; the pirate radio stations that operated clandestinely, and the community radio movement which pursued legal recognition. In both cases, there was again backlash from the state, in the form of victimisation of the activist radio sector. Finally, in the second decade of the millennium and as part of the fifth moment in Zimbabwean socio-economic history, we witness the migration of activist radio into the digital space to expand its audiences and assert its presence. Radio activists continued, during this period to lobby for broadcast licenses. In these years, the Zimbabwean

government appears to become more open to the possibility of a diversification of the radio sphere, allowing for the licencing of some commercial and community stations. The literature nevertheless raises some doubts about the legitimacy of these licencing processes.

In Chapter Four I describe the research plan for the empirical component of my study and comment on the implementation of this research. I point out that the available literature about the history of activist radio in Zimbabwe, as discussed in Chapter Three, lacks a comprehensive focus on the individuals who participated in this history. I explain that the aim of the empirical component of the study was to gain further insight into the history of activist radio at the level of such individual participation. I was interested in learning about their understanding of the social purpose of such radio; to hear more about the principles and values that informed their participation in such radio and to find out about their experience of putting these principles into practice. The chapter describes the decisions that I made about the design of this empirical research project. This includes my decision to pursue biographical, episodic interviews with individuals who participated in and witnessed the establishment of traditions of activist radio in Zimbabwe. I describe the plan that I developed for the selection of interview candidates as well as the design of my interview process. I also describe how this plan worked out in practice, enabling me to conduct interviews with twenty individuals who had been involved in this history including journalists, human rights activists and civil society activists. They include people who had been involved in nationalist radio stations in the late 1970s; those who were part of the pirate radio movement in the early 2000s; those who helped to enable the establishment of the CRIs in the first decade of the millennium (whom I call the community radio advocates) and those who produced and distributed content for the CRI's in the second decade of the millennium (whom I call the community radio practitioners).

In the final three chapters of the study I present the findings from this empirical research. Each of these chapters focuses on the experiences and perspectives of one of the categories of radio activists that I interviewed. Each of these groups were active at a particular moment in the history of radio activism in Zimbabwe. In each chapter I begin by reminding the reader of the historical circumstances that characterised that moment and also of the kind of activist radio that emerged at that time. I then draw on the analytical framework that I presented in Chapter Two, applying this to a review of the research participants' description of their own participation in that moment. In each case I begin with a review located at what I referred to, in Chapter Two, as the microlevel, which is concerned with the experiences of individuals. My focus is on an exploration of the ideals and values that motivated them in their assessment of the Zimbabwean media landscape and their understanding of the role that activist radio could play in making an intervention into this landscape. Secondly, I engage with the research material at the medium level, which in Chapter Two was described to be related to traditions of media practice. Here my discussion focuses on the contribution that research participants made to

the establishment of traditions of activist radio. Thirdly, I trace the impact of these traditions at the macro-level which, as we saw in Chapter Two, has to do with broad systemic relations of power in society. I do so by considering the participants' comments on the responses of government to the radio projects that they established. I argue that such responses were indicative of the extent to which the state perceived such radio to pose a threat to their control of the existing media landscape. Finally, each chapter ends with a review of the research participants' assessment of the current radio landscape in Zimbabwe. I present this review as a way of assessing their analysis of the extent to which activist radio has succeeded in the democratisation of that landscape.

Chapter Five focuses on interviews with radio activists who contributed to the nationalist tradition of radio in the 1970s and also those who participated in the resurgence of such radio in context of the pirate stations in the 2000s. In my review of their interviews at the microlevel (relating to individual values and beliefs), I point out that both groups speak of their awareness of the social injustices endured by Zimbabwean citizens and the role that state radio plays in supporting such injustice. Furthermore, they describe how they came to believe in the importance of establishing a tradition of radio that could offer an alternative to state-controlled radio. They believed that such radio could play a crucial role in driving democratic change.

In reviewing the interview material at the medium-level (relating to the establishment of traditions of media practice), I conclude that both the nationalist radio activists of the 1970s and the pirates of the 2000s were involved in what Christians et al would call a radical media tradition. As such, they operate from the periphery of the established legal system, from where they directly challenged prevailing social and political norms. However, the vision that informed these radio stations was not in fact typical of radical media, being more descriptive of a liberal ideal of a media sector located at the mainstream of society. I concluded that these activists were compelled to adopt a radical approach purely in context of the authoritarian environment in which they had to operate. However, even under these conditions, they still held onto the their vision for a liberal media. They were able, from this vantage point, to amplify voices marginalised by state radio in Zimbabwe. In this way they put into practice the liberal ideals in which their vision of radio was based.

In order to tease out the impact of these traditions at the macro-level of analysis (which is concerned with the broad analysis of social systems), I then turned to a review of the participants' description of the government's response to their activities. They speak about a history of violent suppression, first in context of those participants who had worked in nationalist radio stations in the late 1970s and again in context of the pirate stations of the early 2000s. I argue that in both cases the extreme nature of the government's response, as described by these research participants, suggests that the government regarded activist radio as a serious threat to their control of communication within the Zimbabwean media landscape. I also propose that the research participants' continued

commitment to radio activism, despite the government's response, gives evidence of their resilience and dedication to their ideals.

Chapter Six deals with the interviews that I conducted with the research participants that I refer to as community radio advocates. I focus on their involvement in radio activism in the first decade of the new millennium. I explain that the advocates are individuals who were not directly involved in the practice of radio, and instead played an important role in advocating for the establishment of radio projects. In my analysis of their beliefs and motivations at the microlevel, I found that these activists shared the same libertarian ideals and values as the nationalists of the 1970s and the pirate radio activists of the 2000s. Like these predecessors, their goal was to create an inclusive and emancipatory radio sector that could contribute to democratisation. However, they differed from previous radio activists in that they also embraced a fundamental commitment to development of communities in rural areas.

In considering these community radio advocates' activities at the medium level, I pointed out that unlike their predecessors they sought to locate themselves within mainstream Zimbabwean society and claim it as a space for the alternative tradition of radio in which they believed. Their emphasis was therefore on the transformation of the regulatory environment of broadcasting so that such radio could become legally recognised. Because their focus was on the development of rural communities, they pursued such recognition in context of community radio rather commercial radio. The Supreme Court ruling in 2000 and the subsequent enactment of the BSA in 2001 (discussed in Chapter Three) enabled them to make significant progress in this regard, contributing to the establishment of a three-tier broadcast system with processes in place for the allocation of both community- and commercial radio licenses. They then established the first CRI's, in the belief that the government would soon call on them to apply for community licenses. They also worked for the establishment of a community radio network, and raised consciousness within rural communities about the benefits of community radio. In this way, they set in motion a Zimbabwean community radio movement and created an enabling environment for its future survival.

In teasing out the impact of the community radio advocates' contribution at the macrolevel, it becomes clear that the government treated their lobbying work as well as their attempts to establish and enable radio initiatives for community radio with suspicion and hostility. They demonstrated this by being dismissive and obstructive in their engagement with the activists, and sometimes even subjecting them to intimidation and veiled threats. However, unlike the pirate radio activists, they were seldom subjected to direct instances of violence. I argue, in this chapter, that this may have been because the advocates operated within the bounds of the law, taking the government at its word it would eventually put into practice its professed commitment to a diverse and inclusive media landscape. However, as we saw from the activists' own description of this history, the government

was slow to act on this promise. For this reason, interventions that the community radio advocates made in the first decade of the new millenium made relatively little impact at the macro-level on changing the Zimbabwean radio landscape.

Chapter Seven explores the activities of the research participants that I refer to as community radio practitioners, who were directly involved in producing and distributing radio programming for the CRIs's in the second decade of the millenium. In this chapter I also include reference to interviews with community radio advocates who continued to operate during this time, in support of these CRI's. When I analysed these activists' motivations and values at the micro level, they most closely resemble those of the activists discussed in Chapter Six, in which an emphasis on the values of liberal media are combined with a commitment to communication for development. They envisioned an inclusive and participatory radio landscape, which would compensate for the state broadcaster's failure to fulfil the social purpose of radio in a democratic society. Like the community radio advocates, they placed particular emphasis on the way in which such radio would benefit peri-urban and rural communities in Zimbabwe.

When examining how these practitioners put their motivations into practice at the medium level, I see evidence of a media tradition that Chiristians et al would have described as being collaborative and facilitative in nature. The emphasis is, in other words, on collaboration between like-minded stakeholders in order to contribute to the public good, and to do so by involving audiences in a relationship based on participation. To achieve such participation, they worked from inside community-based organisations. Furthermore, against all odds, they remained true to their commitment to achieving these goals within the bounds of the law. This commitment meant that they could not broadcast since this would have been regarded as an illegal activity. Instead, they effectively simulated a broadcast environment by distributing audio content through broadcasts and on public transport. Later, they also worked within the digital domain on ChanelZim to create the equivalent to

a functioning radio platform. They again demonstrated their emphasis on collaboration by working with pirate radio activists on this platform, creating a media space that closely approximated the dynamics of a broadcasting station.

The impact of the community radio practitioners' activities at the macro level can be seen in the way the state reacted to them. The interview participants speak, in this context, of instances of obstructive behaviour, in which they were denied permission to access public spaces; instances of arrest and intimidation; and even of physical violence and confiscation of equipment. This is in contrast to the way that the government treated the community radio advocates of the previous decade, when there were few acts of violence. However, although the state responded harshly to the community radio practitioners, this was still not as severe as the treatment given to the pirate radio activists described in Chapter Five, who faced extreme state-sponsored violence. As such, these 131

community radio practitioners can be located in the middle of the spectrum of responses of backlash from the state. They escaped extreme violence because they acted with diplomacy, but they still experienced intimidation and resistance from the state, because the tradition of radio that they were putting into place threatened the prevailing order.

In examining the current radio sector in Zimbabwe, three groups of activists—pirate radio activists, community radio advocates, and community radio practitioners—share strikingly similar observations. All three groups highlight concerns about the state's authoritarian grip on the radio sector, noting the continued militarisation and political entanglement in media ownership. While pirate radio activists emphasise the perpetuation of dictatorship, community radio advocates and practitioners also express scepticism regarding the government's recent issuance of licenses, doubting the genuineness of these reforms. Despite some perceived democratic gains by community radio advocates, all groups collectively express frustration over the lack of substantial change and the persistence of historical patterns that hinder the sector's progress towards social justice and democratisation.

This study has uncovered significant insights into the evolution of activist radio in Zimbabwe, demonstrating how radio activists have persistently challenged authoritarian state control over media across different historical periods. It has highlighted the creative and strategic interventions of radio activists who, despite facing state hostility and legal constraints, have successfully promoted democratic media practices and creatively expanded radio access to marginalised communities. These findings contribute to new knowledge in the field of journalism and media studies by showcasing the resilience and adaptability of media activism in authoritarian regimes, emphasising the importance of grassroots movements in fostering media freedom and democratic communication.

Recommendations of relevance to radio activism in Zimbabwe

Based on the insights that I have gained through my review of literature and my engagement with fieldwork in this dissertation, I would like to offer several recommendations of relevance to realising and ensuring the success of people-oriented, participatory, and emancipatory radio in Zimbabwe. I believe that in the establishment of such a radio sector depends heavily on the government's political will. Furthermore, the state can only hope to contribute to the realisation of the potential of this sector if government officials avoid the politicisation of such work.

Within such an approach, decisions about the allocation of licenses should not be influenced by party political interests and should instead be based on objective criteria, designed to assess the extent to which license applicants are able to serve the public. This could be achieved if the licensing process becomes guided by criteria set out by organisations such as MISA-Zimbabwe and ZACRAS,

which emphasize community ownership rather than political appointments to the radio projects'

boards of governors. If such guidelines are followed, the state would necessarily have to recognise all of the radio projects established by Zacras and its development partners. By doing so, the government could save taxpayers' money that would otherwise be spent on setting up new radio projects. More than 20 unlicenced radio projects initiated by civil society have already trained volunteers and community members capable of running them once they are licensed. Furthermore, to achieve political independence, the sector should regulate itself in terms of professional conduct and programming, while the state focuses on policies to ensure a democratic and diverse media landscape in Zimbabwe

My second proposal concerns foreign funding for radio projects, which should not be restricted to state-controlled entities, allowing citizens to support radio initiatives from various sources. Discussions with pirate radio activists in my study revealed that two out of three projects in this sector, SW Radio Africa and VOP, ceased operations in the second decade of the millennium primarily due to dwindling financial support from international development partners. The only remaining project, Voice of America's Studio 7, continues to operate with external funding. Similarly, discussions with community radio practitioners indicate that Radio Dialogue folded at the end of the second decade of the millennium due to a lack of funding. In contrast, all state-controlled radio projects receive support from both local and external funders. Once these steps are taken, attention should shift to the sustainability of radio projects, emphasising the liberalisation and diversification of funding sources.

Areas for further research

In my judgement, further research needs to take place in order to build on the contribution to knowledge that I have made in context of this dissertation. Firstly, I recommend an investigation into government infiltration of media operations to understand their impact on the efficacy of resistance movements. This investigation should be combined with an exploration of media ownership and state influence, focusing on the ownership structures within licensed community radio stations, particularly those established by the government. An immediate area of focus should be the governance structures of recently licensed community radio stations as well as the two national commercial stations, Star FM and Zi FM Stereo, and the eight local commercial stations approved from the inclusive government era until the removal of former President Robert Mugabe in 2017. Such research should include qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, content analysis of media outputs, and case studies of specific radio stations. Additionally, quantitative methods like surveys and statistical analysis of media ownership data should be used to provide a comprehensive understanding of the media landscape and its implications for resistance movements.

I would also recommend a comprehensive assessment and in-depth analysis of the legal framework governing the media in Zimbabwe. This study should explore specific laws and regulations that facilitate or hinder media independence, incorporating a comparative legal study to understand how legal frameworks impact media landscapes in different political contexts. Methodologically, this study could include legal document analysis, interviews with key stakeholders, and case studies of digital activism initiatives. The focus should be on the potential to strengthen the presence of democratic communication spaces.

These studies would contribute to understanding of the intricate interplay between government strategies, media ownership, and their collective influence on the media landscape in Zimbabwe. They would also serve as a guide for potential reforms that can foster a more democratic and transparent media environment in this country. I hope that my own study can serve as a resource for the further pursuance of such research.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The interview guides

	Time	Participants	Enablers
PRELIMINARIES			
1	10 mins	Introductions, settling down, discussion of informed consent, anonymity, how the research will be used, preview of interview process	
2	5 mins	Tell me about your name, age, educational, and social background	
SHARING OF HISTORY			
3	20 mins	Tell me about your experience of growing up. What was the political environment? How did you experience being part of the history of change in this country? When and how did you come to be involved in radio activism and how did you progress? Why did you choose to be a radio activist?	
4	30 mins	When did you start involving yourself in radio production/programming? What was your role? How did this shape your understanding of the role of radio as a vehicle for social change? What did you try to do to realise this goal in practice?	When did you start your advocacy role and what had happened? Why did you choose to advocate for such a radio?
REFLECTING BACK			
5	10 mins	What were the major obstacles in this journey and from where? How did you over-come them? What kept you going?	
6	10 mins	Looking back now, how would you now assess what you have achieved as a radio activist? What did you want to achieve and were you able to do so? How do you measure those achievements?	
7	10 mins	What is your assessment of radio in Zimbabwe today?	

Appendix 2: List of interviewees

Name of participant	Organisation	Role
Buster Magwizi	Military veteran	Listener
Mrs Perseverance Mazinyane	Voice of Revolution	Broadcaster
David Coltart	Capital Radio/SW Radio Africa	Former director
Tichaona Sibanda	SW Radio Africa	Senior producer/presenter
Mudiwa Manyeruke	SW Radio Africa	Producer/Presenter
Frank Chikowore	VOA Studio 7	Correspondent
John Masuku	Radio VOP	Director
Davison Mudzingwa	Radio VOP	Producer/presenter
Nkosana Dlamini	Radio VOP	Reporter-cum-editor
Father Nigel Johnson	Radio Dialogue	Founder
Kudzai Kwangwari	Radio Dialogue	Programs manager
Givemore Chipere	Community Radio Harare	Director
Munyaradzi Chimwara	Community Radio Harare	Board Chairman
Takura Zhangazha	Media Institute of Southern Africa -Zimbabwe chapter	Former director
Tabani Moyo (PhD)	Media Institute of Southern Africa -Zimbabwe chapter	Director
Vivian Marara	Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations	Former national coordinator
Rashweat Mukundu	International Media Support	Regional advisor
Simeon Mawanza	Amnesty International	Former regional manager
Tawanda Chimhini	Election Resource Centre	
Emma Chiseya	Zimbabwe Election Support Network	Senior Electoral Education and Capacity Building Officer

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