Politics and precarious professionalism; how political and economic factors affect media and shape journalism cultures in emerging democracies.

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Declaration

The work presented in this thesis was conducted at the Communication, Cultural and Media Studies Department, Faculty of Arts, Professional and Social Studies, Liverpool John Moores University. Unless otherwise said, it is the original work of the author.

While registered as a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, for which submission is now made, the author has not been registered as a candidate for any other award. This thesis has not been submitted in whole, or in part, for any other degree.

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Abstract

This thesis responds to the call by scholars, notably Shaw (2009) and Chama (2014), among others, on the need for more empirical research on journalism in the Global South, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. To this end, it focuses on professional journalism cultures and their precarities, the influence on the depiction of politics in the news, and reporting politics in democracies. The presence of precarious professionalism is a significant facet of journalism not adequately uncovered in previous research. The thesis illustrates Zambian journalism's role within this political space and how ownership, control, environmental and operational factors affect the profession. It further explores Zambian journalism from a contemporary-historical perspective, allowing for a thorough analysis and understanding of critical factors determining its character. To achieve this, my research is centrally organised around journalism culture (Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2017). It examines journalism cultures in the Global North but more so in the Global South (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020), applying existing African journalism models (Kasoma, 1986; Nyamnjoh, 2005; Shaw, 2009) and considering how this help explain Zambian journalism practice and journalism culture.

Additionally, I apply public sphere theories (Dahlgren and Sparks, 1993; Habermas, 1991) and the political economy of communication (Mosco, 2009). The latter helped assess the effects of political and economic factors on Zambian journalism, while the former helped evaluate journalism's role in the public discourse of politics. Using these analytical frameworks, I consider journalism's representation of politics in Zambia among journalists and media outlets as I build upon previous research by Chama (2014) and Hamusokwe (2015), among others. With Zambia as my case study, I use a multi-method approach that includes interviews and textual analysis of selected media texts using NVivo qualitative analytical software. These approaches helped produce essential insights into the nature of journalism cultures, practices and how these reflect in media texts. This study shows that ownership continues influencing journalism practice and culture in Zambia. It exposes polarised pluralism present within journalism along partisan lines. The study also reveals ongoing tensions between journalism and politics in Zambia, resulting in precarious professionalism for journalists (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020).

Further, the thesis establishes the presence of nuanced journalism practices that do not easily fit within specific models but identify with several traits from known models. This thesis contributes to understanding global journalism and media studies broadly but more specifically about journalism cultures and practices within democracies at the national level, in this case, Zambia. It further contributes to understanding ongoing tensions between the state and journalism and how this affects professional journalism. It will be of interest to journalism and media scholars as well as those interested in political sciences, among others.

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Declaration of Authorship

I, YOUNGSON NDAWANA, declare that this thesis titled "**POLITICS AND PRECARIOUS PROFESSIONALISM; HOW POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECT MEDIA AND SHAPE JOURNALISM CULTURES IN EMERGING DEMOCRACIES**" and the work presented in it are my own. I confirm that:

- This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University.
- Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated.
- Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed.
- Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my work.
- I have acknowledged all primary sources of help.
- Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have clarified exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.

Signed: _____ 

Date: _____ 11 October 2022

“*Colobwe Ba akako;* Own your story, own your piece, your possession.”

Ambrose Candaila Ndawana **(Dad - MHSRIP)**

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Abbreviations/ Acronyms

EOM- European Union Election Observer Mission

IBA – Independent Broadcasting Authority

FES – Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

MISA – Media Institute for Southern Africa (Zambia Chapter)

MLC- Media Liaison Committee

MMD- Movement for Multiparty Democracy

NEPAD- New Partnership for African Development

PAZA- Press Association of Zambia

PF- Patriotic Front

SADC- Southern African Development Community

SABC- South African Broadcasting Corporation

SPFEOM- SADC Parliamentary Forum Election Observer Mission

TOZ – *Times of Zambia*

UNIP- United Party for National Independence

UPND- United Party for National Development

ZANA- Zambia News Agency

ZRA – Zambia Revenue Authority

ZDM – *Zambia Daily Mail*

ZIMA- Zambia Independent Media Association

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND, AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

On 22 June 2016, news reports indicated that "The Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) on Tuesday, 21st June 2016, raided *The Post* newspaper and reportedly seized property at the newspaper's printing plant bringing the paper's operations to a halt" over alleged tax-related charges (MISA Zambia, June 22, 2016, p.1). The newspaper was privately-owned and was widely regarded as the most popular, independent and critical media organisation in Zambia at the time (Chama, 2017, p.73). Five months later, on November 1, 2016, the Lusaka High Court placed the newspaper under "compulsory liquidation and appointed Lewis Mosho of Lewis Nathan Advocates as provisional liquidators in respect of its assets" (*Zambia Daily Mail*, November 2, 2016). Although the issues surrounding this action and the manner of its closure were ostensibly related to the newspaper's business and financial obligations, observers and scholars alike viewed this concerning the general election held on 11th August 2016 (Goldring and Wahman, 2016, p.110). As the newspaper most critical of the ruling party at the time, perceived to have negatively covered the election process, especially about the incumbent, President Edgar Lungu's Patriotic Front Party, PF, closing the newspaper was viewed as part of deliberate efforts targeting platforms deemed friendly and valuable to opposition political parties and other opposing voices. The newspaper was widely viewed as a threat by the leadership and regular members to the ruling party's electoral chances at the polls (IFEX, June 24, 2016). President Edgar Lungu's statements (The Mast, March 24, 2017; Lusaka Voice, September 19, 2015) at several fora indicated his disdain for the newspaper and the wider private media because of their critical stance against the PF and its leadership style.

The events surrounding the *Post*'s closure are reminiscent of the fractious relations between the state and media organisations and journalists in the last three decades since Zambia reverted to democratic rule during the early 1990s. This pattern persists as reports of continuing state interference in media organisations' operations continue

to appear. Often, critical news media outlets are targeted using statutory bodies such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), the State Police or physical harassment by party cadres, forcing them to desist from publishing what the state views as lousy press (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021, p.2). Several incidents support this, including the suspension of *Radio Phoenix*'s practising license barely four months before the December 27, 2001, elections. According to IPI (2001), "On 19 August, the Lusaka-based radio station [was] suspended due to its failure to renew the licence." Commenting on the suspension to Reuters, human rights lawyer Mutembo Nchito said, "they [the government] want to muzzle any critical voice" (IPI, 20 August 2001). In its letter of protest to then-Republican President Fredrick Chiluba, the International Press Institute (IPI) outlined several incidences of state abuse, interference or harassment of media organisations and personnel.

> In the past, *Radio Phoenix* has been banned, and its staff harassed and intimidated by members of the security forces. On 2 September 1997, the radio station was prohibited by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services from relaying live broadcasts of the BBC, which were in alleged breach of their broadcasting licence. In 1999, the editor of Radio Phoenix, David Kumwenda, was questioned in connection with a broadcast in which Fred M'membe, editor of *The Post* newspaper, accepted full responsibility for a story exposing Zambia's military deficiencies. Last year (2000), *Radio Phoenix* also faced growing political pressure, and staff members were physically assaulted.(IPI, August 20, 2001)

The IPI alleged that the state's continued targeting of media outlets was part of systematic efforts to silence critical voices within the country's social-political space, noting that the "IPI fears that the decision to suspend the radio station is part of a wider campaign to silence independent media before elections. On 17 August, the editor of *The Post*, Fred M'membe, was arrested and charged with criminal libel over comments made about President Chiluba. On 18 August, his home was once again searched by police" (IPI, 20 August 2001). These actions were deemed to intimidate the broader media fraternity as fewer journalists and outlets were willing to hold political powers accountable for fear of similar reprisals. However, this only encouraged *The Post* and its managing editor, M'membe, as they intensified their offensive against successive

governments whenever they disagreed on issues of national interest, such as corruption and poor governance.

In the intervening period, between 2001 and 2016, the state, under Presidents Levy Mwanawasa (2001-2008), Rupiah Banda (2008-2011) of the MMD, Michael Sata (2011-2014), and Edgar Lungu (2015-2021) of the PF targeted various media outlets in a similar pattern, presumably to silence them (see also Chama, 2017). I discuss these in more detail in Chapter Four. Sata's brief reign makes it challenging to assess state-media relations (suffice to say his government embraced the media, primarily led by *The Post*). Therefore, it is part of the broader PF relations with media between 2011 and 2021. More recently, the state continued its clampdown on media outlets, a move criticised by media rights activists and scholars as muzzling the independent media within Zambia. Ndawana and MISA (2016, p.5), in their third quarterly State of the Media Report, show that there was heightened "state interference against media's independence… [with suspensions] of licenses for *MUVI TV, Komboni Radio and Itezhi Tezhi Radio* on August 22, 2016, for what was termed 'unprofessional conduct posing a risk to national peace and stability.'"

I discuss these events in detail in Chapter Four, which is dedicated to analysing the history and role of selected Zambian media organisations within the social-political space in the country. This thesis argues that media organisations recognise their crucial social role in a democracy. Further, I say that with many interferences against media organisations coming after incidences of critical news, media organisations face what some scholars term political pressure to suppress their work (Cheeseman and Hinfelaar, 2010; Bwalya, 2017). In response, journalists employ various ways to circumvent these assaults against their work, resulting in cumulative professional routines and behavioural traits incorporated into their journalistic practice, which inevitably form part of their journalistic culture (Hanitzsch et al., 2011). I discuss this concept in theoretical and conceptual detail in Chapter Three and examine how it has manifested within the Zambian context in Chapter Six.

To fulfil the need for more empirical research on journalism in the Global South, this thesis examined how selected Zambian media organisations cover politics, their role in democracy, and their operational challenges. Drawing on insights from interviews with journalists from private and public media, I explore and critically analyse these factors and how they affect journalists' work. By combining this discussion with an analysis of data from media texts in significant news articles from the selected media organisations, this thesis depicts the media's place and role in Zambia's emerging democracy, which, as Rakner and Svåsand (2005, pp.86-87) argue, "although Zambia did make a promising start in 1991, subsequent elections have not progressed as hoped". Cheeseman and Hinfelaar (2010, p.69) argue that "Zambia is far from a consolidated democracy," pointing to the state's continued dominance of the media and persistent abuses of governance institutions. Goldring and Wahman (2016, pp.107-108) also characterise Zambia's democracy as fragile, arguing that "the 2016 elections represent a reversal in the quality of Zambian democracy and raise questions about the country's prospects for democratic consolidation."

A more recent study by Wahman and Goldring (2020, pp.94-95) reinforces the perception of a fragile democracy in Zambia, evidenced by the perennial election-related violence during election campaign periods. The overarching result demonstrated in empirical data analysis shows that media ownership is still the predominant factor affecting the nature and extent of the role of major media organisations, leading to deep-seated polarisation along partisan lines. Media organisations examined; *The Post, MUVI Television, Times of Zambia,* and *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation-ZNBC* - and their journalistic cultures are predicated, to a significant extent, on these two factors, which manifested in a symbiotic pattern. This reflects what other scholars (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), who posit that polarized pluralism -(whereby media are tied to political parties or other groups in society and the notion of journalism as a means for the representation of groups or ideologies)- often manifests in media systems that find themselves deeply integrated into party politics. However, in the Zambian context, polarized pluralism is based not only on media integration in politics but also on strong state control mechanisms, especially of the public media, and owners' proclivities in the

case of private media. During my field trip in mid-2019, in interviews with journalists, they describe these cases in more detail in Chapter Six.

By focusing on the 2016 election campaign period and the periods immediately before and post, I illustrate how diverse journalistic cultures influence the media's role in covering election campaigns. Analysis reveals the persistent tensions between professionalism and partisanship among journalists due to several underlying factors. This suggests that trends prevalent in the broader region, in countries such as Angola or Mozambique, where "there are low levels of journalistic professionalization, high levels of political parallelism, and strong state intervention in the media system" (Salgado, 2018, pp.202-203), are also prevalent within the Zambian media system, giving it a regional significance. This is evident through analysis of media texts, which "unearth[s] news media claims of objectivity and neutrality [and] plac[es] them as partisan actors." (Yusha'u 2018, p.474). However, although the underlying factors to the status of the media system are similar, the Zambian media system has unique features, including excessive state interference in media operations, using state security agencies and party cadres to harass journalists to coerce them against critical coverage, (Kasoma and Pitts, 2017, pp.185-188). Media reports (IPI, July 20, 2011; IFJ, June 8, 2018; *Lusaka Times*, November 6, 2016) corroborate interview data revealing incidences of attacks on journalists by the police, the military and party cadres. For private media, internal hierarchical interference by editors makes it hard for journalists to preserve their professionalism. Coupled with these factors are the inferior remuneration structures amongst journalists *(Lusaka Times*, May 5, 2009), which leaves most journalists susceptible to manipulation. I discuss these factors in detail in Chapters Four and Six, focused on the Zambian media landscape and journalism culture, respectively.

The thesis is organised into eight chapters to lay out the case systematically. Chapter One sets the premise and background to the study, including critical background information that motivated the need for this study. It briefly outlines the major themes that will be explored throughout this work. Chapter Two captures the major theoretical

and conceptual frameworks that the study relies on. The major theories are journalism and its social role in democratic settings, the Political Economy of the media, political communication, and the concept of the Public Sphere. Chapter Three explores the concept of Journalism Culture and its role in democracies. The separate treatment of this concept signifies its critical importance to the entire thesis in understanding the workings of the media, journalists' role conception, and execution within broad and diverse contexts but more so within the Zambian context. It is central to my analysis of journalists' perception of their role and how they execute it.

The second half of the thesis, which includes Chapters Six to Eight, lays out the findings of the study as well as interprets these findings to understand the media's role within democracy. Chapter Four explores the Zambian media landscape, critically discussing selected significant media outlets and the major events within the media in the recent past. This is addressed within the context of state-media relationships, epitomised by the closure of *The Post* in June 2016. The chapter further explores how these relationships impact the role of the media in democracy. Chapter Five lays out the methodologies utilized in the thesis. Chapter Six discusses the journalism culture during 2016, as evidenced by the journalist's coverage of the 2016 general election. Chapter Seven discusses the significant themes in the news and the treatment given within media outlets selected for this study. Chapter Eight concludes the thesis with key findings and recommendations.

Background

Media and democracy in Zambia

Relevant literature on Zambian media and politics includes theses by Chirambo (2011), which discusses the impact of democratisation on the state-owned *Times of Zambia;* Chama (2014), focussing on press freedom by analysing *The Post*'s performance from 2011-2014*;* Gondwe, (2014) which compares journalism ethics in a democracy between *The Post* and *ZNBC;* and Hamusokwe (2015), focusing on political economy of newspapers, their sustainability and independence. I build on these scholarly works

while contributing original knowledge that extends the discourse on Zambian journalism within African and global journalism research. Other studies have identified several significant developments in the evolving relationship between media organisations and the broader social and political sphere. Goldring and Wahman (2016) conclude that media biases significantly contribute to reversals of democratic gains in Zambia. On the other hand, Chama (2020)'s latest contribution analyses tabloid journalism and press freedom and includes *The Post* within the broad African comparative context and their role within democracies, and concludes that this genre of tabloid journalism faces more challenges due to its sensational news reporting.

While not discussing the subject from an intranational comparative perspective, these studies paint a picture of a chequered media environment in their relationship with the State over the last decade or two. For instance, Chama (2020, p.5) has argued that while "newspapers have historically been dominated by political news," they face legal, political, or financial challenges, among others. Further, Chama (2014, p.133) observes that "*The Post* survived the predatory behaviour of President Frederick Chiluba (1991-2001) to eliminate it from the political scene" (although, as I state in the introduction of this chapter, *The Post* was forcibly liquidated, demonstrating the limits newspapers' ability to withstand external political pressure). Meanwhile, (Gondwe, 2014, p.1) argues that "the media in Africa have been characterized by vices that undermine the credibility of journalists through biases (partisanship), conflicts of interest and unprofessionalism" These vices -sensationalism, susceptibility to external pressures, compromised professionalism- have been observed within Zambian journalism as data from literature review and the results of this study illustrate. This shows how often journalism's own inefficiencies and internal weaknesses work to undercut its work by political forces.

Although there is extensive research on the role of journalism in democracy, questions persist about this phenomenon within national contexts in the Global South, especially in African countries, including Zambia. Recent research has been conducted in African countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, and Nigeria (Wasserman, 2006; Conroy-Krutz, 2016; Ikeanyibe et al., 2018). However, the case for

more research remains for much of the continent, especially for countries such as Zambia that have been flashpoints in recent years with signs of democratic regression, which also affects the media (Goldring and Wahman, 2016). Therefore, this research contributes to deepening this understanding and knowledge in political communication, media, and democracy within national contexts, as it is still vitally important and relevant to broadening the understanding of regional and global trends. It is an original work contributing to continued scholarly efforts examining trends at the intersection of media and democratic processes and how this interplay impacts the field of political news and political communication within national contexts (Graves and Konieczna, 2015, pp.1967,1978).

This study focuses on Zambia within the comparative framework (Downey and Stanyer, 2010) of African media studies (Mutsvairo, 2018; Chama, 2020). As some scholars have observed, “much [of the] existing comparative media analysis is ethnocentric, taking North American or Western European media as normative models of what media systems ought to be like” (Downey and Stanyer, 2010, p.332). This study critiques these commonly misapplied and often ill-fitted approaches to researching contexts outside the Global North. It thus contributes to understanding contextual peculiarities, to “get past ethnocentricity, making us aware of geographical limitations” (Park and Curran, 2000), and furthering efforts that are aimed at dealing with the “‘de-westernization’ and ‘decolonization’” (Mutsvairo, 2018) of media studies by bringing to the fore African models and analytical framework.

The research investigates and analyses the role of journalism and its political representation extant within selected Zambian media organisations during election periods, focusing on the 2016 election period as a case study. I chose the 2016 election season as it uniquely affected the journalism profession in Zambia. Based on the unprecedented attacks against professional journalists and news media outlets, this election cycle was deemed by many scholars to have been, perhaps, the worst on record since the reinstitution of democracy in Zambia back in 1991 (Goldring and Wahman, 2016; Ndawana and MISA, 2016; Willems, 2016; Wahman and Goldring,

2020). With the closure of *The Post* newspaper and suspensions of *Komboni radio* and *Itezhi Tezhi radio* (Ndawana and MISA, 2016) being the backdrop to these attacks, this study became imperative to examine how journalists fared in such an environment, how this affected their operations and influenced the journalistic cultures in the representation of politics. Characterised by the highly polarised political and media landscape and the overly pronounced role of money and political power, this election period was ideal for assessing how these factors affected journalism. These events epitomised the perils of political news reporting in such a fragile and somewhat unpredictable environment. Therefore, this study also reveals opportunities and challenges journalism faces in fragile democracies such as Zambia.

This strengthens the argument for a more robust media as a practical Fourth Estate (Whitten-Woodring, 2009, pp.595-596), which contributes to necessary conditions for the growth and consolidation of efficient democratic governance systems that focus on national development through political leadership, (see also, Chama, 2014; Połońska, 2019). This is important for a nation such as Zambia, whose recent political history has been plagued by persistent political tribalism, regionalism, clientelism and rent-seeking leadership, factors that have blunted the nation's efforts in achieving social-political stability and economic prosperity as these factors are interlinked. The media has been an integral part of the re-democratisation process of Zambia since the early 1990s and the post-1990s context, which I discuss in detail in Chapter Four. Overall, however, I argue that despite reverses and false steps, the re-democratisation project continues to gather pace and score progress in the face of many challenges although it is nowhere near perfection.

Most of the media's coverage of political campaigns in Zambia shows polarization (Kalyango Jr and Eckler, 2010) between the ruling party and opposition voices. Election observers such as the European Union Election Observer Mission (EOM) (EOM, 2016, p.23) noted that "media reporting was polarized, with public media giving preference to

campaign activities of the ruling party while some among the private media covered mainly those of the opposition." However, other experts, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum Election Observation Mission (SADC-PFEOM) to the 2011 general elections, had contrary observations. They concluded that "sections of the private media, particularly television stations, were fair in their coverage" (Baloi et al., 2016, Access. para 1). These contradictory views on the media's coverage speak to the need for empirical research to examine various data in greater depth to carve out a more coherent narrative or perspective.

Attacks on media organisations using some of the most archaic and defective laws have hampered their operations, affecting their efficient contribution to national affairs. Chama (2020, p.2) posits that "journalists in Africa face many challenges, but the continuous existence of draconian colonial laws remains a serious impediment to press freedom" several decades after independence. Some of these laws are obsolete and do not resonate with a modern democratic state, such as the *Public Order Act Cap. 113*, *the State Secrets Act Cap. 111*, the *Seditious Practices Act, Cap. 69* and the *State Security Act, Cap. 112,* among others, are used as pretexts to clamp down on citizens' rights and freedoms.

Further, Gondwe (2014, p.92) argues that the Zambian constitution, despite several amendments, "still retains draconian laws that were meant to suppress the Zambian people and benefited the colonialists." This shows that the laws that govern most aspects of Zambian society still carry those colonial vestiges six decades after independence. This has led to a highly constricted environment for the Zambian media and limited the rights of opposition political parties and citizens' access to information and the media.

The *African Media Barometer, Zambia 2017 Report*, jointly published by the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung (FES Media), summarised the state of the media describing the lead-up to the 2016 elections and the aftermath, thus, "The period in the run-up to the elections was characterised by using

laws that dated back to the colonial era. There was bias by the state media in favour of the ruling party, and the political and media landscape was marked by uncharacteristically high levels of threats, intimidation and violence." (Titus and Brombart, 2017, p.7). The report highlighted some of the actions conducted by the state which are inimical to press freedom and democratic engagement by citizens—for example the report notes.

> The police arrested journalism students of the *Lusaka Star*, a UNZA Radio magazine show at the University of Zambia, shortly after airing a programme with a guest who spoke critically about the government. *The Post*, a privately-owned newspaper which has been part of the Zambian media landscape for the last three decades, was closed two months before the elections. Alleged tax non-compliance was cited as the reason for its closure. However, analysts considered this action a ploy to force the closure of a critical and independent voice, a media outlet willing to take on the ruling party. Immediately after the elections, two radio stations and a television station; *Komboni Radio, Itezhi Tezhi Radio and MUVI TV*, had their broadcasting licences suspended and their equipment seized by the Independent Broadcasting (Titus and Brombart, 2017, p.7)

Such incidences have characterised the media and political landscape over the last three decades but have recently increased in frequency and intensity, pointing to a deterioration, rather than entrenching, of Zambian democracy since her return to democratic governance during the early 1990s. Research shows that the state usually undermines the mainstream media. This stifles the vital function of a free press to provide information. This is against the backdrop of evidence showing that much of Africa's post-colonial media architecture has not transformed to reflect decoloniality in context since "media were inherited as a direct political and ideological instrument of the colonial state" (Karikari, 2007, p.11), a function which unfortunately is against democratic logic espoused by many of these modern states. Significant portions of the media are still under the control of governments in many independent African states and serve their mercy. Therefore, this study further examines how this persists in Zambia, as evidenced by the analysis of events in 2016 and the implications.

As some scholars posit, "Fifty years after independence, the media in most African countries are still under the control and management of the State. [However], with

legislation that supports establishing of private media, independent [media] organisations [have] surfaced to fill the gaps left by State monopolies" (Akoh and Ahiabenu, 2012, p.352). However, despite the emergence of these private and independent media, governments still to dominate these too, as is the case in Angola which "demonstrates that there can be commercialization and privatization in the media system without political and economic independence of the media outlets. The ruling elite buy and control many media outlets [while] private media outlets are directly controlled by elites close to People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)." (Salgado, 2018, p.202). Similarly, the media in Zambia, although not directly under the control of the ruling party or the State, suffer from a similar disorder, whereby they are coerced to support the ruling party through stiff laws or advertising deals. Hamusokwe, in his thesis established that "State owned enterprises were expected to support State owned newspapers by directing more advertising resources to the *Daily Mail,* but *The Post* General Manager for Marketing [stated] that ZAMTEL (a state-owned enterprise) avoided advertising in *The Post* because of political reasons" (Hamusokwe, 2015, p.195). This stance was confirmed when Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Chishimba Kambwili warned that the "state advertising and buying of the paper may be withdrawn if the newspaper continues attacking government, declaring that "we will have no choice [as] government but to stop buying and advertising in *The Post*." (Phiri, 2015, para 6). While this may not constitute direct censorship, it perhaps equates to strong pressure and interference in the media market for political ends.

Statement of the research problem

Political stakeholders and citizens alike have long-held views that political representation within Zambian media, especially during election campaigns, was typically skewed, leaving voters with highly subjective news as they weigh political candidates to vote for during elections. Media across both private and public sectors were seen as deeply polarized along partisan lines. Scholarly works also supported these perceptions of events to some extent. This research investigated these concerns raised by various political stakeholders in the country. Further, the study examined

specific textual forms of representation for empirical evidence. To achieve this, I reviewed critical articles on election-related political discourse published in selected leading media outlets, specifically, *The Post newspaper, MUVI Television, Times of Zambia and ZNBC,* published between May 10, 2016, and August 20, 2016, which was the official election campaign period during the 2016 Zambian presidential, parliamentary, and local government elections. The research examined how politicians and their messages were reported and editorially treated in these news outlets by assessing specific news-presentation factors for journalistic behaviours within their operating environment.

Rationale and aims/goals of the research

There has been a dearth of research on journalism culture, its precarities and how this intersects with the political and democratic process in Zambia, as evident from the literature reviewed. The rationale for this research is the need to fill this shortage of scholarship steeped within green fields and to sketch an understanding of the structural makeup of Zambia's media system. This involved demonstrating how journalistic cultures are formed and how they impact news production processes, i.e., how the environment, ownership, policy, and regulatory factors affect journalism. This effectively analyses the national media system and its impact on political communication in Zambia. The media and journalism are invariably linked to political and democratic discourse. Thus, research of this nature can be instructive in understanding how to harness and utilise these analytical tools and contribute to propagating democratic values and practices within nation-states such as Zambia.

Subsequently, the overarching aim of this study was to explore the journalistic culture within the Zambian media that shapes and influences reporting on political discourse. It uses the 2016 election campaign period as a case in point but extends to earlier and later periods. To achieve this, I examined four of Zambia's leading media outlets: *The Post newspaper, MUVI Television, Times of Zambia and ZNBC*. The following were the specific goals:

i. To examine critical news articles published in selected leading Zambian media outlets during the 2016 election campaign.
ii. To analyse how media ownership influenced and shaped journalistic behaviour and journalistic culture in selected leading Zambian media outlets.
iii. To show other forms of influence on journalists' work in selected Zambian media outlets during elections.
iv. To assess major political thematic areas covered in the selected leading media outlets during the 2016 election campaign.
v. To examine how regulatory, policy and legislative provisions affect journalistic conduct and the formation of journalistic cultures.

Research questions

i. What were the dominant themes of media content during election campaign periods in selected outlets?
ii. How did policy, regulatory and legislative factors affect journalists' practice?
iii. How did media ownership structures affect journalistic culture within the sampled media outlets?
iv. How did the newsroom culture reflect in the news content within these media outlets?
v. What changes would improve the journalism culture in Zambia and its professionalism?

Summary of original contribution to journalism and media research

My thesis contributes to the discourse and scholarship on Zambia's journalism as it exists within an unpredictable and often fragile political environment. It builds on recent studies such as Chama's (2014) thesis, which focused on press freedom within a political context using *The Post* newspaper as a study case. Further, I extend Hamusokwe (2015)'s thesis, which focused on newspapers' political and economic sustainability through advertising in a small market such as Zambia using the cases of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. My research revealed political and

economic factors previously unidentified on how they affect their media independence and journalism cultures. Both these scholars considered their studies within the political economy philosophy, similar to my philosophical premise.

My thesis deepened my understanding of this phenomenon by adding layers to this ongoing discourse by focusing more on journalism cultures and how they influence journalism practice in specific political spaces and other social, cultural, and economic factors, as reflected in media texts. Through interviews with practising journalists and editors, my study sought to understand the motivations, fears, challenges, and other factors that these professionals considered in their work as they reported about politics, especially during periods of heightened political activity and at different periods. I used the multimethod approach that combined textual analysis and in-depth interviews to achieve this. This allowed for corroborating the interview data and selected media texts from the sampled news media outlets. In this way, this research made specific and unique contributions in a detailed manner to understanding the concept of journalism culture and its influence on political reporting. While previous research by other scholars such as Kasoma (1996), and Banda (2009), significantly more recent work by Chama (2014) and Hamusokwe (2015) focused on journalism ethics, press freedom, the political and economic sustainability of journalism through advertising, respectively, my research builds on these studies and assess how these factors interface and contribute to the shaping of journalism cultures. By drawing upon observations and conclusions from these works, this thesis makes a case for examining the current journalism culture by showing how considerations related to press freedom, political economy, and sustainability affect personal and professional journalism practice. This extends what previous studies have revealed and extends this knowledge by examining these interlaced personal and professional factors as the basis for decision-making among journalists, which is a novel contribution to the scholarship on journalism practice, journalism cultures, African journalism models and indeed the global journalism studies from a national context, and in a way, responding to Shaw's (2009, p.492) call for further research in these fields.

While Hamusokwe, for example, focused on the political economy and sustainability of newspapers within Zambia through analysis of advertising and its leverage, I go further to show how these considerations by media owners and journalists, which include, but are not limited to advertising, affect their professional practice and decision making, resulting in distinct journalism cultures. Whenever journalists faced such choices, they often prioritized financial interests over professionalism. Equally, media owners showed that commercial interests mattered more by willingly engaging with political players as long as they had paid substantial amounts of money. Owners treated their media organisations as a business before concerning themselves with journalism's ethics and professional values. Further, I will later show how this culture influenced news reporting on politics and the treatment of various political subjects. My study showed that beyond the economic factor of advertising, for instance, news media seek other financial benefits such as setting up businesses outside of media operations, as was the case with *The Post* setting up a transport business, programming such as *MUVI TV* anchoring paid-for political programmes as alternative economic and revenue-generating ventures. Therefore, a critical strand of my findings is the significance of these economic imperatives in decision-making.

However, my research also uncovers a more complex picture, which shows that these economic considerations did, in turn, mean journalists and media owners made concessions to their professional and ethical obligations, such as objectivity, fairness, news balance, etc., to accommodate these political and economic-based decisions (Hanusch and Hanitzsch, 2017, p.532). In other instances, direct financial benefits by journalists in the form of field trip allowances, commonly known as *blarizo,* were also a decisive factor in how political news was reported. Odd collaborations between rival journalists and, in certain instances, State operatives are the other practices that this study reveals and contributes as original knowledge to the ongoing continuum of journalism practices and cultures. Additionally, owners' or senior editors' fearful environment, coercion, and editorial interference resulted in adaptive journalistic cultures such as those I describe above and, in more detail, later in Chapter Six, features that had not been discovered empirically in previous research. The latter is

more prevalent within public media organisations, as I demonstrated in later chapters. Other aspects of Zambian journalistic culture that this study extensively discussed include the fear of the unknown, the fear of the known, activist journalism, and contingency-based journalism, among others. I discuss these in detail in Chapter Six.

Further, while Chama (2014), for example, focuses on the press freedom of *The Post* as an emblematic news media organisation in Zambia, my approach uniquely extends this scholarship to show how the internal practices within the newspaper affected its place and trajectory within Zambian journalism, especially within the political space. The eventual liquidation and closure of the newspaper just before the 2016 election, which forms the backdrop to this study, offers insights into the perils of journalism in typically fragile democracies (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008, p.22), such as Zambia, where rights and freedoms such as press freedom, are only typically guaranteed at the discretion of the State and only as far as they align with political power. While Chama's study unravels the internal workings of the newspaper concerning political news and its effects on press freedom, my study while buttressing this aspect, extends the discourse by analysing the journalism cultures that emerge at the newspaper, as well as three other media outlets, and how these shape and influence journalists' engagement within political spaces and with political players.

This thesis, therefore, revealed that *The Post* blurred professional lines of objectivity or fairness as it explicitly aligned with the ruling PF at the time, fundamentally affecting its long-established perceived independence. The closure sheds light on how certain journalism cultures affect news media entities and the political landscape within given jurisdictions. In the case of *The Post*, this led to an impoverished and polarized media landscape, mainly because the newspaper was once-upon-a-time widely regarded as the flagbearer. Many local news media outlets usually took a cue from the newspaper's stance on many political debates and questions of the time. Thus, a pattern shows a journalism culture responsive to how the newspaper positions itself. For instance, whenever the newspaper picked an anti-government tone, most, if not all, the three public media outlets responded directly to counter this to challenge its positionality and

attempt to blunt its influence on the political discourses. By inference, this promoted antagonisms among news media outlets and intensified polarisation within the journalism and political space.

By focusing on three other media organisations besides *The Post* newspaper, this thesis broadens the scholarship on Zambian media research by assessing the applicability of Chama's findings to different organizational journalism cultures and the novel contributions. While this research draws similar conclusions to Chama's results, it also highlights novel and unique features that deepen and broaden understanding of the field. These include the presence of a 'precarious professionalism' (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020) existing not only within *The Post* newspaper but in the other three media organisations. This form of intranational-comparative research of a media system has not previously been undertaken in Zambia, especially in comparing private and public media organisations, but also across ownership types. Therefore, this thesis adds a new dimension to understanding empirical journalism studies within national contexts. The theory shows how specific trends observed within *The Post* newspaper, such as editorial control by media owners and editorial interference, were also present within *MUVI TV* and the two state-media organisations in this study, to varying degrees. My thesis examines these in more detail in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

In summary, this thesis makes the following contribution to research.

i. Contributes original contextual data and analysis of scholarship on media, journalism, and democracy.
ii. Tests theoretical propositions within the Zambian context and identifies similarities and disparities from previous research while deepening understanding.
iii. It demonstrates that Shaw's (2009) call for further case study research on the African and regional contexts for journalism is justified, broadening the scope for future research.
iv. The findings can potentially inform future research on journalism's role and challenges within emerging and fragile democracies, as results show.

Periodisation of major social-political events that affected media

The chapter has laid out the background, motivation, and rationale for this study. It has also outlined the key issues present within the Zambian national context concerning the intersections of media and democracy and how the media plays its role within this political context. This current section on periodisation is essential to provide an understanding of both the surface issues and the several undercurrents that influence how media conduct themselves and their role within the political space. By briefly discussing the state-media relationship, discussed in detail in Chapter Four, this section lays out the markers for further analysis of the media landscape, the social-political operating environment, and some of the significant events that have shaped the media system that this study seeks to unravel.

To help explain this, I highlight, using *Table 1.* below, some of the key political events that affected the media landscape since Zambia's return to democracy in the early 1990s (1991 - 2021). I have periodised the events to align with Zambia's election cycles, although this is not evenly distributed due to the death of two sitting presidents, Mwanawasa in 2008 and Sata in 2014. The periodisation helps trace periods of heightened political activity when media organisations come under intense pressure, affecting their operations and attracting a lot of scrutiny on how they cover various political players. As *Table 1*. below illustrates, Zambia has held seven successive elections since her return to democracy. However, this has not generally improved operating conditions for the media, especially the private media. The frequency and intensity of assaults against fundamental freedoms of the press have worsened, a situation that defies normative perceptions of democratic growth and progressively strengthens democratic values and institutions. This supports assessments by Cheeseman and Hinfelaar (2010, p.69) that "Zambia is not yet a consolidated democracy" and remains fragile (Goldring and Wahman, p.2016), as experiences during the 2016 election showed.

Period	1991 -	1996 -	2001 -	-2008 -
Political event	**Oct 1991**- Zambia holds first democratic elections; Kaunda loses power to Chiluba	**Nov 1996**-Second democratic election under Chiluba/MMD Chiluba was re-elected for the second and final term. First President Kaunda barred	**Feb 2001**- Chiluba bid to amend the constitution for illegal third term illegally fails. Fallout impacts the broader political landscape. Nov- Third election after 1991 held, Levy Mwanawasa is the new President	**Nov 2006**- Fourth election held; Mwanawasa wins second term
Media-related event	**1991** Several media outlets founded *The Post newspaper, National Mirror, Radio Ichengelo Chronicle newspaper* Most are short-lived. *Post* survives/thrives and expands	• **Feb 5, 1996**- *Three Post* editors Fred M'membe, Bright Mwape, and Matsautso Phiri, were detained. • *Radio Phoenix* was founded. • **Nov.19, 1996**- Several *ZNBC* staff were suspended for conspiring to discredit the Nov.18 election result.	• **Mar 2001**- T*imes of Zambia*, *Zambia Daily Mail*, and *ZNBC* boards dissolved, ostensibly to "restore a sense of responsibility/accountable journalism." • Access to Information (ATI) Bill drafted. • **June-Aug 2001**- Several private media journalists were harassed across the country. • **19 Aug 2001** – *Radio Phoenix* suspended. • *Radio Ichengelo* was attacked/partially burnt by ruling MMD cadres. • **2005** *MUVI TV* established	**Feb 2006**- defamation case against M'membe of *Post* dropped. **Jun-Nov 2006** Post backs Mwanawasa against Sata **Mar 2006**- Two community Chikuni *radio* journalists arrested/later released for fake news. **Jun 2006**- Police arrest *Radio Phoenix* reporter Anthony Mukwita over potential sedition charges after critical fax read out. The radio station's management later fired Mukwita. **Oct 2006**- State reject proposed (ATI) Bill.
	Various Committee to Protect Journalists (CJP), Country reports and news articles (IPI, August 20, 2001), (CPJ, February 1997), (CPJ, February 2002), (CPJ, February 2007)			

Table 1: Periodization of major political events that coincide with major media-related events.

-2010 -	2011 -	2014 - 2021
Aug 2008- President Mwanawasa dies, two years into his five-year term. Oct 2008- Presidential By-election Rupiah Banda - fourth President	Aug 2011- Elections were held, and Michael Sata of PF defeated Banda. Sata becomes the fifth President	Oct. 2014- President Michael Sata dies, three years into his five-year term. Jan 2015 Presidential by-election held. Edgar Lungu, Sata's successor, wins a tight contest.
• **Dec 2008**- Ruling party supporters assault journalists. • Government wages politicised prosecutions against *The Post*. • **Jan 2009**- Banda requests the media to formulate a self-regulatory body, or the state would draft one. • **Jun 2009**- *Post newspaper* editor Chansa Kabwela was arrested over allegations of circulating obscene pictures. • **Nov 2009**- Chansa Kabwela acquitted • *Post newspaper* begins campaigns against Banda, highlighting high corruption in his government. • Banda threatens to close Post newspaper due to critical coverage	**July 2011**- MUVI TV reporters were brutally beaten by ruling MMD supporters. **2011**- *Post newspaper* endorses and acks Sata/PF. **2012**- Zambia Nation Newspaper founded 2011- Several journalists from The *Post* newspaper were rewarded with govt jobs. **2013-** several radio licences issued IBA operationalised. **Jan 2013-** Freelancer Chanda Chimba charged with unlawful publishing of two newspapers: *Stand Up for Zambia* and *News of Our Times*. **Sept.2013,** *IBA* announces nationwide broadcasting licenses for *Q FM, Radio Phoenix, Christian Voice,* and *Catholic TV*. **On Oct.28/2013**, President Michael Sata overturned the decision to license *Radio Phoenix* and *Q FM*. Mwamba was officially retired.	• Late 2014/early 2015- Post newspaper campaigns against Edgar Lungu's candidature • *Daily Nation* backs Lungu candidature • State media, as usual backs Lungu's candidature • **Sept 2015**- President Lungu issues threats to close The Post and death threats against editor M'membe. • **Jan 2016-** *Prime Television* established • **June 2016-** ZRA raids *The Post* newspaper, seize property, and halt the paper's operations" over alleged tax-related charges. • Sept. Broadcast licences for MUVI TV, Komboni Radio and Itezhi Tezhi were suspended by IBA allegedly for flouting professionalism. • **Nov 2016**- Lusaka High Court places *The Post* newspaper under "compulsory liquidation, effectively shutting paper. • **Feb 2019**- The state requests media bodies to develop statute-backed self-regulatory, or they will enact the law. • **May 2019**- Journalists resolve to formulate a regulatory body. • **April 2020**– *Prime Television's* licence was revoked over allegations of being anti-state. IBA alleges station failed to renew its licence on time.
Sources; (CJP, February 2010)	(CJP, February 2014)	(Sishuwa, April 11, 2020; MISA Zambia, March 20, 2020; Lusaka Times, Novermber 6, 2015; Lusaka Voice, September 19, 2015)

Table 1: Illustrating periodisation of major political events that coincide with major media-related events.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Introduction

This chapter sets out relevant literature that captures the major theoretical and conceptual frameworks the study relied on. The significant concepts explored include the media's social role in democracy, the Public Sphere, the media's Political Economy, and Political Communication. The chapter also discusses normative journalistic values of professionalism and ethicalness from both a historical and contemporary context and how this manifests in the African context, particularly in this study. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Three. Media's social role in democracy is examined through a regional comparative lens to understand the trends by historicising its development while assessing how this exists in national contexts, especially Zambia. The concept of Political Economy of the media, which uses historical, theoretical, and applied perspectives, underlines the rationality of role conception and execution that journalists must make within their operating environments. Further, I assess the manifestations and effects of the concept within the Zambian national context. The idea of Political Communication and a discussion on political news reporting follows later, using a similar approach that explores its theoretical and historical aspects and its application as another analytical framework within the Zambian context.

Media's Social Role in Democracy

Many discourses do not seem to sufficiently recognise and address the inherent differences that exist between Western democracies and media systems, which are advanced and developed when compared to many of the African democracies in countries such as Zambia, with emerging or fragile democratic cultures compounded by small media markets. Democracy promotes participation, accountability, transparency and regard for fundamental freedoms and human rights. It is widely argued that institutions and systems built within this political system promote the fulfilment of these values for citizens to appreciate their worth. It is commonly acknowledged that this is seen as a Western hegemonic approach to governance expected to be adopted globally

as a marker of ‘development.’ Literature focusing on the Global North often posits that journalism is integral to any democratic project. In Western democracies such as the United States and Britain, for example, the power of media, especially during elections, is well documented. As Alger (1989, p.254) observes, “news people are aware of the idea of democracy,” recognising that “elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and the media have a key role to play in coverage of elections.”

Similarly, other scholars argue that “satisfaction with nominally democratic institutions leads citizens to defend their existence and perhaps to demand more meaningful participation and accountability” (Conroy-Krutz and Kerr, 2015, p.593). From the Kenyan experience, for example, Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis (2014, p.18) conclude that “his (President Daniel Arap Moi's) decision to lift the ban on opposition parties changed the nature of electoral competition. Over the [next] five successive elections [that followed], Kenyan voters and opposition parties converted political openings into political change.” This shows that it is vital to ensure such pillars of democracy enlist the support and trust of the citizens by affording them mechanisms to actualise this participation. In this scenario, the media plays an integral part as a tool for the involvement of citizens through “a media system that [enables] citizens to hold elected officials accountable” (Curran et al., 2009, p.6) to the fulfilment of some of the critical aspects of democracy as the Fourth Estate.

To this end, this chapter explores the role of the media within democracies such as Zambia by drawing on literature from the region and beyond that illustrates interactions between media and democracy. This study shows that the universal conceptualisation of the social role of the press, while understood and widely applied and accepted in the Global North, does not precisely resonate in similar ways in the Global South, as demonstrated in national contexts such as Zambia where contestations on the ideal role of the media are still a challenge to these normative appeals.

Comparisons: media and democracy within the region

Similarities have been observed in several African countries such as Uganda, Zambia, The Gambia, Gabon, and Kenya, “where citizens’ evaluations of regime performance [are] fluid and where popular dissatisfaction with democratic institutions inhibit political development” (Conroy-Krutz and Kerr, 2015, p.593). These countries present a misleading semblance of stable democratic processes and institutions yet face similar challenges in entrenching democratic practice. These observations come from a larger body of literature on nominally democratic institutions, especially in Africa, where “even hybrid or authoritarian regimes frequently have parties and legislatures, which ostensibly allow rulers to co-opt adversaries." However, “such institutions [or achievements] do not mean that a country is on an inexorable march toward a thriving democracy, although this increases the likelihood of democratic consolidation” (Conroy-Krutz and Kerr, 2015, p.593) (See also Magaloni, 2006; Blaydes, 2010; Svolik, 2012). Others still posit that African democracies still have much to be done to achieve progress towards a thriving democratic culture. Scholars argue that most of them could be considered “pseudo-democracies because elections have been so flawed that they do not meet the minimal criteria for electoral democracy” (Weghorst and Lindberg, 2010, pp.3-4). Other scholars describe African democracies as constantly changing due to their infancy, missteps, and drawbacks hampering their growth and refinement. Kpundeh (1992, p.22), for instance, argues that “African democracy has been put to the test through the monopolisation of the electoral processes by incumbent presidents or their ruling parties.” Here, one may want to ask, within this media-centric study, what role the media plays or how it falls short in the furtherance or lack thereof, of democratic entrenchment. This is especially relevant since journalism in many African countries is still influenced or controlled by the state via ownership or legislative and regulatory means.

Despite elections held across much of Africa since 2010, such as in Uganda in 2016, Kenya in 2013 and 2017, Zambia in 2015 and 2016, The Gambia in 2016, and Burundi in 2015, among others, research indicates that political views have become more polarised with each successive election. Drawing from these experiences, it is plausible to argue that citizens got more disillusioned with elections overtime, even under the

umbrella of democracy. Cheeseman, Whitfield and Death (2017, p.173) point to increased polarisation in Rwanda and Kenya, while Wahman and Goldring (2020, p.93), in their comparative study on political violence and polarisation between Zambia and Kenya, theorise that "low subnational competitiveness (polarization), [result in] violence, [as well] as turf war(s) to maintain or disrupt political territorial control", demonstrating challenges facing countries with fragile democracies such as Zambia. Part of this failure and emerging challenges result from political polarisation (EOM, 2016) and "state media continuing to be heavily biased in favour of the ruling party" (Goldring and Wahman, 2016, p.110). This thesis demonstrates the persistence of these trends from the data and examines the reasons behind them. It shows a journalistic culture that embraces and promotes polarisation and political partisanship within media organisations.

Scholarship shows that journalism is not helpful, to a large extent, but somewhat complicit in perpetuating the subversion of democracy by incumbent political parties (Bleck and Van De Walle 2013, p.1401) through polarization, which "breeds resentment, mistrust and apathy among the unfulfilled public," (Bakardjieva and Konstantinova, 2020, p.9), across Africa in general but also distinct from Western norms. This is usually under pressure from incumbent parties or private media owners supporting their preferred candidate for the assorted reasons I detail later in the chapter, related to theories of the Political Economy of the media. Highlighting the challenges of media bias and polarisation in Zambia, Bwalya (2017, p.1555) argues that "although the Zambian Electoral Code of Conduct requires media to uphold a fair and balanced manner of reporting events of all political parties, media alignment to political parties [causes] newspapers [still] reported positively about the party they supported while negatively portraying those political parties they opposed." This thesis corroborates Bwalya's findings and argues that this trend is, in fact, on the upswing in Zambia since the last general election in 2011. Analysis of research on the available election results since 2011 and later show that this trend deteriorated, as I reflect in Chapters Six and Seven. Bwalya adds that "this schism has increasingly become recurrent in successive electoral cycles, particularly at the presidential level where the state-run media reported little of the opposition campaigns."(2017, p.1555).

On the other hand, Chama (2017, p.12) argues that most tabloid newspapers, most of which are privately owned, “are biased against the government,” a scenario that is present in Zambia. These scenarios show that media organisations’ political and editorial tactics are primarily shaped by their ownership types. However, there are also exceptions to this, with some Zambian private media organisations aligning themselves with the government of the day for political and economic reasons, such as advertising revenue and other business opportunities which influence their editorial positions (Hamusokwe, 2015, p.204). These patterns show, nevertheless, that factors central to the political economy of the media, whether ownership- or market-related, tend to dominate, as shown later in the thesis.

However, other scholars argue that progress towards a more mature democracy can be achieved in time despite the flaws in media coverage of elections, “repetitive elections, even when flawed, are one of the important causal factors in democratization” (Lindberg 2003, p.136), which accounts for the importance of taking deliberate steps to improve democratic governance. Akoh and Ahiabenu (2012, p.352) argue that “media must continue to seek ways through which they can continue to play their watchdog functions…ensuring free and fair elections.” The challenges of a lack of well-developed media systems and small commercial markets make it hard for mainstream media to contribute to the growth of democracy in more meaningful ways. This is more so where the state still owns and controls significant portions of the press and commands a considerable part of the advertising business. Therefore, it becomes challenging to have efficient media that inextricably entrench democratic values, as Harrison (2019, pp.10-12) has posited in her book, *The Civil Power of the news.* This means achieving and sustaining an independent and robust media system under these problematic political and economic conditions becomes increasingly complicated, especially in a small media market such as Zambia. The media’s ability to fulfil their normative role is even more compromised in what is not only fragile democracies but also “small markets characterised by a heavy [deficiency] in media resources such as advertising and infrastructure” (Hamusokwe, 2015, p.198).

Therefore, as a basis for sustainable democratic progress, this presumed normative role of journalism does not manifest in ways and forms described or theorised in literature that focuses on western media systems, which are characterised by relatively advanced and viable media markets and a high degree of liberties as compared to their counterparts across much of Global South, Africa, including Zambia. As such, this thesis provides peculiar insights into how media organisations, in different national contexts, with other democratic conditions and different market fundamentals from those in the Global North, perform. Therefore, the thesis contributes a unique perspective on disparities between national contexts and factors that must be considered when making assumptions about media and democracy. It also challenges some universalised views that, in most instances, infer that factors and contexts within the Global North are similar to those in the Global South. Chapter Six builds on these differences in detail using empirical evidence from interviewing journalists as part of this research. This corroborates with literature on existing journalism cultures within Zambia regarding the precarities that the journalism profession face.

Media's role in promoting democratic participation: the African context

Many theories examine the role of media in helping achieve democratic participation among citizens in the governance system of a given nation. Understanding this is important to fully grasp the media's place within democratic spaces, especially in emerging and fragile democracies like Zambia, where not all the ideal ingredients are present or practised. Norris (2002, p.5), for example, highlights participation as being well within the context of "traditional theories of representative democracy [which] suggests that citizens hold elected representatives and governments to account directly through the mechanism of regular elections, and via the news media, parties, interest groups, NGOs," etc. Here, the assumption is that citizens' participation enhances accountability and that meaningful participation is more likely to be achieved when citizens are fully informed. Akpojivi (2018, p.6) argues that "for this participation to take place [through] a free and independent media will provide citizens with relevant, adequate information."

Further, Conroy-Krutz and Kerr (2015, pp.347-348) suggest that "…electoral politics in Africa [rely heavily] on ethnicity for information gathering when other types of political information decrease." In the case of Zambia, research has shown a skewed political participation that is heavily ethnocentric during elections. The journalism profession often coalesces its messaging around this factor, as analysis of the news media text in this study indicates (Chapter Seven). Journalists also corroborate this in their interviews in Chapter Six, noting how incidences centred on ethnicity sometimes spill into the newsroom and the news-making process. This indicates that when open and transparent democratic discourse is stifled due to censorship and muzzling of the media, informed participation among citizens becomes difficult.

This reduced participation among citizens makes it difficult for democracy to develop in the face of such limitations since the "provision of relevant information is crucial to the sustenance of democracy and ensuring good governance, making media freedom fundamental in the discourse of democracy" (Akpojivi, 2018, p.6). Similar challenges exist in the Zambian context, making promoting democratic participation a daunting task for the media. The media, therefore, have a considerable job to overcome these challenges for them to play their rightful and ideal role.

Despite the reduced citizen participation, literature shows that African journalism continues to promote democratic participation among citizens even under challenging circumstances and has recorded democratic regressions since the mid-2000s. For example, McNair (2011, p.xv) sees the increased mediatisation of politics through heightened media's political role as "signalling a long overdue extension of democratic participation." In the case of the Zambian media, Kasoma (1996, p.541) argues that *The Post* newspaper, for example, had been instrumental in entrenching democratic participation (1991- 2006) among citizens increasingly demanding government accountability. This continues to date through media promoting public interest in national affairs. For example, Mudhai (2016, p.8-18) records *MUVI TV*'s "*The Assignment*, which started in 2010 as one of the talk shows on Sunday evenings (19:15 Hours-20:15 Hours) live interview... giving [viewers] a chance to interact with the guest

and the presenter by texting in questions. The live-phone-in programme *Let the People Talk* (*Radio Phoenix* – Zambia since 2000) discusses contemporary politics and governance issues, especially around election time." However, as is commonplace in much of Africa, democratic participation through state-owned newspapers is challenging since criticism of government operations is highly restricted (Lungu, 1986, p.405). Altschull (1995, p.5) argues that "any newspaper, whether state-owned or privately run, has inherent complications such as advertising and ownership influence." Phiri argues that in the case of Zambia, these challenges are present even though "we know that they are neither consistent with news objectivity values nor easy choices even for the journalists" (Phiri 1999, p.78). Similarly, Makungu (2004, p.14) argues that owners have often abused the "Zambian independent media to either build-up or destroy politicians", citing examples of Frank Moore and Alexander Scott, among others, who used their newspapers to achieve their political missions.

In contemporary times, Zambian privately owned press such as *The Post newspaper*[1] (from 2006 until its forced liquidation in 2016) and now the *Daily Nation Zambia* [2](2010 – to date) took overly partisan positions, which affected their credibility and compromised professional objectivity. This also shows how media become entangled in polarising political discourses that compromise their objectivity. For instance, although *The Post newspaper* successfully helped in the re-introduction and growth of democracy in its early years, from circa 1991-2006, its later years, before its liquidation, are characterised by overly partisan stances, initially supporting late President Mwanawasa's MMD during the 2006 Zambian election against two major opposition parties, Anderson Mazoka's UPND and Michael Sata's PF, (Larmer and Alastair, 2007, p.630). According to US diplomatic cables accessed by Wikileaks (2006, p.7), this is

[1] *The Post* newspaper supported and propped up the *Patriotic Front* party in the run-up to the 2011 election. From 2011 until his demise in 2014, the newspaper continued to function as the government's propaganda arm, as shown by the vast amount of favourable coverage given to the PF. However, the newspaper seemed to pick the losing side of the intra-party contests upon his death. From this point until its closure, *The Post* returned to its earlier role of being a critical and more independent outlet, or so it seemed. However, based on interviews, this was most likely a business-based position as much as it was a show of trust in Edgar Lungu based on his poor record.

[2] The *Daily Nation Zambia,* under President Lungu's *PF,* seems to have replaced *The Post* under President Michael Sata's PF. The *Daily Nation* Zambia has exponentially increased favourable government coverage since late 2014.

because “M'membe's (co-owner and Managing Editor of *The Post*) calculation [was] that a second term for Mwanawasa would be the lesser of two evils.” However, the newspaper later switched from Mwanawasa’s successor, President Rupiah Banda, to supporting late President Michael Sata and his PF party during the 2011 election (Chama, 2014, pp.39-40). This was partly because Rupiah Banda’s government was seen as corrupt by the newspaper (but also threatened the newspaper’s operations with closure for ‘fighting’ his government) and, therefore, incapable of continuing with Mwanawasa’s leadership style of fighting against corruption. These actions show that although *The Post* promoted public good by holding governments to account, the newspaper also disingenuously used similar tactics to attack any government they deemed as a threat to its media business.

To undermine his re-election bid, the newspaper mounted an anti-corruption campaign against Rupiah Banda’s government between 2008-2011 (Chama, 2014; Chama, 2019). For example, the newspaper reported that “the Zamtel corruption scandal occurred during President Rupiah Banda’s reign. On 6 February 2009, *The Post* newspaper revealed that President Banda’s son Henry Banda was involved in the fraudulent valuation and sale of the company.” (Chama, 2019, p.28). At the same time, the newspaper was giving Michael Sata positive coverage in the lead-up to the 2011 general elections. Incensed at this negative coverage, Rupiah Banda targeted the newspaper with threats to permanently close it (Chama, 2014, p.85). He instituted investigations into the newspaper’s dealings to find anything that could implicate the newspaper’s business as justification for targeting it.

However, many observers viewed this as a politically motivated effort. This effort could, however, not succeed as Banda lost the subsequent election of 2011 before he could carry out his threats to close the newspaper. Cheeseman (2018, p.319) confirms this, arguing that “while Rupiah Banda was president, *The Post* was his fiercest critic. In this context, its publisher became the target of a legal investigation and court case concerning his investments and financial dealings. Some suspected that the case was politically motivated.” This demonstrates how political power and journalism constantly conflict over national matters due to competing interests. Efforts to close the newspaper

succeeded in 2016 under the Lungu presidency partly because *The Post* had slackened to pay its tax obligations during the good years under Sata (Chama 2017). Lungu used this lapse on the newspaper's part to bring tax evasion charges and hastily liquidate the company under a court process widely seen as a sham by observers. As if to confirm this, the Supreme Court of Zambia reversed this action and ruled that the liquidation was illegal. (International Press Institute, 2022)

The above example highlights two issues of significance to this study. It shows that media inherently play a political role that sometimes promotes democratic growth. Secondly, and more significant to the research, the example shows how different organisational interests or agendas conflate with journalism's professional and ethical social roles. As illustrated above, *The Post* conflated its social role (of fighting corruption, on the one hand, to promote accountability in a democracy) by engaging in partisan politics to save itself from an impeding clash with the state during Rupiah Banda's presidency. I suggest, therefore, that the newspaper engaged in these efforts for self-preservation reasons, believing that if Rupiah Banda lost in the 2011 election, any further investigations of the newspaper by the state apparatus could be put off by the new, friendly government of Sata. As things turned out, the sustained negative coverage of Rupiah Banda's government, led by *The Post,* is likely to have contributed to his decline in popularity resulting in his 2011 electoral loss to Michael Sata, Banda's political nemesis and erstwhile enemy of *The Post* newspaper. However, the partnership between Sata and the newspaper only lasted while Sata was president until his demise in 2014. The events that followed Sata's demise form the backdrop for much of this thesis; suffice to say that media-state relations have since deteriorated, negatively affecting press freedom, although media still play a role in national political discourses. I discuss these issues in much detail in Chapter Four.

The example of *The Post newspaper* above illustrates a conflict of interest within the media's social role, negatively affecting society. This demonstrates journalism's potential for positive social interventions and the many other factors that can shape this potential into adverse outcomes. As the above account shows, the Zambian media, epitomized by *The Post* and a horde of other media entities such as Radio Phoenix,

navigated through precarious environments to contribute to the growth of democracy in Zambia. However, they equally faltered at various points along the way. It was not until the 2011 elections when *The Post* newspaper took an overly partisan position and backed their erstwhile enemy turned political ally, Michael Sata, and his Patriotic Front party. Chama (2014, p.i) has observed, "*The Post* [became] incapable of contributing effectively to the maturity of democracy. Its credibility as a tabloid was compromised by joining ranks with ruling politicians." More media houses took partisan positions than at any other time since the democratic reinstitution in the early 1990s. The issues of polarisation and partisan biases, as illustrated here, are significant in analysing and understanding the role of media in Zambia, the underlying factors, and the challenges the media faces in the execution of this role. I discuss these in the latter Chapters, Six, Seven and Eight.

Media promoting political accountability.

It is commonly held that media systems with diverse media ownership and devoid of dominant players make meaningful contributions to the growth of democracy (Tunney, 2007, p.4) as they promote diverse media content, as I illustrated earlier in the first section of this chapter. This also prevents a single media organisation from excessively influencing the public discourse on national matters. Additionally, a vibrant and diverse media is more likely to hold political leaders accountable. As Ogbondah observes, "in every successful democracy, the role of vibrant and independent newspapers is important in providing checks and balances, ensuring accountability by elected officials." (1994: p.3). In this context, the history of the media in Zambia shows that they have had a fair share of influence on political affairs. As Makungu (2004, p.19) argues, "the role of the media [is] to provide checks and balances for Zambia's democratic governance," A fact that remains true now in the case of Zambia despite the reported polarisation blighting this potential in recent years, (2010-2021). Other scholars argue that "journalists monitor and prevent abuses by the government authorities. They investigate government activities and bring out stories on misuse of public resources and abuse of power. They question government processes, policy decisions and government responsibilities towards citizens." (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009, p.239).

Crucially, tabloid journalism is instrumental in emerging democracies in monitoring governments (Phiri, 2008, p.18).

Against this backdrop, however, many African leaders still insist on supportive media than adversarial and critical media. By implication, they prefer that state or privately-owned media must align with the state's agenda and often use this excuse to muzzle the essential press. This trend has been seen within the Zambian context. Data shows that part of the reason for a much-polarised press is due to the overbearing nature of the state in media operations. However, Ogbondah (1994: 3) argues that "…curbing press freedom is not the panacea for socio-political stability. Accountability is one of the essential ingredients in social stability and development." Public or state-ownership of media is a practice which I suggest is still rooted in post-independence relics. These authoritarian systems proliferated across Africa up to the early 1990s.

Similarly, Karikari (2007, p.13) argues that for much of Africa's media, "…it is within this political context that [it was] inherited, as a direct political and ideological instrument of the colonial state." The ruling class believes that the media must remain an instrument of nation-building and unity. This, unfortunately, does not portend well in a democracy where critical media is essential (Ogbondah, 1994, p.20).

The Political Economy of communication and media

In most instances, media ownership has a significant bearing on operations and the type of content produced, editorial policy and a general sense of direction and agenda. One of the defining ideas underpinning this study is an analysis of the importance of media ownership and how it affects reporting of Zambian politics and the political economy of communication/media. Mosco (2009, p.2) defines political economy as "the study of the social relations, particularly the power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including communication resources." Political economy theory helps us understand social processes, change, transformations, and relations. It evaluates the implications of social relations in society and how social institutions such as media businesses are influenced. It uses the political

economy theoretical framework, which considers historical, socio-economic, and political imperatives, such as ownership and control (Murdock & Golding, 1995, p.186). I examine the Zambian media system and its effects on reporting political news. As the literature data shows, ownership and control over the media have significant implications, including polarisation, bias in the information and deteriorating professionalism among journalists.

The 1977 Annan report, for instance, proves the argument of a subjective media that is deeply integrated into socio-political discourses. For example, an ITN editor, in submissions to Lord Annan's 1977 *Committee on the Future of Broadcasting,* argues that "some subjective considerations of ITN did not dictate news; …' the priority of a television news programme is to present the viewer with a plain unvarnished account of happenings, free of bias,"(Annan 1977, pp.17-28). This shows that news media organisations want to be seen as objective in their news coverage. However, as I argued earlier, this is farfetched as the reality suggests media is inherently subjective. In response, Lord Annan argues that he had no issue with the fact that editors and journalists must process the news and select what passes for news. However, "in doing so, how can they not be influenced by their own cultural and social backgrounds, the requirements of their organisation, their professional experiences and the assumptions of their profession? News cannot be some objectively established entity" (Annan, 1977, p.29). This suggests that media often do make professional, cultural, social, political, and economic considerations, among others, in the news production process. Within the context of this research, results (Chapter Six and Chapter Seven) show how ownership, for example, influences editorial policy and content as evident in the selected media organisations that I focus on in this study.

In the words of one scholar, "despite the importance of mass media, the role of the media in democratic transformations [has not been proportionately highlighted]" (Voltmer 2006, p.xv). Many states view the media as a tool for their political agendas and ends. Given this, I suggest that it is difficult to have a media system that serves the public information needs where the ownership is in few hands, much worse than the state. In developing countries, characterised by emerging and fragile democracies,

public officials often pressure journalists to undermine the news, resonating with the radical political economy tradition. Scholars argue that society comprises dominant classes that determine power relations under this tradition. For instance, Bennett et al. (2005, pp.4-6) argue that in these contexts, "…media are seen as part of the ideological arena where class views are fought." Under this tradition, scholars argue that journalists and the media are controlled "through pre-selection, socialization and managerial supervision shaped by their political and economic organization, in multiple, complex ways" (Curran, 2002, p.113). An example from South Africa in its early post-apartheid democracy is instructive.

Voltmer (2006, p.53) writes, "under Thabo Mbeki's presidency, the government accused the media of not embracing its role of promoting national interest in its reporting. Part of the friction resulted from 'apartheid hangovers'—structural issues (such as ownership and staffing) and a deep-seated mistrust" between private media owners and the newly independent South African state. Media are sometimes forced to kowtow to these demands or be gagged, while other media organisations resist this pressure from political powers. In the worst of circumstances, media are targeted for shut down. This is a common trend in many contexts, including Zambia, where these post-authoritarian hangovers persist (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021). Often political party functionaries occupy positions within state-owned media organisations to influence decisions in line with their benefactors. For private media owners, political economy considerations such as profit and support for political allies to maintain operations also necessitate such choices.

These manipulative strategies by media owners are even more problematic in presenting an illusory sense of autonomy and freedom to professional journalists. Bennett et al. (2005, p.5) argue that "… while enjoying the illusion of autonomy, [journalists are] socialized into dominant culture principles, [thereby] internalizing dominant culture norms, relay[ing] interpretive frameworks [aligned] with interests of dominant classes, while sometimes contesting these frameworks." Journalists contest these dominant interests through negotiating and emphasising professionalism to maintain credibility or lose it, which may undercut the owners' business interests.

Critical scrutiny of literature on this tradition shows that there is often an inherent imperative for journalists to follow the owners' stratagem, especially in small media markets such as Zambia, characterised by fewer jobs in journalism. Thus, data analysis using the political economy paradigm reveals that journalists seldom have complete control or independence in the news process (Schudson, 1995; Curran, 2002). While a lack of media autonomy from political powers is more pronounced in the Global South, mainly African states, there is a relatively higher degree of their independence in western democracies.

Similarities to the preceding, such as lack or autonomy, negotiated autonomy, and dominant cultures through ownership interests, can be drawn in many emerging democracies in Africa and elsewhere, where these relations exist between the media and the state. Zambia has similar experiences, where the state still owns and controls a large part of the media industry, both in terms or physical assets, reach and market share. The autonomy of *ZNBC,* for example, as enshrined in the *ZNBC Amendment Act No. 20 of 2002,* which transformed it into a public broadcaster, has not had any operational effect regarding the daily operations and independence of the professional journalists there. Under Section 6 and subsections *a, b, e,* and *m,* for instance, the act states.

> (a) provide varied and balanced programming for all sections of the population.
>
> (b) serve the public interest.
>
> (e) contribute to the development of free and informed opinions and, as such, constitute an essential element of the democratic process.
>
> m) broadcast news and current affairs programmes which shall be comprehensive, unbiased, and independent and commentary which shall be clearly distinguished from news;[3]

Additionally, the Zambian media industry is weak, without any meaningful advantage to tradeoff or oppose arbitrary state legislation or regulatory measures such as the IBA Act of 2002 and amendment Act of 2010. Data shows that this state of the media in Zambia,

[3] Zambia National Broadcasting Act No. 20 of 2002.pdf

particularly of the four selected media organisations, has resulted in an inefficient and polarized media system when measured against normative journalism principles/ values and expectations from the journalism profession and society.

Contextual application of political economy of communication to Zambia

Within this research, understanding "the political economy of these media forms against the specificities of African contexts," Wasserman (2010, p.6) that includes Zambia, is essential to analyse and draw valid observations and conclusions appropriately. This implies that the theory "brings the concepts of social change, social processes, and social relations to the forefront, even if that means re-evaluating the emphasis that political economy has traditionally placed on social institutions, like media businesses." (Mosco, 2009, p.2). This research examines the political and economic factors that influence the functioning of Zambian journalism. These factors, amongst others, include the political environment and legislative and regulatory measures, while financial considerations may include business sustainability. As seen from the literature review and results data, these factors play a significant role in how the Zambian media cover politics, showing elevated levels of polarisation over time. Within this context, the study also examines how the normative journalistic values of professional and ethical journalism are affected. I discuss these in detail in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Contemporary research on the political economy of communication is helpful in the analysis of how it helps social transformation and the development of democracy. For example, Mosco (2009, p.4) observes that "contemporary political economy supports a range of moral positions but, on balance, tends to favour the value of extending democracy to all aspects of social life such as the economic, social, and cultural domains." This would give society more liberties and choices in daily economic activities, partaking in social, political, and cultural activities, including media content preferences. This leads to improved political participation and elections, producing quality leaders most likely amenable to progressive interventions in the other sectors. Scholars argue that this model makes democracy more meaningful as it also serves public interests by sharing helpful information with members of society through

mediating political and other national discourse. This is in addition to the traditional business and political interests that media outfits are often characterised with. It extends discourse and research to understand how social institutions such as the media contribute to shaping the socio-political life of society. By showing opportunities and challenges within this spectrum about the role of journalism, political economy research helps improve their role performance by revealing inadequacies that need improving to enhance democratic participation. Within the Zambian context, for example, the study shows several challenges hamper the adequate performance of the media's role, such as state censorship, archaic laws, and editorial interference within media structures.

Thus, when used to analyse media roles and rationality, the theoretical underpinnings of the political economy of communication help explain the choices and role performance that media organisations consider as being intrinsically linked to capitalist imperatives. Data shows how the selected media organisations in this study base their role performance decisions on factors that may be categorized within this conceptual framework of the political economy of communication, such as business modelling, political correctness, and averting adverse reactions from certain sections of society such as political leaders or their followers. For example, the literature reviewed and results from interview data show how *The Post* newspape*r* prioritized its business interests under President Michael Sata's reign between 2011-2014 by seldom reporting any negative stories about him. Although the newspaper exposed several corruption cases involving his government ministers during the same period (Chama, 2014). Chama (2017, p.94) argues that the newspaper was later "closed down by the government (under Sata's successor, Edgar Lungu) because of difficult political and economic conditions." As I argued earlier, the newspaper found itself engrossed in tax-related troubles, which the state used to forcibly liquidate, bringing its quarter-century operations to a close on 22 June 2016.

Experiences from the past show that the state often uses this tactic to target media entities perceived as hostile to punish them by cutting off advertising revenue to coerce them against negative coverage (Hamusokwe, 2018). For example, Chama (2017, p.69) argues that "the government directed all government departments not to advertise in the

tabloid (*Post*) newspaper due to its negative reporting… to make sure that the tabloid newspaper is taken out of business." This practice has continued even during this study, as interview data shows in the latter chapters (Chapter Six). Additionally, this study shows that other means to coerce media organisations and journalists, including detentions and physical assault on media personnel, have become tools the state and other parties use against journalists to intimidate them. It is, therefore, essential to account for these peculiarities when analysing the political economy of communication in the Zambian context, which this study fulfils.

Political economy of communication is "grounded in a realist, inclusive, constitutive and critical epistemology in that it recognizes both concepts and social practices, distinguishing itself from approaches that claim ideas as only labels for the singular reality of human action," Mosco (2009, p.8). It is also considered to be *inclusive* because "it rejects essentialism, which reduces social practices to a single political economy explanation, in favour of an approach that views concepts as starting points into a diverse social field," (Resnick and Wolff, 2006, p.45). Additionally, "the epistemology is constitutive in that it recognizes the limits of causal determination, including the assumption that units of social analysis interact as fully formed wholes and in a linear fashion," Mosco (2009, p.10). These aspects of the epistemological approach taken by political economy analysis are central to understanding the Zambian media content as my research does. In this instance, analysis of the selected media organisations using this theoretical framework enabled me to examine the factors that help explain journalism cultural practices within the media system without necessarily aligning them to presumptions formed in different contexts such as those of the Global North.

The Public Sphere and communication

The Public Sphere as a concept has evolved over several decades and speaks to how governance systems work and create spaces for the exchange of public opinions. This public space provides a vital platform for vigorously interrogating competing ideas. Schulz (1997, p.57) suggests that "an intermediary system which links the base with the

top of the political system (or, according to Habermas, the link between) the private and collective actors of the periphery with the political institutions in the centre". Different models of the public sphere have gained prominence in academic literature. Schulz (1997, p.57) for example, contrasts notions of, "the discursive public (consisting mostly of individual or collective actors dominated by civil society) and the liberal public (collective actors with equal access of all, which reflects preferences of the people)." While the former is premised on Habermas' transformation of the public sphere six decades ago and his later modifications and reflections in the 1990s, the latter is anchored in political science and theories of liberal democracy.

Lowe and Huajanen (2003, p.30) argue that under the liberal public sphere model, critical political decisions must embrace input from the public; "It is obligatory for democracy that decisions are bound to citizens, interests. This is usually expressed characteristically in elections. For citizens to decide [on who they think best stands for their interests], they must be informed about the competing candidates for power." This assertion is based on the need for such a public to be universally represented through elected officials' decisions, policy pronouncements and actions. The role of the media in this exercise cannot be overemphasised as they play an essential role in giving messages from the politicians to the voters and vice versa. This research examines how the media fulfils this role as the nexus of the public sphere. A functional public sphere is essential in any democratic political system. For this to be realised in a meaningful way, Rutherford (2000, p.18) argues that such a public sphere ought to be "accessible, autonomous, and have a [high] quality of participation" from critical players that include the media. In assessing these factors, this thesis shows that Zambian media organisations suffer several limitations, partly due to the state's overbearing influence, as I explain in the results Chapters Six and Seven.

Additionally, a historical perspective of the concept and its development shows that the public sphere underwent "concurrent deformations when large newspapers devoted to profit and turned the press into an agent of manipulation" (Soules, 2007, para 6). Further, (Habermas, 1991, p.185) argues that the media "became the gate through which privileged private interests invaded the public sphere." It becomes clear that

when the elites realised how powerful and politically influential this space had become, they felt threatened and devised mechanisms to influence it. This is clear in contemporary times, where the state in pseudo-democracies tries to control the narrative of political power by undercutting media ethics and professionalism for the current administration's selfish gains. These manipulations or transformations, therefore, necessitate scrutiny of the public sphere, particularly within the Zambian media context, to unravel these influences on journalism's role within emerging or fragile democracies such as Zambia. As the literature shows in Chapter Four and the results in Chapters Six and Seven, the state's influence is pervasive across the media landscape. It often undermines journalism's role within the democratic process, as I highlight in later chapters. Analysis shows that the media are caught between fulfilling their role of serving the public interest while trying to resist the influence of powerful interests such as the state.

In their studies, the Glasgow Media Group (GMG) revealed these patterns of usurpation of the public space by the dominant in society. Their analyses show that the narratives and story lines in the news are not based on a neutral measurement of news values but a systematic weaving of certain events and presentations to emphasise topics or themes while downplaying others. From this, their work typically concludes that the worldview presented by large news entities is a well-calculated exercise to sustain a certain status quo. For example, Eldridge (1995, p.86) of the GMG argues that "the news was organised and produced substantially around the views of the dominant political group in society…the views of those who disagree fundamentally with this position were downgraded and underrepresented in the news coverage." Analysis of the Zambian media environment, especially of the four selected media organisations, reveals similar patterns of news reporting, polarised along ownership and partisan lines. Chapter Seven discusses this in detail by analysing critical media texts from the selected media organisations. At the same time, Chapter Six illustrates the dominance of the incumbent on media coverage of the 2016 election by examining journalistic cultures.

Political communication theory and relevant historical developments

The early development of the concept of the subfield of political communication traces back to various specialisations that had little to do with political science or mass media, as known then or their contemporary equivalents. It is not surprising when McChesney (2013, p.305) notes that "…it is axiomatic in nearly all variants of social and political theory, [that a] communication system is the cornerstone of modern societies. In political terms, the communication system may serve to enhance democracy, or to deny it, or some combination of the two." Further, Willems (2016: p.48) argues that "media provide information to enable citizens to participate meaningfully in political life, [such as] to provide fair and 'objective' coverage on all major candidates in elections to make a well-informed choice[s]." In its ideal form, this constitutes political communication, serving the political information needs of both the politician on the one hand and the public as audiences, and as citizens, on the other. The media occupy a central role in the politics of most societies, thus increasingly becoming more influential with time, and "deeply integrate into different spheres of society through mediatisation" (Strömbäck and Luengo, 2008, pp.551-553). This reinforces 's (2000, p.2) argument that "ownership, support mechanisms such as advertising and government policies influence media behaviour and content." This is discussed in the latter chapters of this thesis concerning experiences within Zambian journalism.

A critical examination of the African media landscape reveals that much of today's political communication carries historical patterns and legacies. It shows structural and orientation hangovers from major past eras that had engulfed much of the African continent; the precolonial era, the colonial era (the 1890s-1950s), the post-independence era (1960s-1980s) and what some scholars have termed the re-democratisation period of Africa starting from the late 1980s to the 1990s, (See for example (Eribo and Jong-Ebot, 1997). During the colonial period, colonialists used African media to integrate African economies and human resources into the western economic structures for exploitation. In the post-independence era, the press, which had been nationalised, was used by the newly independent African states to rally their citizens around nation-building and nationalism. Mwangi and Moyo (2011) argue that "…post-independence African rulers found a powerful ally in the state-controlled media,

which were turned into mouthpieces of the ruling class." Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan (2021, p.7) show that this relic from the past still presents significant challenges to journalism in today's Zambia, which has embraced an emerging yet fragile democratic political system.

The 'big man' syndrome, i.e., autocratic leadership, which is often corrupt, and wastes public resources, is still rife. Political propaganda still characterises and defines much of what passes for political communication in many African countries, including Zambia. Additionally, as many democracy projects continue to falter across the continent, indications are that "media, in the hands of the state, became a powerful instrument for disseminating political propaganda for the ruling élite" (Rønning, 1994, p.4). This trend is a disservice to democratic governance and growth. Zambia's case is not much different in her democratic trajectory, which has regressed in the last decade (see Zamchiya and Lewanika, 2015; Goldring and Wahman, 2016; Cheeseman, Whitfield and Death, 2017).

In emerging and fragile democracies such as Zambia, however, political communication and related communication models are being promoted amidst these challenges to enhance democratic governance systems. This forms much of the political communication apparatus, and many development communication scholars seem to agree that "media influence could be a magic multiplier for development through dissemination of new development knowledge" (Schramm, 1964, p.164). Scholars argue that this is necessary to entrench democratic governance. For example, Mwangi & Moyo (2011, p.2) say that "…nearly all African countries have embarked on a faltering process of democratization. Over the years, the emphasis has shifted from elections to building institutions that may support African democracy such [as] a free and independent media." Within this context, I suggest that proper communication models must include the necessary means and mechanisms that have diverse publics within democracies. Further, Wasserman (2010, p.11) argues that "contextual reading of media brings to light a different kind of political engagement, termed the 'politics of every day," which responds to tendencies within journalism that dissuade citizens' engagement in democracies such as media bias, lack of professionalism, elements

which, data shows, are prevalent within the Zambian media landscape, especially the four media outlets in this study, as I discuss in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven of the thesis.

Political Communication theory and its contextual application

Political communication theory draws from political sciences, media, and cultural studies. Much research has occurred in the Global North, contributing the most to informing research elsewhere, such as in Africa. However, due to this inherent bias in literature, "we know relatively little about how contextual factors such as electoral structures, political culture, media systems, and information flows affect citizens' participation in the democratic political process" elsewhere (Wojcieszak 2012, p.255). This study assesses some of the propositions of this theory within the context of the sub-Saharan African region, particularly Zambia and shows differences in context and attendant factors. In this regard, Mwangi & Moyo (2011, p.10) argues that in the advent of the democratic resurgence in African countries such as Zambia, it was expected that "independent media [would] emerge in the forefront of the campaign for democratic governments," to consolidate liberal democratic values. This would see the media becoming more inclusive of all stakeholders. Wasserman (2010, p.47) argues that "in a liberal democracy, media fulfil an important role in strengthening the democratic process and holding government to account over its performance," premised on an enabling environment. However, the realities within many African states, such as Zambia, do not reflect these values, giving way to the continued stifling of media operations. Thus, understanding political communication within this context is essential to appreciate the environmental peculiarities and challenges that make the universal application of the concept problematic. To some extent, this study relates to political communication within the constricts of the Zambian context by analysing the forum Zambian journalism provided for political discussions, around the 2016 election, through the textual case study discussed later in this thesis.

McNair defines political communication as "purposeful communication about politics undertaken by politicians and other actors addressed to non-politicians such as voters

about these actors and their activities" (McNair, 2011, p.4). Additionally, Graber (1984) posits that political communication incorporates written text and many other forms of communication, such as non-verbal, visual, dressing, logos, etc. In analysing the Zambian context, therefore, I suggest that it is crucial to consider that 'purposeful communication' involves choosing what to include and also what to exclude communicative acts such as the - e.g. the deliberate omission or inclusion of facts or misinformation that have a bearing on giving an objective understanding of political events. Thus, acts of self-censorship (Rajkhowa, 2015, pp.870-873), by journalists, under pressure from their own media organisation (Whitten-Woodring, 2009, p.598) or external forces such as "state censorship" (Rajkhowa, 2015, p.870), constitute these omissions or misinformation. This research shows these traits within Zambian journalism (Chama, 2020) argues, particularly in analysing the selected media organisations, as discussed in Chapter Seven.

Contextually, political communication must be understood from a socio-cultural standpoint. For example, the African traditions of respect for authority or African leaders' aversiveness to criticism in the name of reverence feature prominently in the Zambian context. This is often abused as a cloak covering inefficiencies, corrupt activities, and lack of leadership characteristics. This is discussed in Chapter Six, where data shows that journalists' reverence for authority is overly pronounced, especially among public media journalists, in keeping with these social-cultural norms and expectations. However, journalists must break from these nuanced cultural traits embedded within cultural essentialism as it is detrimental to the democratic political model that Zambia has embraced. Culture itself is dynamic and responsive to society's needs. Therefore, I would argue that those aspects of the African culture that do not benefit the wider community must be adapted to be more valuable and responsive to democratic values such as transparency and accountability. Political leaders who demand respect as a pretext to cover their inadequacies must realise this and equally adjust, embrace these values, but more importantly, be willing to earn this respect by practising good governance.

In ending, it is worth noting that political communication in the contemporary world also includes contacts outside traditional journalism spaces – perhaps most notably, those on social media and other online platforms. These new spaces have become increasingly important for political communication practices. However, this thesis focuses on established journalism institutions where attention to traditions, cultures and their broader implications is still needed.

CHAPTER THREE

JOURNALISM CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON REPORTING POLITICS IN DEMOCRACY

Introduction

Having discussed the importance of media within democracy in Chapter One, as well the notions surrounding media's social role in Chapter Two, the objective of this chapter is to introduce and discuss the concept of journalism culture and how it helps shape journalism practice within political systems such as a democracy as the case is for my study. Its main thrust focuses on journalism culture's major theoretical and conceptual dimensions and epochs relevant to this study. The chapter is divided into three major sections; the first introduces the concept of normative journalism, its historical developments, and contemporary debates. Further, I discuss relevant journalistic norms and their intersection with culture within democracies. Later, the chapter introduces the concept of journalistic culture, examining it from the Global North or western journalistic perspectives. This exercise is an essential build-up to the following discussion on African journalistic cultures within the African context. I also discuss the historicity of cultural essentialism within African journalism (the idea that specific cultural values or beliefs are highly regarded in Africa and must therefore be reflected within African journalism practice). These include patriarchy, power asymmetries, as well as matters of domination) (Onyenankeya, Onyenankeya & Osunkunle, 2021)

Finally, the chapter engages in a comparative analysis of journalism culture on the continent using selected countries in West Africa, eastern Africa, and Sothern Africa. As shown later, these countries are chosen because they represent regional trends in journalism developments and research. Additionally, parameters within these selected countries compare well with the Zambian context, which is the final phase of the chapter. Overall, this discussion on journalistic culture is vital as an analytical framework of the emergent journalistic culture within Zambia, as shown in my research's data collection and analysis, as demonstrated in Chapters Six and Seven.

Historicity and current trends of normative journalism and democracy

In his book *The Power of News,* Schudson (1995, p.25) argues for an integrationist role of the media. He argues, "[the media's] capacity to publicly include is their most important feature. [The fact that we each read the same paper as elites] is empowering . . . the impression it promotes equality and commonality, illusion though it is, sustains a hope of democratic life." This narrative predicates the role that media ideally play within society, to varying degrees dependent on contextual environmental factors, as well as whether this role is framed within the Western-libertarian model, which regards media freedom highly, the social responsibility model with emphasis on journalists upholding public trust or the development model with its focus on journalism's influence in promoting growth/development, (Fourie 2008: 53). The common denominator in all the models is that they occur within a democratic framework, a political system most conducive to a free press. The discussion, therefore, traces developments of normative journalism within democracy and demonstrates how the two complement each other Mellado, Hellmueller and Donsbach (2016, p.1) argue that "journalists' professional roles impact political and democratic life.".

Understanding the normative roles of journalism, centred around concepts like "balance and objectivity" (Griffin, 2010, p.35), is vital to this study. Christians et al. (2010, p.vii) argue that "at issue is not only the role of journalism in society but what this role should be." I suggest that a discussion of this nature should be considered within the context of prevailing environmental factors, such as regulatory, legislative and political environment, which affects media operations. This, Christians et. al. argue, leads to a determination of the "media's mission in democracy, a normative level—beyond factual landscapes toward values and objectives." (2010, p.35). Within the Zambian context as an emerging and fragile democracy, as noted in Chapter One, analysis of these factors helps explain the underlying causes of some of the journalists' norms, practices and journalistic cultures that form over time.

It is worth noting that while the concepts of balance and objectivity have adorned a universal appeal and meaning, both are products of cultural norms. Schudson (2001, p.149), for example, argues that "objectivity as a norm is historically at once a moral

ideal, a set of reporting and editing practices, and an observable pattern of news writing…it measures the degree of impersonality and non-partisanship in news stories." Meanwhile, Cunningham(2003, p.211) argues that "the [American] press began to embrace objectivity in the middle of the nineteenth century, as society turned away from religion and toward science and empiricism to explain the world." On the other hand Hopmann, Van Aelst and Legnante (2012, p.240) posit that "political balance can be defined according to a political system perspective (where coverage reflects politically defined norms or regulation) or a media routine perspective (where coverage results from journalistic norms)." They further note that the concept is complex, and "notoriously difficult concept to operationalize." (ibid).

Therefore, a contextual application reduces the risk of misconstruing its meaning in specific environments. These arguments imply explicit cultural and ideological norms that necessitated the evolution and crystallization of these moral positions as "the emergence of new cultural norms and ideals" (Schudson, 2001, p.149). Therefore, within the Zambian journalism context, these terms must be understood and operationalised fluidly to appreciate the contextual use, based chiefly on contingent considerations by journalists. However, as Chama (2017, pp.14,57) argues, African society still expects African journalism to be professional and objective. The practice, however, does not always meet these expectations, which might still be understood in diverse ways. This also reveals continuing tensions such as between Africanity versus Modernity (Nyamnjoh 2005, p.114), professionalism versus partisanship, and this theoretical discussion has a counterpart in the conversation of the presence of these expectations in interview data with Zambian journalists in Chapter Six.

A survey of the history of normative journalism roles can be traced to the seminal study by Rosten (1937) on Washington journalists' roles between 1933 and 1934, where he concluded that reporting on President Roosevelt evolved among journalists from eulogies at the beginning of his presidency to 'slant' news as the perception of the president changed. Rosten records one respondent (who was frustrated about accusations from their editor that they were sold to the 'New Deal'), saying, "I am sick of fighting my office... from now on I am giving my paper what it wants" (Rosten, 1937,

p.51). This response illustrates tensions between journalists and news media hierarchies or external pressures, as many stakeholders expect journalists' roles. These internal interactions, often under pressure from external forces, result in tensions between journalists' role conception and role execution, leading "journalists [to form their own] perception of their social function in society" (Zhu et al., 1997, p.94). Mellado, Hellmueller and Donsbach (2016, p.1) argue that these "conflicting stances of how journalism ought to be (i.e., journalistic role conception) and how journalism is performed (i.e., how those roles manifest in practice) have long stood in stark contrast." This study analyses how their relations with owners and the operating environmental factors affect journalists' roles.

This study argues that normative roles and expectations in journalism must be considered alongside changes in socio-political systems. Within this context, data analysis shows that normative roles and expectations among Zambian journalists are superseded by partisan considerations, which undercuts professionalism, which has been exacerbated over the last decade since 2011. These normative roles include the "*monitorial, facilitative, radical,* and the less regarded *collaborative role*" (Christians et al., 2010, pp.139-218). The *monitorial role*, which Lasswell (1948) termed *surveillance,* "suggests not only looking out but doing so in a planned and systematic way, guided by criteria of relevance and reliability" (Christians et al., 2010, p.159). In practice, this includes investigative journalism that exposes corruption and abuse of power and holds those in authority accountable. The role of *facilitation* is designed towards entrenching the democratic tradition where the media "preside over and within the conversation of culture" (Carrey, 1987, p.17) and the "media promote dialogue in facilitative terms, [to] support and strengthen participation in civil society," (Christians et al., 2010, p.158). This study suggests that the media do not merely reflect sentiments within society but enrich and improve them through analysis, interpretation and translation to improve the community, noting, as (Waisbord, 2013, p.3) does, that the journalism "profession must provide instant news and analysis."

In one scholar's words, critical media is necessary within democracy as it helps in offering checks on the excesses of those in power. Couldry (2005, p.4) asks, "Why not

social instability? Stability of what exactly?" Within democratic setups, media fulfil this *radical role by* challenging the status quo to agitate for improvement or change to better conditions. Similarly, (Beattie, 2018, p.19) argues that a "free press undergirds political accountability." Hence Couldry's social instability proposition may mean that radical options must go with democratic practices, especially within the libertarian democratic model that prioritises the free expression of people and institutions. Christians et al. capture *radical media's* purpose in democracy, arguing that "radical democratic commitment works for the continual elimination of concentrations of social power" (Christians et al., 2010, p.179). As the fourth estate, therefore, radical media aids in eliminating these concentrations of social power by challenging political power. "The long-range goal is a society of universal recognition of human rights for all…challenge the injustices perpetrated by those who dominate the political-economic conditions of a society" (Christians et al., 2010, p.179). As the data shows, in the following chapter (Chapter Four) and Chapters Six and Seven, this thesis argues that within the Zambian context, *The Post newspaper* and *MUVI TV* closely mirror the characteristics of the radical media among other media organisations.

The media's *collaborative role* within a democracy, often criticised for its misconstrued alliance with political power, assumes that "commercialism does not undermine democracy as long as rules and procedures are not undermined" (Stromback 2005, p.338). This proposition is antithetical in the case of Zambian journalism, as the data suggests that commercialism does affect democracy in a way that interferes with or shapes parties' interests. The issue of the defunct *Post newspaper* and *MUVI TV* using their platforms for paid political campaign spots during the 2016 elections is quite instructive. This study, therefore, suggests that certain positionalities of journalism within a democracy are misconstrued and, therefore, counterintuitive since media organisations sometimes make editorial policy decisions based on business considerations rather than professional or ethical journalism principles, as cited above. This corroborates with Christians et al. (2010, p.196), who argue that this normative role is undesirable since the "idea of collaboration implies a relationship with the state that clashes with the libertarian ideal of an autonomous press". Within the Zambian context, a mix of these normative roles are understood in similar forms as they exist in the

Global North, underpinned, however, by contextual differences, which include a fragile democratic environment, small, underdeveloped market, high levels of interference in journalists' work, poor remunerations, unsafe working environments, and job insecurities, among others. I discuss these in detail in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Journalism cultures in the Global North or Western media

Scholarship about Western media has led the discourse over comparative journalistic cultures. Among many prominent works, scholars such as Harrison (2000), Zelizer (2005) and Hanitzsch (2007) have contributed to the growing body of scholarly research that compares journalists' role perceptions within society. Some, such as Splichal and Sparks (1994, p.179), in their study involving first-year journalism students in 22 countries, show "a striking similarity in the desire for independence and autonomy." Similarly, Deuze (2005, pp.446–447) documents what he sees as something close to universal characteristics being familiar, a ''shared occupational ideology among new workers." This consists of five typical elements signifying those journalists.

a) "Provide a public service.
b) are impartial,
c) neutral,
d) objective,
e) fair, and credible.
f) ought to be autonomous,
g) free and independent in their work.
h) have a sense of immediacy, actuality, and speed; and
i) have a sense of ethics, validity, and legitimacy."

Other researchers in countries as diverse as Brazil, Germany, Tanzania, and the United States have revealed "remarkable similarities in journalists' professional role conceptions, ethical views, editorial procedures and socialization processes" (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, p.274), (see also Mwesige, 2004; Ramaprasad, 2001). Murdock & Golding (1977: pp.292-293) theorise that the ''diffusion of occupational ideologies'' or ''transfer of ideology'' models could partly explain this fusion and emerging similarities between journalists from the Global North to those in the Global South.

However, international studies have shown that although there might be these similarities in elements across regions, there are still differences when country-specific analysis is applied. For example, within geographical areas such as the Global North or Western media, the intra-country study of journalistic practice norms, role perceptions and ethical dispositions reveals substantial differences. Donsbach and Klett's (1993, p.80) survey found "different perceptions of the objectivity norm in a comparative survey of journalists in Germany, Great Britain, Italy and the United States." They interpreted this disparity in terms of "'partially different 'professional cultures' where the boundaries can be drawn between the Anglo-Saxon journalists on the one hand, and the continental European journalists on the other side.'' In these works, scholars have found that most of the "professional ethics of journalists are largely determined by the national contexts within which they work" (Hanitzsch. et al., 2011, p.275). As earlier alluded, the owners' agendas, advertising, business considerations, and political persuasions affected what constituted a journalistic practice among journalists and media institutions. Cultural predisposition was also discovered (ibid) to influence journalists' ethical and ideological views in the countries reviewed. This is an interesting observation, as moral dispositions are often assumed to have a universal, or at least broad, appeal; thus, when one talks of such ethical provisions as objectivity, fairness and impartiality, a Western journalist is frequently assumed to understand it similarly to their African, Latin American, or Asian counterparts.

Scholars have shown evidence that despite the ethical and ideological dispositions assumed to be widely applied, national journalistic cultures still reveal contrasts partly informed by their professional attitudes. In their comparative study of German and British journalists to understand these differences, Henkel, Thurman and Deffner (2019, pp.1-2) discovered that "among the most striking contrasts was the political positioning of newspapers in Britain and Germany: British front pages, especially of the tabloid press, can loudly advocate political or moral views, while German papers are often more reticent." During election campaigns, British papers often declare their support for one party or the other. Henkel, Thurman and Deffner (2019, p.2) further conclude from their study that "in Britain, newspapers and their editors can be seen as players in the power game of Politics" For the German media on the other hand, journalists do not

take such outright positions on political matters, doing only enough to let audiences make the final call on their political choices; “German newspapers refrain from campaigning, and instead offer help and advice to allow their readers to decide for themselves.” (ibid)

This contrast between two similar sets of professionals speaks to how diverse and complex journalistic cultures can be in seemingly similar geographical or cultural contexts. It also reveals the deep-seated cultural and epistemological foundations that influence these professionals. Albæk et al. (2014, p.74) note that “the relationship between attitudes and behaviour is not presumed theoretically but empirically supported.” Similarly, Kim and Hunter (1993, p.129) show, through a meta-study of communication research on “attitudes and behaviour, an overall strong relationship between the two factors when controlled for methodological differences.” Their study further showed the relationship was remarkably stronger when it concerned an issue of great personal relevance to an individual. For a journalist, this could be political ideology or belief in democracy, political activism, affiliation to a political party within a given national context, or strong views on human rights and justice. Journalists often resist mudslinging subjects in the news even when employers encourage them. Other journalists refuse to editorialise objective information to fit specific narratives or create bias in coverage. I return to this discussion in Chapter Six.

Resulting of these suppositions, scholars have concluded that several aspects are inherent in the perceived roles of institutional journalism, along which variations are drawn. According to Hanitzsch et al. (2011), these can be broken down as follows.

> *Interventionism*, [which] reflects the extent to which journalists pursue missions and promote specific values. The distinction is between two types of journalists: one interventionist, involved, socially committed, assertive and motivated; the other detached and uninvolved, dedicated to objectivity, neutrality, fairness, and impartiality. *Power distance* refers to the journalist’s position towards the loci of societal power. [*Adversary journalists*], as the ‘‘Fourth Estate,’’ openly challenge those in power. [However], ‘‘*loyal*’’ or *opportunist-journalists* see themselves more in a collaborative role, as ‘‘partners’’ of the ruling elites in political processes. *Market orientation* is high in journalism cultures that subordinate their goals to the logic of the market. [However], journalists prioritising public interest

> emphasize political information and mobilization to create an informed citizenry. (2011, pp.275-276)

The preceding indicates that much of what becomes journalistic culture depends on many factors, internal or external, to media institutions. For example, the interventionists may see nothing wrong in partisanship when reporting politics, while the non-interventionists will not take such a position. The proximity to power also influences journalism cultures and what kind of power that is. In the case of the ruling elite, the closer someone is to them, the more likely they are to be pliant in aiding the elite's cause. Although this is out of desire, it is often through coercive tactics employed by the powerful, covertly or overtly, through a combination of promises of favours, persuasion and hostile regulations and policies. In extreme instances, severe measures such as physical harm or exemplar harassment to 'erring' journalists. Often, this is done to a few journalists to send a message to the rest 'to the official line or else!' I discuss this further concerning Zambian journalists with illustrations in Chapter Six.

African Journalism Models and their influence on journalism culture

Much of African journalism's ideological and epistemological underpinnings are primarily informed by Western models (Shaw, 2009, p.491). However, it is also plausible to suggest that local social, political, and economic factors distinctive to Africa influence African journalistic models while adopting and adapting to certain normative journalism traits predominant in the Global North (Hallin and Mancini, 2012, pp.116-118). Additionally, role perceptions, ethical dispositions, and epistemological foundations of African journalism tend to reflect Western models and theories, although significant steps to adapt to local contexts have been recorded (Kalyango et al., 2017). As a contribution to this continuing academic discourse on African normative journalism, this study sees several key arguments drawn in Shaw's seminal paper while arguing that some of his conclusions need updating and evaluation contextually, considering the data emerging within national contexts such as the case of Zambia. Shaw encourages continued research, as he worried that growing globalisation discourse risks diluting key African normative values of associational and participatory journalism. He notes, "I want to conclude by calling for more research in this area…taking into consideration various

local conditions and experiences informed by African journalism models" (Shaw, 2009, p.507). This thesis responds, in part, to Shaw's call for more research that considers the local conditions and contexts based on African journalism models.

Shaw's (2009) work sets out several key arguments about the nature of African journalism, which will be detailed here to advance the case for this thesis. He states that while the old African journalism forms were "grounded in precolonial oral discourse, creativity, humanity and agency… " (in other words, based on the idea of the centrality of community rather than individualism, involved the creativity of storytellers, musicians poets or dancers to relay information playing the role of modern journalists) (Shaw, 2009, pp.491,493), Bourgault (1995) on the other hand argues that "the African oral tradition resonates with the myth of the African ruler as a spiritual symbol of a people and stressed group orientation, continuity, harmony, and balance" (1995, p.4). Kasoma's (1996, p.96) argument is that pre-colonial forms of journalism models were "society-centred rather than money and power-centred profession" and must still be predominant in modern African journalism. Skjerdal (2012, p.246) also suggests, like Shaw and Bourgault, that, in the last century, traditional media was inclined to prioritize "access to the public sphere for all citizens."

Following this, journalism discourse in the post-independence period was framed within the development discourse (Ramaprasad, 2001, p.539), while academic writing of the 1990s framed it as democratic journalism since media actively participated in urging autocratic governments on the continent to democratise, (Berger, 2002, pp.23-24). Further, Shaw observes that at the turn of the last century distribution of public information was anchored on the two concepts of civil society and the public sphere, where information was shared with specific publics and the general public. The pre-colonial model, then, remains relevant to more recent journalism practices. In these arguments, data suggests that more than three decades later since the reinstitution of democracy in several African countries, African journalism is still dealing with the question of democracy and the challenges that journalism faces in efforts to entrench the liberal democratic values in nations experiencing fragile democracies such as Zambia as highlighted in Chapter One. Thus, this study contributes to nation-specific

data from countries such as Zambia that adds to a better understanding and appreciation of journalism's rhetoric and practice within emerging or fragile democracies, especially in an African context.

Another aspect of the forms of precolonial African journalism (Bourgault, 1995, p.205) is that “poets employed as praise singers, [needed] permi[ssion] to criticise their patrons, provided the criticism bore the weight of group norms and values.” This signifies a form of critical journalism within the communal normative framework, a feature present in today’s African journalism practice. This thesis also argues that these old forms of journalism evolved and hybridised, despite unevenly, with Western normative values to produce journalism with an edge in criticising authority, as many African tabloids show (Chama, 2020). From the preceding, I suggest that similar to the precolonial forms of journalism that were more likely to be subservient to authority and therefore less critical, the current journalism on the continent, illustrated by data in this thesis, shows media are less adversarial towards of power for fear of reprisals. This is unlike the Global North’s journalism models anchored within liberal democratic values. For instance, Hallin and Mancini (2012, p.106) argue that “in South Africa, instrumentalism (using media as an instrument to appropriate political power) is on the rise and journalistic autonomy is under threat.” This trend is present within Zambia, where owners undermine editorial independence or state coercion of media, illustrated in Chapters Six and Seven.

Another relevant concept in considering norms and cultures of journalism is Nyamnjoh’s Africanity – which refers to the cultural unity of Saharan Africa, a unique African configuration of various features that are found separately elsewhere (Maquet 2009, pp.160-161) versus Modernity – which is the idea used as a discipline of dominance, impressing the superiorities of Western culture (Washbrook 2009, p.125) on the Global South, especially former colonies. Nyamnjoh uses it to refer to Western journalism normativism premised on liberal democracy. This proposition needs updating to reflect journalism experiences in different contexts and to address its limitations as an analytical framework of African journalism models. Given this, I suggest a more fluid approach that considers hybrids, even though tensions remain, presents a more useful

analytical framework for the Zambian media. While Chama's recent work addresses this and helpfully focuses on tabloid journalism, particularly *The Post* newspaper, more remains to be done. As I highlighted in Chapter One, this study builds on this argument by extending the analysis to other media outlets, such as television and broadsheets. I also argue that 'Africanity', which is the "lived reality, shaped by a unique history, and marked by unequal encounters and misrepresentations" (Nyamnjoh, 2009, pp.12-13) continues to shape African journalism models, and is as relevant as the 'Modernity' that bears influence over this Africanity. For example, (Chama, 2014, p.55) theorises that Zambian journalism continues to evolve with features such as commitment to democratic growth, critical of power, advocacy, peace, and national unity, strands from 'Modernity' -based on Western liberal democratic traditions while emphasising the 'Africanity' role which reflects a commitment to oral tradition, community, deference to authority, etc. Further, Kasoma (1996, p.110) argues that African journalism strives to "serve the poor and avoid selfish needs of serving their interests," a nod to the 'Africanity values as espoused by Nyamnjoh.

Further, the literature shows a movement towards a revolutionary journalism culture to help in the liberation struggle of countries that were still colonies during the 1950s and 1960s. Kwame Nkrumah, for example, urged the media to participate in the 1950-1960s liberation struggle by reporting and writing the African story through revolutionary journalism, which is "summed up in Nkrumah's independence declaration; "The independence of Ghana is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of Africa," (Karikari, 2007, p.11). In all this, "Nkrumah was thought to view the role of the media to be that of "political education and mobilisation," (Biney, 2011, p.120) to tell the African narratives to the world. Biney (2011, p.114), for example, writes that "There is no doubt Nkrumah's media philosophy was a mixture of paternalism, revolutionary theory, developmental media theory and other varieties which are all as far away as possible from the classic libertarian theory of the press." Elsewhere in Africa, Ramaprasad (2001, p.540) notes that "soon after independence, African media were enlisted to help with national unity and development…Nyerere led his country on a socialist path to development, making the press a partner in this effort."

Nation-building was crucial for newly independent African states, aligning with this revolutionary journalism culture. Ramaprasad notes that “a policy was encoded in the Arusha Declaration in 1967 which was spelt the basis for moving toward socialism and self-reliance” in Tanzania (Ramaprasad, 2001, p.541). This was under Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere’s *‘Ujamaa’* mantra, which translates as *a* family hood, a Swahili expression that embraced the social cohesion of society. However, history is replete with examples of how these liberatory philosophies led to autocracies, as Pitts (2000, p.274) and Saul (2012, pp.118-120) suggest about Africa and Tanzania, respectively.

Shaw (2009, p.494) argues that “the classical liberal democracy media (19th and 20th century), in black Africa, particularly in British West Africa, were largely owned by influential Africans [who] played an important watchdog role in exposing the excesses of the colonial administration.” As a journalism model, they adopted Western liberal democratic values and principles, which they replicated within African colonial states. Although in other parts of Africa, colonial settlers owned the press, such as was the case in East Africa (Mwesige (2004, p.73–4), Tunstall (1977, p.108) argues that the British style press in African colonies was imposed on them, often “established for the use of British businessmen, settlers, teachers, government officials and soldiers.” Similarly, other colonies under different colonial regimes except for Francophone territories – (because of the French government’s setting up a programme that tied broadcasting in French Africa to France)- experienced the same fate. Even under such pressure and manipulation, however, these media outlets are credited with “the growth of African political consciousness at the time”, a journalism model that defined the colonial-era press between the 1940s and the early 1960s (Bourgault, 1995, pp.167-168).

The postcolonial era left a press modelled along these similar principles, with (Shaw, 2009, p.498) arguing that “while the press in Anglophone Africa continued its watchdog role, having to contend with state repression, Francophone Africa [press] reverted to the praise-singing or propagandist role” as France intended by empowering top managers who coincidentally had been trained in France for their roles as broadcasting station

managers in Francophone colonies (Bourgault 1995, p.71). This is similar to Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan's (2021, p.7) argument that there “remains an authoritarian (colonial and postcolonial) hangover across many African countries”, such as Zambia, where *The Post,* for example, faced state repression (Chama, 2017) and where *Times of Zambia* (Chirambo, 2011) and *ZNBC* (Gondwe, 2014), are routinely coerced by political authorities to act as a propagandist press. Therefore, the “Hallin and Mancini argument [of comparing media systems] for rethinking normative journalism theory and practice to reflect local conditions from one society to another” (Shaw, 2009, p.506) remains relevant, making this study timely and appropriate in its detailed examination of such local conditions.

Chirambo (2011, p.319) writes that Zambian/African journalism embraces the idea of the “watchdog media model”, which entails that the media questions public affairs and public officials, which is within the scope of the social responsibility model as highlighted earlier in this chapter, that focuses on upholding of public trust holding. Within the Zambian and African contexts, Kasoma (1995, p.539) expresses optimism that the media will “fulfil its democratic duty as a watchdog over government, thereby making it accountable to the people" However, Phiri (1999, p.58) would later remark that “The watchdog role of the media, so ably articulated by the MMD leadership during and soon after the transition to plural politics, has not come to fruition.” This is due to some bottlenecks, such as enacting restrictive laws and setting up restrictive media regulatory bodies such as the IBA highlighted in *Table No.1* of Chapter One. Equally, the broader changes in political conditions and leadership have left a fragile democracy (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008; Goldring and Wahman, 2016), leading to unpredictability in policy regimes by successive leaders, resulting in a harsher operating environment for Zambian journalism.

Therefore, two decades later, a study such as this, examining the status of media in fulfilling such a vital democratic role, is relevant, hence this thesis. And from the emerging data in this study, I suggest that some of the journalism models manifest within Zambian journalism are characterised by activist-journalism – where journalists take a personal interest in issues which makes it hard to keep their professional

distance in their practice (Bourgault, 1995, p.183). In assessing these patterns, this study argues that some outlets and journalists have been radical at certain times and collaborative at others. This, therefore, calls for the need to recognise the fluidity/hybridity of journalism roles within Zambia. This leads to a conflating of journalists' expected professional normative roles and personal preferences, resulting in the Jekyll and Hyde personality- (two distinct and opposed personalities) (Nyamnjoh, 2005a, pp.2-3). This also adopts aspects of the journalism's watchdog role, although in a partisan manner that may lead to polarization, creating tensions between professionalism, Africanity and Modernity. Contingency journalism, where conditions on the ground dictate journalists' actions, may offer a pragmatic solution to these professional dilemmas as I suggest in my analysis of the interview data in Chapter Six.

Cultures of journalism also relate to questions of civil society and the public sphere (Berger, 2002, p.23) and their impact on media ownership and journalism practice within a democracy (Akpojivi, 2018; Bakardjieva and Konstantinova, 2020). Shaw presents differing views of civil society; some scholars suggest that media differs from civil society, while others contend that the two must be treated as the same (Shaw, 2009, p.502). For Rønning (1999, p.17), community-owned media works better than private media, which are usually driven by the profit motive agenda overarching all other considerations, similar to the state's desire for control and dominance of the press (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, pp.227-228).

Within African journalism, particularly in Zambia, Hamusokwe (2015, p.85) argues that "besides the profit motive, evidence shows that private newspaper owners usually serve personal interests and ideological viewpoints." Meanwhile, Phiri (1999, p.63) suggests that with the continued stifling of media, "the solution to the predicament of media in Zambia lies in civil society organizations committed to the creation of a democratic society." However, Berger (2002, pp.23-24) raises important questions on where to draw the lines between journalism and civil society, which illustrates the complexity of this debate. This study shows these tensions exist within the Zambian context, where data reveals an aggressive state-media relationship, as presented in Chapter Four. This study further examines these arguments to show how rhetoric and practice align or

depart from them, as highlighted in Chapters Four, Six and Seven. Considering the emerging data, I argue that Rønning and Phiri's positionality is helpful in examining the media's role vis-a-vis democracy, a position I agree with that private ownership does not necessarily support the flourishing democracy.

The journalism models discussed above influence the journalism culture prevalent in many countries across Africa. However, the local or national cultural nuances profoundly affect the nature of journalistic cultures. Skjerdal (2012, p.635) observed that this is because the "vital differences are explicated along the dimensions of interventionism and cultural essentialism." Therefore, Banda calls for a journalism culture in Africa that is orientated towards "civic journalism, community journalism, peace journalism, etc." (Banda, 2009: 226), for many of Africa is still confronted with these issues. In this regard, civic journalism views "the journalist as a catalyst for civic engagement" (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch, 2009, p.299), while peace journalism (Lynch and McGoldrick, 2007, pp.27, 247) emphasises "reporting within solution-oriented peace discourse, [assessing] what is known and has been observed about conflict, its dynamics and potential for transformation," in the context of fragile political environments are key to redefining African journalism.

Further, community journalism which focuses on "programming about and for the local community, [which] practitioners generally see as 'grassroots' and 'participatory" (Tucker, 2013, pp.394-395), remains fundamental to the shaping of African journalism models. Despite the visible presence of such media, it suffices to note that there is a shortage of scholarly work analysing community media in Zambia, with only literature by (Banda, 2003; Banda and Fourie, 2004) as this is not the focus of this thesis. These journalism practices and cultures show that contingent hybrids of normative principles predominant in the Global North and those in the Global South result in interventions that may work in different social-political contexts. Although I must hasten to caution here that this hybridisation is more contingency based, as journalism practices compartmentalise the use of Western norms and local norms dependant on suitability and acceptability within their environmental contexts. The result is usually one of continual tension between these norms and practices that do not easily blend or work

smoothly. In Zambia, for example, all the journalism approaches discussed under section 2.0. of this chapter are present and constantly adapting to local dynamics to be more effective, as the data suggests.

However, a growing body of literature analyses another vital journalism strand within the African context and surrounding discourse on hybridity: citizen journalism. At the turn of the last decade, when academic attention turned to this relatively new concept, scholars such as Paterson (2013) undertook a broad assessment of the state of the phenomena where he notes that "new forms of citizenship are emerging around Africa, as a result of widespread interaction with new communications technologies, including social media and the adaptation of mainstream media to those trends," (2013, p.1). Further, in his assessment of the emergence of citizen journalism Moyo (2009, p.563) concludes that "citizen journalism is not necessarily emerging as a distinct form of 'unmediated' communication, but as a hybrid form, as mainstream media increasingly tap into that space as a way of [illustrating] their close links to the citizenry as a testimony of citizen engagement." Other works (Ogenga, 2010; Srinivasan, Diepeveen and Karekwaivanane, 2019) on Kenya and Tanzania, (Moyo, 2011; Moyo, 2015; Ndlovu and Sibanda, 2020) on Zimbabwe and South Africa, and last but not least, (Banda, 2010) on Zambia, situate the discourse on this important phenomena in specific national contexts. Since this is work for another time and place, it suffices to take note here, of the phenomena's significance within the broad literature on African journalism models and practices that continue to occupy scholarly discourse. While this thesis does not focus on citizen journalism, its status as a 'hybrid form' supports the need to explore in greater depth the characteristics of this hybridity as vital to understanding the cultures of journalism.

This shows that (Nyamnjoh, 2005b, p.4)'s 'bandwagonism', characterised by mimicking and less thought among African journalists, is an overstatement of the problem. This entails the idea that journalists are expected not to think but to adopt a mindset that produces the desired content in line with media owners. Similarly, the argument by (Banda, 2009, p.228) that "Western media practices applied in the African context arguably reinforce neo-colonialism" and that they undermine (Ndlela, 2009) and

misinterpret local culture (Sesanti, 2009) needs revisiting to examine their current status. Banda (2009, p.226) argues that this stems from a foundational basis since "media education in Africa is carried on within the strictures of Western ontology and epistemology, characterised by the liberal journalistic epistemic orientation which privileges dispassionate media work over civically active media practice." However, I argue here that tensions are still present whereby discourses urging discarding neo-colonial models can (unintentionally) reinforce control of authoritarian regimes and fit their ideas about the role of the media. The argument is to challenge or dismantle these practices without falling into the trap of the state systems' unintentional media control.

The hybridity of journalism models emerges as increasingly important in understanding journalistic culture. Shaw (2009, p.492) argues that African journalists can embrace African journalism values and culture and adopt and adapt approaches from the Global North to create a journalism culture fitting local needs such as nation-building, development, and peace journalism, among others. This proposition further challenges Banda's argument, which does not acknowledge the presence of hybrid journalism models within Africa, particularly in national contexts, as data on Zambia suggests in this thesis. In analysing emerging journalism patterns, the data shows journalists challenging organisational hierarchies and renegotiating their roles and values as I highlight these experiences among some journalists in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven). As I point out, this practice is the exception rather than the norm within the broader Zambian journalism practice. Given this, I argue for a need to engage in more country-specific and intra-national analyses using an excellent range of ontological and epistemological approaches to unravel the leanings of African journalism models and their values within specific cultural and social-political contexts.

In the final analysis, I agree with Shaw's closing argument to a greater extent that the "'neutrality' or 'objectivity' convention of the Western model may completely override the associational and participatory values of African journalism models unless efforts are made to preserve and adapt them to changing circumstances" (Shaw, 2009, p.507). If

this were to happen, this would be problematic as it would confer credibility on this normative (neutrality of news and its objectivity) as viewed and operationalised within the Global North context while urging it upon African journalism without recognising the local factors such as emerging and fragile democracies, less structured and less developed media systems. Further, the broader question of development communication (compounded by low literacy levels and standard internet and other communicative tools penetration levels) still requires a more deliberate effort by the media to emphasise participatory news production processes and associational values, although with less emphasis. Preserving participatory values of African journalism is rational as it is helpful to encourage "citizenship" driven and centred journalism that appropriates human agency in development communication and promotion of democratic good governance, Banda (2009a, p.233). Shaw highlights some of the positive values of associational journalism, including chronological news stories and first-hand accounts told in the first or third person.

However, a critique of this insistence on associational values is that although entrenched within the broader African cultural fabric, interview data suggests this is problematic within African journalism as it skews the news cycle and upsets the newsrooms' harmonious co-existence of journalists from different ethnicities, (whether imaginary or real), and competing social-political groupings. As I show in Chapter Seven using interview results, the associational value within Zambian journalism, regardless of ownership type, is not helping the cause of democracy and undermines broad-based participation by citizens based on balanced, 'objective news' and information about political competitors. Interview responses suggest that this value undermines these efforts and instead is viewed as part of the broader problem of the deepening polarization within Zambian journalism. This is because, although Shaw (2009, p.497) makes the point that "eyewitness accounts make for the most newsworthy and authoritative stories," the primary identifiers of journalists within Zambia are based on ethnicity, political association, or media ownership. These direct identifiers undercut the newsworthiness and authoritativeness of the journalists' stories and worsen the polarisation along similar fault lines. Primary identifiers here mean the characteristics that journalists are judged upon before their work is assessed. These characteristics

include names, their region, the media house they work for, and their political persuasion. As I discuss this further in my analysis of the interview data in Chapter Six, respondents highlighted this as one of the significant reasons besides the standard evaluations for the polarisation existing within and across media institutions.

The case for journalism autonomy in the face of cultural normativism

As the preceding discussion shows, much has been asked about the media's role in society. In broad terms, media plays its role based on various factors. These include the need for information sharing, promotion of open communities, transparency and, according to a public sphere, allowing the governed to intersect with the governors. These perceived roles rely on several widely held ethical, epistemological, and journalistic role perceptions, including objectivism, fairness, truthfulness etc. In Africa, for example, there is still a strong view that journalists should cover politicians in a good light. However, Tomaselli (2003, p.429) argues that this is a "simplistic perspective [used] when criticizing politicians, presidents, chiefs, the state [based on] social assumptions [that] these officials are God-given custodians of a nation's morals, and therefore, are above criticism," This shows a close similarity to the views about the pre-colonial oral tradition discussed earlier by Bourgault (1995), Skjerdal (2012) and Shaw (2009) in section 4.0. Tomaselli further argues that promoters of such views "often opportunistically legitimize i[t] under the rubric of "'development journalism' and the erroneous conflation of the procedure of democratically organized elections with the practice of democratic government." This argument assumes that the media should support the 'national interest' and not adversarial. However, Windeck (2010, p.17) argues that the irony is that these sentiments are made in supposedly "westernised democratic states," noting instead that journalism institutions must maintain "a certain degree of institutional independence from the political system" (Windeck, 2010, pp.17-18). Indeed, I argue that journalists must not be viewed as cheerleaders since they play a crucial role as watchdogs (holding politicians to account for their actions), which must not be compromised nor conflated with propaganda wings as this does not serve journalism nor the citizens well. I discuss this earlier in this chapter as part of the media social responsibility model, and later Chirambo (2011) uses it in Zambia.

Buttressing the above, Kasoma (2000, pp.14,19) argues that democracies are as much about minorities as they are about majorities, a nuance often lost on many African governments. Tomaselli (2009, p.429) also criticises this view among politicians, who demand respect from the media, arguing that “African media should adhere to the principles of a free press as these are understood internationally.” I made this argument earlier in Chapter Two. For Duncan and Seleoane (1998, p.116), Africa's challenge is constructing legal frameworks that encourage openness rather than restricting media. In practice, however, Okigbo (1994) argues that expressive freedom must be mediated based on the culture, norms, and values of the societies in which they operate.

On the other hand, Karikari (2006, para.6) notes the reality of ignorance, arguing that the “African masses are either not informed at all or are abjectly misinformed about how they are governed.” (Karikari 2002, n.p). Effectively, this discourse shows tensions between embracing an African brand of journalism and culture versus embracing the normative values of press freedom, an open and transparent society originating from the Global North. These differences in views manifest themselves in scholarly rhetoric, as I demonstrate earlier in section 4.0 above, as they do in journalism practice, within media organisations’ newsrooms and between different media outlets across the ownership divide.

Comparative national journalistic cultures in select African countries

Given the preceding discussion on African journalism and journalistic cultures, it is appropriate to provide a comparative analysis of selected African countries and wind up on Zambia for the perspective or contextual position of the discussion. Although characteristics of national journalistic cultures may not be easily generalised, they do offer valuable insights into trends and patterns that form over time within these specific national contexts and regions., For this purpose, I selected South Africa (De Beer and Tomaselli, 2000; Berger, 2002; Fourie, 2008) etc., Kenya (Ogenga, 2010), and Nigeria (White, 2010; Obateru, 2017; Akpojivi, 2018) since they have received significant scholarly attention that chronicles and analyses media systems and journalism cultures covering several decades. Additionally, their histories are diversely unique. South Africa

is a relatively newly independent, democratic African state. At the same time, Kenya represents the social-politically stable with a well-established media system, although the country experienced civil unrest in 2007 and 2013 (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008, p.3-4). Nigeria's chequered history of military and democratic rule presents a unique case study, as the media has endured both political systems (Akpojivi, 2018, p.100).

South Africa's Mixed state of journalistic cultures

In his discussion of normative ethics, White (2010, p.53), responding to Wasserman (2006), argues that "the most effective foundation for media ethics in South Africa could be a postcolonial discourse that rejects the institutions of Western liberal democracy and Western concepts of the state-media confrontation as the normative value for the whole world." He further argues that every country's culture has unique issues that are not defined in the styles and standards of western equivalents of "political and normative media theories." (ibid). Diedong (2008: 208) argues that because of the unique position of South Africa's apartheid history and the many challenges that have emerged in the post-apartheid period, "older, better educated, and more experienced media professionals have developed a more sophisticated sensitivity to the injustices and suffering around them." Many have received specialised human rights training - on gender-related issues, inhumane conditions in prisons, and HIV/AIDS-related issues, which issues they perceive in terms of human, civil, or political rights. For example, there have been concerted efforts in South Africa, Ghana, and other African countries where focus on such issues and "research and action centres [on] dealing with a broad range of issues such as political democratization, media policy, ethics, fair elections, conflict resolution, and gender policy" have been established (White, 2010, p.57).

In terms of attitudes and focus, the 2006 remarks by Professor Njabulo Simakahle Ndebele, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town, during the occasion to mark the South African National Editors Forum's (SANEF) first decade, captured the central task and defining roles of the South African journalist. I quote him extensively below.

> "It may be that this kind of probing journalism, which does not set out to look for easy angels and devils, is deemed not to sell newspapers. I beg to disagree. The

> corollary of a policy to develop a Black middle class is journalism that pushes that new middle class to the limits. The new middle class operates in a complex and conceptually demanding corporate and public sector world. The intellectual appeal of journalism that probes such matters will find its market. We are increasingly seeing this kind of journalism. It appeals to the fear of the exposure of sanctionable actions and the desire to do well through the corrective effect of increased understanding. (2006, p.204)

This, it would seem, forms the backbone of what today may be defined as the journalistic culture of South African journalism. It prioritises building a middle class, especially among the Black majority population who had been politically and economically excluded during the apartheid era. This corroborates with what Krüger (2017, p.32) observes, where, in efforts to highlight ordinary South Africans' struggles and stories, the media shines a light on the presence or absence of economic policies that have a direct positive impact on primarily black populations. He writes, "[the 2017] budget coverage showed evidence of an attempt to redress imbalances in ordinary coverage–exercising the role of custodian –by bringing in the voices of ordinary people." Krüger (2017, p.32) shows empirical evidence of these efforts through textual analysis; "an elderly couple spoke of their disappointment at the size of their pension, a teacher discussed hopes for increased spending on education while an unemployed public relations practitioner was quoted on the difficulties of finding work."

Another facet of the South African journalistic culture has been the deliberate efforts to create more spaces for the public to participate in national socio-political processes and dialogues. One scholar mainly focuses on this as she notes that the "post-repressive-regime public sphere" is an important aspect that the media in South Africa has put significant efforts into (Hamilton,2009, p.357). She notes that this approach has been particularly successful because state institutions developed deliberate measures that engender public participation at all levels of the governance systems within the country, "highlighting an initial impetus to create a wide set of practices and institutions to ensure public participation, [as] a feature of South Africa's democracy" (ibid). Krüger (2017, p.32) highlights "the way concerted efforts were first made to turn the SABC from a state broadcaster into a public broadcaster" although, as he quickly points out, "only [for

it, SABC] to be subjected to increasingly tight state control" illustrating media efforts to continually push back against forms of repression from the governance systems.

The preceding discussion shows that, in practice, "journalists tend to be more pluralistic in their role conceptions than is often thought" Kanyegirire (2006, p.163). Faced with multiple tasks or challenges, South African journalists have developed a multi-faceted approach to their roles. This has resulted in a diverse journalistic culture. De Bens, Golding and McQuail (2005, p.12) acknowledge this, writing that journalists "may even subscribe simultaneously to various contradictory and mixed roles depending on the context and issues at hand."

Kenya's divided journalistic culture, the young versus the old

The Kenyan media is widely regarded as diverse, with a well-established private media presence which is heavily commercialised along the lines of Western media (see Ogenga (2010, p.153); (also Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis, 2014). Consequently, the media system is characterised by "the liberal-commercial, authoritarian-development, and advocacy-protest traditions" (Ireri, 2017, p.92), where journalists tend to walk a fine line to avoid offending either advertisers through adverse reporting or the political establishment who supposedly have a close relationship with the private media owners.

The media culture in Kenya has evolved since its independence in the 1960s. The political economy of the contemporary Kenyan media is often undercut by government manoeuvres, including "funding, using their privileged position as official sources and imposing media regulation, censorship and legislation" (Ogenga, 2010, p.153), measures that are seen more as coercive than negotiated, to achieve a pliant media environment. This puts Kenyan journalists in perpetual jeopardy, requiring a cultural disposition resistant to staying relevant within the national media discourse. As a result of this tendency by politicians to pose an existential threat, the Kenyan media has had to entrench a deep culture of "watchdog role to safeguard against a return to an authoritarian influence" experienced in post-independence decades, and as a matter of "its very legitimacy," (Ogenga, 2010, p.155). It is a persistent trait for politicians in

African countries to undermine media efforts to promote democratic growth. The trend has been recorded in South Africa, Zambia, and Nigeria. A survey in several other African countries would likely reveal similar trends. This must, therefore, raise concern for the democracy project across the continent. What makes this an even more urgent issue is the lack of resolve or clarity by such pan-African institutions as NEPAD and others on the need to appreciate the media's role and guarantee their freedoms in promoting good governance (Kanyegirire, 2006, p.164).

However, an intriguing practice in Kenyan media has been the emergence of young professional journalists who have formed support groups that help grow their confidence and understanding of the news dynamics within the nation. Studies of Kenyan journalism reveal those factors influencing newsroom ethical decisions of especially young media professionals confirm that an important factor is the norms and practices of the media team that one is working within the newsroom or other forms of media production (Ericson, Baranek and Chan, 1991; Josephi, 1999). The studies have shown that these journalists build solid connections and support networks, which enable them to "speak with [the] greatest confidence, complain to, and strategize…the cadets are also the most idealistic, and the people that young journalists would trust as the most honest and ethical" White (2010, p.60). In their study of young Kenyan journalists, Ogongo-Ongong'a and White (2008, p.234) showed that they "formed a loyal friends' group and that virtually all problems and questions were informally discussed by them. It was evident that their idealism and "underdog worldview" of colleagues was a major factor in their news values." Older journalists, on the other hand, are sometimes described by their idealistic young colleagues as "thoroughly sold out to the politically powerful" or sold out to the management," or "efficient but marginal," or "feeling threatened by younger people coming on," (White, 2010, pp.60-61). This characterisation has emerged over recent decades in view of how diverse sets of journalists cover politics in Kenya.

Fascinatingly, however, a recent study showed that despite the relatively healthy freedom that the Kenyan media enjoy, limitations for a more autonomous media culture are driven mainly by internal control measures by the editors. This aligns with the

"hierarchy-of influences model" by Shoemaker and Reese (1996, p.214), which argues that hierarchical order influences and shapes media content. As the enabling-restricting-enabling dichotomy dictates, such restrictions or enablers can originate internally or from external factors. Ireri carried out an autonomy audit of Kenyan journalists which indicated that "editorial supervisors [were] the second most influential forces (after editorial policies) that interfere with the autonomy of Kenyan journalists during the news selection process…encounter[ing] lots of pressure from their supervisors" (Ireri, 2017, p.105). That study also surmises that the owners' commercial considerations heavily influence this routinized internal limitation by editors on journalists' autonomy, capping their freedom to author stories using angles they see fit. As such, the journalistic culture most prevalent among Kenyan journalists is one of self-censorship, concession, and political correctness to stay afloat, either as a media owner or an employed journalist. These are trends not unique to the Kenyan context as already demonstrated above and will continue to be demonstrated elsewhere in this study.

A synopsis of Nigerian journalistic culture in covering politics

Nigeria's social-political history has been characterised by extended periods of military rule that operated along the lines of authoritarianism, leading to harsh conditions for the practice of journalism. Literature paints a picture of a thriving journalism culture in the immediate years after Nigeria's independence (Obateru, 2017, p.17). Beyond that, the media is also credited with significant contributions to the struggle for a return to democracy, where some considered it an honour to push back against military rulers at the time (Adesoji and Alimi, 2012, p.111), while Ogongo-Ongong'a and White (2008, pp.312-314) argue that "many leading journalists thought of themselves as the last line of defence against tyranny." Further, White (2010, p.55) argues that "journalists of the late 1980s and early 1990s [were] amazingly courageous in contesting the neo-patrimonial regimes of the time." Despite the lack of well-defined media systems in the Western sense and the absence of media conglomerates within the country, the vitality of the media is reinforced by its "plurality which ensures a counterbalancing of tendencies, because the audiences have access to a variety" of media content and outlets (Obateru, 2017, p.70).

Older studies of political news coverage show that there had been a shift within the Nigerian media that was showing "deep dissatisfaction with the bias toward the incumbent party shown by journalists, especially the bias in the government-controlled media in Nigeria" (Esuh, 2008, p.424). Esuh analysed this trend among public media journalists in Nigeria as they covered the 2007 general election, from which later studies such as Obateru benefited in analysing the latest trends. This tendency is not unique to the Nigerian context, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Four which analyses the Zambian media landscape, where I illustrate the practice among public media journalists of aligning with ruling parties in covering political news. The underlying causes of this differ in countries, ranging from deliberate socialisation and re-orientation measures by media owners (demonstrated in Chapter Two) to outright coercive measures and threats to the welfare and job security of the journalists. Whatever the cause of such pliant characteristics, this journalistic culture seems prevalent on the continent and in many national contexts.

In Nigeria's case, however, literature also reveals a 'brown envelope journalism' feature. Obateru (2017, p.70) lists several factors that have led to the general deterioration of attitude among journalists in Nigeria, among them "open disregard for journalism ethics, loss of interest or passion for the profession, abandonment of codes of conduct resulting in the virtual institutionalizing of envelope journalism." Adesoji and Alimi (2012, p.26) observe that this trend has been growing in the country, noting that "news media have departed from the noble roles they once played and are now deeply involved in corruption with envelope journalism almost becoming a norm." They further identify the "policy of incorporation, where journalists are offered political appointments as commissioners, special advisors or serve as contractors and media consultants to political leaders" (Ibid). Again, this incorporation policy is not unique to the Nigerian context as it is widespread in much of Africa. Zambia has experienced this trend in recent years since the turn of the decade under the Patriotic Front government, where a considerable number of former *Post* newspaper journalists and others were appointed into various government departments and foreign diplomatic services as press attaches or ambassadors. It would seem this attraction of government appointments has become an ambition among several journalists, going by the efforts they put in to stay in good

books with parties in power. This is against the backdrop of "precarious professionalism," Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1836) that afflicts Zambian journalism. In Chapter Six, I discuss and highlight the unique features that distinguish Zambia's precarities in journalism and similarities with other contexts elsewhere.

Zambia's journalistic cultures; a typology

In 1996, Prof. Francis Kasoma authored what may be regarded as one of the foremost essays on what became known as 'Afriethics' to describe and explore approaches and journalism practices within the African context that would be society centred. In it, he argues that "society, drawing from its humane approach to life, can inspire its recalcitrant journalists to bring sanity into African journalism by making it a society-centred rather than a money and power-centred profession" (Kasoma, 1996, p.96). Nearly three decades later, this admonishing would still hold for many approaches to journalism practice, but particularly in the Zambian context. Kasoma argues that "individualism and divisionism that permeate the practice of journalism in Africa should be discarded since they are not only unAfrican but also professionally unhealthy" (Kasoma, 1996, p.93).

Writing as he did, with an intimate knowledge of his home country and its journalism norms and practices, I have little doubt that Kasoma's views on Afriethics were informed more by this proximity as a window to his bigger view on Africa. Over a decade later, (Banda, 2009b, p.228) revisited Kasoma's thesis on the subject, arguing that "in re-evaluating Kasoma's thesis of Afriethics, I analyse the Zambian socio-political context within which Kasoma lamented the 'un-African' nature of the journalism practised across sub-Saharan Africa." Further, Banda (2009b, p.228) argues that Kasoma's premise to evaluate journalism in his days was informed by the ideological plane of "African exceptionalism' and 'African particularism" (the idea of unique African cultures such as society/group oriented). According to Kasoma, (1996, p.93) the "individualism and divisionism that permeate journalism in Africa" was therefore "culturally bad."

Banda, however, argues that Kasoma's "ethical reflections were implicated in his personal and professional experiences: (1) religious affiliation, (2) professional association, (3) state hegemony and (4) pluralistic media environment" (Banda, 2009b, p.229). Banda suggests that Kasoma's outrage against excesses of journalism that promoted individualism and division within society was drawn from these four distinctive experiences. Tomaselli also critiques Kasoma's moralistic and simplistic conceptualisation of journalism as either bad or good journalism, primarily based on his religiousness, arguing that "Kasoma divides journalism into "bad" and "good" …in our postmodern world conventional rules about 'Truth'...no longer apply quite so absolutely," Tomaselli (2003, p.433). Effectively, this critique challenges the moralistic premise of Kasoma's conceptualisation as it does not consider factors that might influence the bad or the excellent journalism in addition to the rejection of his absolutism in his characterisation.

However, Banda counters Tomaselli's argument, noting that "under postmodernism, contextual constructions of the wrongness and rightness of the practice of journalism within the African context, [may render] certain forms of journalism to be culturally 'bad'" (Banda, 2009b, p.230) since postmodernism tends to challenge long-held conventional grand narratives of the profession such as the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity, making their definition or contextual application (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2016), This argument challenges (Bourgault, 1995, pp.7-9)'s findings about precolonial African traditional values that emphasised "imparting moral lessons". This shows that although certain traits in precolonial times survived the colonial era and still manifest presently, some of the narratives and conventional professional positions have evolved or are contested by postmodernism.

Professionally Kasoma worked almost exclusively for the state-owned *Times of Zambia* newspaper under the one-party-state, which later transformed into multipartyism with liberalised, pluralist politics and media systems. These experiences, according to Banda, meant Kasoma's professional disposition was influenced by the years he spent working with state media. In contrast, the dominance of the state told the restrictive environment under the one-party system made him have a one-sided orientation of

media systems, thus influencing his views on Afriethics (Banda, 2009a, pp.30-32). As such, Nyamnjoh, for example, reappraises Kasoma's conceptualisation of Afriethics when he accuses the media's lack of ethics as the reason the state clamps down on the free press. In his critique, Nyamnjoh (1995, p.197) argues that "African governments do not take kindly to any reportorial criticism that puts them in a negative light… and long pressured African journalists to offer 'constructive' or 'responsible' criticism." Nyamnjoh further suggests that "the term is generally interpreted to suggest that the postcolonial ruling elites did not brook media content that negatively portrayed them." Although Wilcox (1975, p.29) argues that "constructive criticism is located in the traditional African value of respect for authority," a trait that Bourgault (1995) discusses in her exposition of African traditions and their regard for authority during the pre-colonial era. This is another cultural value that has survived the colonial period and continues to be pervasive in today's African social-cultural settings, including the media. This study reveals interview and media text data showing state media and journalists who saw nothing wrong in skewing the news if the president was the subject.

Given this, I argue that these undesirable trends occurring in the mid-1990s (individualism and divisionism) that Kasoma observed have evolved into the plural polarisation that Zambian journalism is experiencing currently, as the data shows. This polarization is against the backdrop of the associational value within African journalism that (Shaw, 2009, pp.504-505) espouses and calls for its preservation. Additionally, this is a trend observed in Kenya (1.8) and Nigeria (1.9), as argued here, where the media market is more extensive compared to Zambia's small media market and an even smaller advertisers footprint (Hamusokwe, 2015, pp.204-206). Further, I suggest that Kasoma's position was not merely informed by his socio-political outlook but by other factors such as ownership, a fragile political environment, and the propensity of some public media journalists to actively engage in propaganda for the ruling party (Chirambo, 2011, p.344). Private media journalists saw themselves as advocates and voices for the voiceless, engaging in activist journalism that I highlight under section 4.0, which the interview data aptly captures in Chapter Six. Hence, (Banda, 2009b)'s antithesis suggests that Kasoma's location was problematic in his value-judgement of journalism

practice. This work, therefore, builds and updates these dated discourses by re-examining these propositions afresh, considering the changing social-political factors.

Additionally, Chama (2014) argues that the culture among private tabloid journalists such as *The Post* was one of feeling duty-bound to promote democracy and the fight against corruption (Chama, 2019, pp.22-24). However, the newspaper also participated in a partisan position within the broader Zambian landscape when they backed the presidential candidate Michael Sata in 2011 (Chama, 2014, p.221). These two aspects are reminiscent of Nigerian journalism, where they constantly guard against a return to authoritarian rule (Obateru, 2017) and similar Kenyan media efforts (Ogenga, 2010, pp.152-153). Meanwhile, in his comparative study of the *ZNBC* and *The Pos*t's adherence to ethics, Gondwe (2014, p.iv) concludes "that media credibility has reached unprecedented levels of suspicion", resulting from deepened political polarisation. As I discuss in the latter chapters (Chapters Six and Seven), this study shows that polarization has mainly deepened in response to the ever-deepening political polarisation and an increasingly hostile political and legal environment in a symbiotic fashion (Fraser, 2017; Wahman and Goldring, 2020).

As discussed in Chapter One, understanding the political polarisation helps contextualise the polarisation witnessed on the media front. I suggest that these facets of the media collectively constitute the journalism culture in today's Zambian media. These views build on Kasoma and Banda's work that explicate the presence of "persecution of the opposition and free media" (Fraser, 2017, p.466). Within this study, I show how media continues this trajectory, although in a more hostile environment. This has meant journalists are more wary of the physical and otherwise dangers confronting them in their work. Data reveals incidences of physical abuse by the state operatives while journalists have devised innovative ways to collaborate with 'rival' journalists to get the news with reduced risks to their safety.

The organisations I examine as part of this study benefit the profession as they offer new perspectives on the dynamics within journalism and the impact of democracy on media, especially in fragile democracies such as Zambia (Chirambo, 2011, p.21). Then,

Journalism cultures in Zambia can be seen as a product of contextual factors, of broader issues, noted more widely across Africa, and as exhibiting distinctive and adaptive traits in response to contingencies. These include the culture of acquiescence, fear, resistance, and continual renegotiation of journalism practice within Zambia. Therefore, my work contributes new knowledge that broadens the understanding of journalism practices and cultures in national contexts.

In conclusion, it is vital to be cautious in extrapolating from the observed traits of African journalism models and journalists' role perceptions within democracy as couched within the broad field of political communication. As Windeck (2010, p.17) argues, despite "trends evident and similar behavioural patterns in the regional context", caution must be employed overall when applying generalities to the analysis of journalism models and cultures and practice in each country across the continent. This chapter has explored the critical theoretical arguments about journalism's grand normative narratives within the wider Global North but, more importantly, within the discourse about the Global South and mainly African journalism. These include the social responsibility model, libertarian model and radical journalism models, variants of which exist in Zambian to varying degrees and adaptation. The next chapter surveys the Zambian media landscape of recent years by considering the theoretical propositions and examining key events that characterise Zambian journalism during this study. This is important to understand and contextualise the analysis of data and findings in the latter chapters as I deconstruct the journalism models and cultures present within Zambian journalism.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE ZAMBIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Introduction

This chapter discusses critical events and contemporary circumstances within the Zambian media with specific reference to how they affect the media's political role. This builds on the discussion in Chapter One on the interfacing of media and political events and the analysis of the social position of the press in Chapter Two. Further, the chapter uses concepts underpinning journalism normativism, models, and practices in Africa (discussed in Chapter Three) to analyse the Zambian context, drawing insights into how these factors and events influence journalism practice. This chapter contributes a unique understanding of the journalism model(s) and practices within Zambia as a scholarly contribution to understanding journalism models and approaches in particular national contexts. This is useful in the face of globalized narratives that generalize trends without micro-analyses of the distinct features in diverse contexts.

The chapter is divided into three major sections, with the first section discussing media-state relations immediately after independence (1964-1973) and in the later years (1975-1991) under President Kaunda's largely autocratic regime. The second phase explores the state-media relations since 1991 when Zambia reverted to democracy under the MMD before extending to the PF government post-2011 to 2021. I assess the four media organisations selected for this study to achieve these insights.

My analysis draws on relevant literature that sheds light on a historical context of political and media events and their influence on the social-political landscape within Zambia. Further, this helps the study to examine how these events influence the role of journalism within the political sphere. As I have shown elsewhere in this work (see Chapter One, Chapter Two, Chapter Three, and Chapter Six), Zambian journalism has a symbiotic relationship with polarization as they both feed off each other and influence the other. Thus, I argue that political polarisation feeds into media polarisation, which in turn provides into and exacerbates political polarisation. Interestingly this media

polarisation and the political polarisation extant in Zambia feed off each other. It seems this does not serve the democratic process efficiently as it affects information.

Herman and Chomsky (1988) make this salient note in their book, *Manufacturing Consent – Political Economy of the Media,* and allude to the control that the states often have. Ruling elites in many forms, including developed democracies, often abuse Regulatory and policy frameworks. The tendency seems even more prominent in pseudo-democratic states or those still growing. They write, “The radio-TV companies that require government licenses are thus potentially subject to government control or harassment. This technical legal dependency has been used as a club to discipline the media, and media policies that stray too often from an establishment orientation could activate this threat” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, p.13). I return to this discussion later in this chapter with illustrations.

A brief history of the media-state Relations post-independence

From independence in 1964 to 2016, the media (especially the state-owned media) has had a prescribed role, written or unwritten, explicitly or implicitly, under each successive government. The stance of the press over the decades has been varied, ranging from outright refusal or reluctance to cooperate, in the early years after independence, until 1975, during which period government did not have full ownership, to forced compliance, coercion and eventually willingness after complete government acquisitions (from 1985 to date (2020)).

> “The first step was to change the ownership of newspapers. In 1975, the *ruling party took over the Times of Zambia, then owned by LONRHO (a British multinational corporation with extensive assets in Southern Africa)*. Announcing the move, Kaunda said the *Times of Zambia* would reflect official party and government thinking. Party ownership of the mass media was completed in 1985. That also marked the death of the press. Daily newspapers, radio and television, became the mouthpieces of the ruling party to a point which defied all logic and sense.” (Mushingeh, 1994, p.130),

Horowitz also argues that the “one-party rule consolidated the regime's authoritarianism by removing political choice, eliminating political contestation against Kaunda's minority-dominated, authoritarian regime, stifling the press” (1993, p.26). This approach by

Kaunda's UNIP (United National Independence Party) reflects trends that prevailed during that period in the region relating to media-state relations and the role of journalism. For example, Biney (2011) makes a similar argument about Nkrumah's revolutionary development philosophy in Ghana, while Ramaprasad (2001) examines Nyerere's *Ujamaa* doctrine (an adaptation of socialism) in Tanzania, discussed earlier in Chapter Three. These trends align with Ramaprasad's argument (2001, p.539) that scholarly research and discourse about the role of the media in much of Africa's post-independence period was framed within the development discourse.

Under the UNIP government, the state-owned press promoted the national development agenda. Kaunda was outspoken on views about the press's role in national affairs. For example, Pitts (2000, p.269) argues that "Kaunda established a government based on a political philosophy called *humanism* and defined the role of the press as a tool for national development." Most of Kaunda's interactions with the press must be understood in this light as the state used the media to reclaim and galvanize the nation towards unity and development through the national motto *'One Zambia, One nation.'* This was a trend present in other newly independent African countries such as Ghana and Tanzania, as the literature shows in Chapter Three (Pitts, 2000 &; Saul, 2012). Like other post-independence experiences of the media in the sub-region, Zambian media saw diminishing press freedom amidst an increasingly autocratic posture disguised as patriotism by the UNIP government in the early 1970s. After the declaration of the one-party democratic governance in 1973, Mushingeh (1994, p.129) reports that "there was a systematic attempt to curb press freedom, intimidate, harass and monitor activities of journalists."

This is like the occurrences in Tanzania under President Nyerere, Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta, and Ghana's Nkrumah. As Barratt and Berger (2009, pp.16-17) argue, "common forms of state governance from the 1960s were one-party or military dictatorships. Governments abhorred dissent and proscribed organised opposition expressions in the political management of society. Political pluralism was at best discouraged." Evidence suggests that current media environments in several African states, including Zambia, keep autocratic legacies that have endured despite the

reintroduction of democracy. In the Zambian case, interview data (Chapter Six) suggests that these relics have endured six decades after independence. These include the persistent direct state ownership and control of vast swathes of media while retaining control over the private media through legislative and regulatory means enshrined within colonial-style laws inherited from colonial regimes (Aimufua, 2007, pp.2-4). I extensively make this argument in our recently published paper on media regulatory mechanisms still primarily influenced by autocratic beliefs (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan 2021, p.9). We show how the state continues to use legislative and regulatory measures that are either ill-conceived or poorly implemented to limit press freedom or, in certain instances, deny the press their liberty. This inevitably affects the role of journalism within democratic systems (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021, p.7). This is supported by interview data analysis in Chapter Six.

Like the colonial regime, the Kaunda government viewed the media as a tool for communicating government information to the people, reminiscent of the precolonial village criers during the African oral tradition society, as Bourgault (1995, pp.95-96) postulated. According to the Kaunda government, this propaganda agenda was based on the “rationale that one-party rule would enhance popular participation in the country's political economy, thereby accelerating peace, progress and stability” (Mushingeh, 1994, p.117). Additionally, I have previously argued (Ndawana, 2011, p.3) that despite the stated official reasons by the UNIP government, as Mushingeh suggests, evidence from the implementation of these policies shows that “…the media was perceived as a facility for political power consolidation and as an instrument for national development programming.” Therefore, despite the declarations to the contrary, the result of the one-party autocratic rule is that the media was abused as a tool for the appropriation of power, similar to the ‘instrumentalism’ that Hallin and Mancini, (2012, p.106) argue in the case of South Africa. Similarly, Kasoma (1986, p.111) argues that the media was used as an “instrument for telling people positive news about mainly what government officers, particularly the President, were saying or doing in the form of speeches.”

Media-state Relations in the multi-party democracy era 1991 and Beyond

The state of the media and the press under the third republic, which began with Zambia's return to multi-party democracy in 1991, experienced mixed periods of hope and buoyancy. However, this was ultimately not realised due to state interference and suppression. However, as I illustrate in Chapter One, apart from the ideological shift from an authoritarian socialist (*humanism*) to a liberal democratic system of governance, the governance structures hardly relinquished their conception of journalism under the new dispensation. As Phiri (1999, p.53) argues, "Zambia's transition to multiparty politics in 1991 has not led to significant changes in state-media relations. There was a brief period when it appeared that the media would become an independent influence in a democratic environment. But any such hope has been thwarted by the continued state control of the country's major news establishments." The reasons for this will be discussed in the discussion that follows.

Second Republican President Frederick Chiluba is credited with initiating measures shortly after his ascendency to power in 1991 to liberalise the media landscape. For example, shortly after ushering the MMD into power, Chiluba introduced measures to liberalise media ownership and create a conducive operating environment for journalism (Phiri, 1999). Soon after, several private print news outlets were established. Pitts (2000, p.280) observes that "the 1991 election of the MMD government gave birth to privately owned newspapers such as *The Weekly Express*, *The Post (*successor of *The Weekly Post), Zambia Crime News, The Sun, The National Herald, The Weekly Standard, The Eagle Express, and The Chronicle.*" However, not long into his presidency some "elements in the press charged that the Chiluba government is corrupt and seeks to stifle criticism. The editor of *The Post*, Fred M'membe, claimed that Chiluba's government fears an independent press" (Pitts, 2000, p.282). This change in posture may be predicated on several reasons. Still, the most plausible one is that newly elected leaders often begin with lofty pronouncements but soon after become open to using repressive measures to protect their power, in a similar fashion to Hallin and Mancini (2012)'s argument of the state's use of media to appropriate authority, that I refer to in Chapter Three. Similarly, once Chiluba had settled into the presidency, Zambian journalism came under severe repression, with the targeting of *The Post* and

its Managing Editor, Fred M'membe and the suspension of the licence for Radio Phoenix by Information Minister Vernon Mwaanga in 1996 as the major examples. I discuss these events extensively in Chapter One.

Analysis of the policy direction and media regulations under the Chiluba government shows it was not so different from Kaunda. Several incidents indicate that Chiluba quickly avoided free media, stifling independent media. For example, Barratt and Berger (2009, p.82) observe that Chiluba's government proceeded "to enact SI. 178 of 1993 called the *ZNBC (Licensing) Regulations Act* which required licence applicants to apply through a licensing technical committee of the Ministry of Information, where *ZNBC* belonged. In effect, only *ZNBC* retained national licences." As a result, the state constantly harassed independent media outlets through wanton licence suspensions, closures, libel-court cases, state security-related laws, and state secrecy laws which negatively affected how these media organisations operated. Equally, this study reinforces the view that the current harsh media conditions in Zambia are an exacerbation of Chiluba's double-dealing policies, where he promoted press freedom while practically stifling them at the same time (Phiri, 1999; Chirambo, 2011).

However, unlike his predecessor, "Chiluba's government was concerned with what it called 'cleaning the image of the country' and the MMD government, it claimed, was being tarnished by the private media, particularly the independent newspapers." (Ndawana, 2011, p.4). Stories that agitated Chiluba the most were those that identified corruption in Chiluba's government. For example, Chama (2019, pp.26-27) argues that the newspaper in "an editorial titled 'Cheap demagogy' on 22 September 2006 graphically described how vanity and buying of political support intermingled, noting that everything with Chiluba started and ended with money. Chiluba prided himself on bribing people and is on record of having said that there is nothing wrong with 'brown envelopes.'" Chama also (2017, pp.66-67) writes that in 1999, "the tabloid newspaper published a lead story 'Angola Worries Zambia Army' quoting senior military officers arguing that the country could not withstand a military attack by Angola. The Minister of Defence acted against the tabloid newspaper, arguing that it threatened the country's security." Thus, besides the quantitatively significant numbers of private and

independent media outlets increasing (*Table No.1*), the operating, policy and regulatory environment lagged and was largely unchanged from the Kaunda era. Chirwa (1996: 36) echoes this analysis, noting, for example, that "*The Post* survived the predatory behaviour of President Frederick Chiluba (1991-2001), who used several political attempts to eliminate it from the political scene." Thus, the attacks on *The Post* were recurrent throughout its 25 years of operations though only successful in 2016.

Media-state relations under the Patriotic Front government from 2011 to 2021

As laid out above, the media under the Patriotic Front is seen as the enduring legacy of the post-independence and post-re democratisation legacy experienced under the MMD. While Sata and later Lungu introduced and implemented several laws and policies, such as the IBA in 2013, the first-ever national communication policy in 2020, and the national media development policy of 2020, the state repression of the media has recently deteriorated further, perhaps to an all-time low since independence. Similarly, Chama (2014, pp.133-134) paints a picture of President Sata, who was bent on seeing the back of *The Post* as an erstwhile friendly publication which initially supported him, but soon changed its stance when it realized that his government was not keeping campaign promises. The newspaper reported Sata's extravagant, corrupt lifestyle, amidst people's suffering, much to his chagrin. This antagonistic relationship was epitomized by the shutting of *The Post* in 2016, just before Zambia conducted her fifth democratic national election. This is similar to the experiences of the Kenyan media, which has been on guard against a return to authoritarian rule, as Ogenga (2010, p.152) argues.

As I mentioned (Table 1), Lungu came into power after PF founding president Michael Sata in early 2015, in acrimonious circumstances to claim his party's top position and later the Republican presidency. *The Post* opposed and campaigned against Lungu's election to the party and Republican presidency. These events, it seems, set the stage for a clash later between the two. As I stated in Chapter One, it became apparent the use of ZRA to target the newspaper over suspected tax-related offences was a political vendetta, "The ZRA raided *The Post* newspaper bringing its operations to a halt" over

alleged tax-related charges (MISA Zambia, June 22, 2016). As an independent news outlet and a popular one at the time (Chama, 2017, p.73), these actions by President Lungu's government were widely viewed as a direct assault on press freedom within the country. This move has become commonplace in new and emerging democracies in Africa. This happened barely two months before Zambia went to the polls on 11th August 2016 (Goldring and Wahman, 2016, p.110). However, as I observed earlier (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008; Cheeseman, 2015; Wahman and Goldring, 2020), scholars assess Zambia's democratic credentials as fragile. This study also suggests that the practices and actions of the state, per journalists interviewed (Chapter Six), do not reflect a stable liberal democracy as far as journalism is concerned. Instead, the media landscape is characterised by the deepening polarisation of the media (Hallin and Mancini, 2004) along partisan lines, which has been exacerbated by an intolerant and repressive regime under the PF which coerced most media outlets to kowtow its line using its heavy-handed approach towards the media and journalists.

Although similar events occurred under the MMD, their recurrence during the last decade (2011-2021) worsened under the PF, leading to several media organisations and journalists becoming disaffected further due to intimidation, harassment, closures, and suspensions meted out on them as discussed in Chapter One. While some public media journalists indicated that they operate in fear and coercively submit to the state, many still willingly embrace partisanship and tout it as appropriate. Further, journalists in private media, as illustrated in Chapter Six, operate in fear (seeing how harshly the state dealt with *The Post, Prime TV,* and others), which forces them to submit to the ruling party grudgingly. Others, however, collaborate with the state in line with Strömbäck's commercialism model (2005, p.338), where business interests supersede editorial principles within a media organisation's planning. Whereas Stromback suggests that "the market mechanisms rather than normative demands ensure that journalism provides the information people need", this study asserts that this does not fit within Zambian journalism as most media organisations provide information based on their political and economic considerations such as alignment with ruling elites to stay in business.

Similarly, Chama (2014) concludes in his study of *The Post* that "*The Post* was not independent of market interests. *The Post* [also] supported government policies and benefitted from advertising revenues" (2014, p.13). Journalists interviewed about the newspaper also point to its heightened non-media-related business interests as one of the precipitating reasons for its fate. It also began a cascading of events leading to a rapidly deteriorating operating environment in Zambia. I discuss these more in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. The views about commercialism observed here are also evident in the Kenyan setup, where internal editorial interference is rampant, influenced by the owners' business interests (Ireri, 2017, p.1045), reflecting a growing concern in the region.

These factors have resulted in a more timid but also innovative media landscape, with many media outlets fearful of the ruling party. As data shows in Chapter Six, journalists adopt self-censorship as a coping mechanism. Further, because of this hostile environment, journalists have devised survival tactics such as odd collaborative efforts (Graves and Konieczna, 2015, pp.1978-1979) with 'rival' journalists outside formal settings. This helps journalists overcome impediments to their efforts to fulfil their watchdog role, similar to Phiri's argument (1999, p.58) that journalists' optimism under MMD failed to bear positive results. Similarly, this thesis suggests that journalism's strides under MMD's 20 years in power (1991-2011) have been dashed by the PF and eroded significantly. The MMD was more tolerant in a positive sense. Most progressive laws and regulations were pronounced under MMD, which PF implemented but quickly backtracked. Thus, as Nyamnjoh (2005a, p.8) argues, the PF has exhibited a Jekyll and Hyde personality by enacting progressive laws and policies to promote journalism growth while their actions are antithetical. This study argues that while the media participated in calling for democratisation in Zambia during the 1990s, as Berger (2002) suggests, they have not benefited from liberal democracy as expected, with their role remaining precarious. Zambia shows a "reversal of democracy" (Goldring and Wahman, 2016, p.107). The self-censorship, state intimidation, fear of loss of jobs among journalists, 'fear of the system,' and 'fear of the unknown' characterise journalists' lived experiences in Zambia.

Having outlined the general media landscape under the three political parties and their leaders, the last section of this chapter gives a detailed analysis of each of the four media organisations selected for this study. I analyse the organisations within their historical context and current place and state within the broader Zambian journalism landscape to achieve this. Additionally, I examine these media organisations' role within the political landscape of Zambia. By so doing, I establish vital events and periods that have shaped both the role of media organisations and how the political landscape has impacted them over time, but more specifically, regarding the 2016 election period.

Analyses of the selected media outlets

1.1. *The Post* Newspaper; a synopsis of its role in political communication

A closer look at the media landscape reveals that what divides them is more than just ownership type. Baker (2006, p.69) argues, "The owner gets to choose the news emphasis, editorial slant, or columnists" in private or public media. In the case of *The Post* newspaper, its mission was characterised as one that championed democratic values in post-1991 Zambia. Its emergence coincided with the clamour for a return to plural politics during the early 1990s. The paper made its mark through its anti-corruption reporting to promote transparency and government accountability. Ellis (2016, p.10) argues that "Zambia's *Post* [was] founded in 1991 in Lusaka… was one of the country's most politically outspoken newspapers throughout its run." However, in its editorial to mark its silver jubilee in 2016, the paper wrote, "…the day [was] a "sad, happy anniversary," given the enormous [political] pressure the paper face[d]" Ellis (2016, p.10). This statement was consequential for two reasons; firstly, the situation the paper found itself in, facing a huge tax bill, as I discuss in Chapter One, was partly a result of its own political (mis)calculations that did not go as expected.

The lead-up to and the eventual folding up of *The Post* was characterised by (mis)steps it took following the death of President Michael Sata of the Patriotic Front (PF). As was earlier recorded, the newspaper had decided to back him during the 2011 elections. However, upon his death on 28th October 2014, the newspaper got itself entangled in PF's intra-party in succession disputes and backed the group that would ultimately lose.

Immediately after this debacle and in the 20 January 2015 elections run-up, the publication opposed Edgar Lungu, who became the eventual PF candidate and Republican President. In their usual style, the paper employed an adversarial stance against the PF under Lungu, who took issue with this and vowed to bring the newspaper down. In a move that was seen to be politically motivated, Lungu made good on this threat and eventually closed *The Post*[4] down in June 2016, barely two months before the contentious August 2016 general elections saw Lungu retain power.

Once Sata had won the presidency, the paper went on a tax break'(non-payment of tax for an extended period despite liability) as the owners had imagined since the party they had campaigned for had formed government. Munyonzwe (2014, para.2) argues that "Fred M'membe is accused of not meeting tax liabilities since 2011 when the Patriotic Front (PF) government came to power in Zambia. The newspapers have reported the tax liability as of 1 September 2014 to be K8 Billion." Secondly, the political environment under President Edgar Lungu's PF became increasingly intolerant of press freedom in general and specifically towards the newspaper and its Managing Editor, Fred M'membe, as illustrated earlier in Chapter One. This study, therefore, argues that a combination of these factors led to the involuntary demise of the newspaper, signifying the critical role that media owners play in the success or failure of journalism outlets.

As illustrated in Chapter Six, interviewees from within and outside *The Post* detail how M'membe was personally invested in micro-managing the paper's daily operations to manipulate and dictate stories and headlines to journalists to achieve his personal and political agenda. Interviewees often note that the owner would sit with them in the

[4] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/06/28/zambia-accused-of-attacking-press-freedom-as-newspaper-is-closed/ (Accessed 14.12.2018)
http://misa.org/featured-on-home/zambian-media-survives-turbulent-third-quarter-misa-zambia-third-quarter-report/ (Accessed 14.12.2018)
The report highlights the raid against *The Post* newspaper on June 22, 2016, by the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) for alleged tax non-compliance. This caused the newspaper to face serious operational challenges after the Zambia Police sealed off the premises on behalf of the Tax body. The newspaper survived for a few months after in make-shift-operation style, but this blow proved fatal as the publication was soon to be forced off the streets. The last editions were seen in early November 2016, five months after the raid and closure of its offices. https://zambiareports.com/2014/12/05/lungu-threatens-lawsuit-post/ / (Accessed 14.12.2018)

newsroom to edit stories and ask them to add their bylines. Where some journalists were reluctant to do this, a by-line such as “By Staff Reporters” would appear. This compromised the critical distance many scholars see necessary in journalism, as discussed in Chapter Three. Further, I argue that despite his supposed pursuit of democratic values and the fight against corruption, M’membe used his newspaper to pursue personal interests in the name of public interests as the owner. This corroborates Chama's argument (2017, pp.14-15) that “Even though tabloid journalists [owners] are entitled to their own opinions on matters of public interest, [sometimes] malice and undisguised personal motives masquerade as public interest.”

For instance, despite being a privately owned and independent publication, *The Post* took various inconsistent positions before, during the 2011 elections cycle and the later ones in 2015 after the demise of President Michael Sata and in 2016. Before the 2011 elections, the paper was critical of Rupiah Banda and the MMD government over his corruption that “some stories angered President Rupiah Banda who made several attempts to suppress reporting” (Chama, 2014, p.136). Although the paper genuinely believed in its anticorruption fight, another motivation was surviving Rupiah Banda’s attempts to target it for closure as his government instituted investigations into the newspaper’s dealings to find anything that could implicate its business. I elaborate on this in Chapter Two. As a result, the newspaper backed then-presidential candidate Michael Sata during the run-up to the 2011 elections. This is corroborated by scholars who state that “while the tabloid kept attacking the government, opposition leader Michael Sata’s political campaigns (2008-2011) enjoyed good coverage” (Chilemba & Sinyangwe, 2010).

As the leading privately owned independent newspaper, the newspaper openly backed the opposition PF. This was viewed as a normative step within Zambian journalism, where private media often equate themselves to oppositional forces. However, the explicit partisan stance to support a single political party during the 2011 elections was at odds with practice, varying with Kasoma (1997)’s argument that newspapers should not take political sides unless pursuing a personal agenda. Although *The Post* had subtly supported various political groupings in the past, the unprecedented, explicit

nature and level of involvement in the PF's campaign machinery to the point of assigning reporters dedicated solely to covering PF candidates and Sata's countrywide campaign tours were unique. This also caught the attention of scholars and keen media observers' attention during the 2011 general election run-up. After forming the government, George Chellah, the journalist assigned to Mr Sata, became the Presidential spokesperson. Several other reporters from the newspaper were rewarded with government jobs, while others went to serve in Zambia's foreign missions. The newspaper's action was unprofessional, compromising its objectivity in reporting politics. M'membe saw an opportunity to curry favour with Sata's government to access business favours such as tax breaks for his newspaper, an explicitly political and economic decision.

Consequently, political players viewed the newspaper as an active political stakeholder rather than a media outfit. Therefore, the actions surrounding its controversial liquidation must be considered from this perspective, as discussed in Chapter One. However, this does not justify the state-engineered move to shut down the newspaper on political grounds using the pretext of tax-related fraud by the paper. Former *Post* employees corroborate these views in interview notes in Chapter Six. This reinforces Cheeseman's (2015, pp.218-219)'s argument that "the newspaper and its publisher, Fred M'membe, was deeply embedded in the political fight between Banda and Sata, holding strong allegiance, and by some accounts, financial connections to Sata." This is a discussion I return to in Chapter Six, which further illuminates these issues.

I argue that the newspaper took this approach to survive the political onslaught. This aligns with Stremlau, Fantini and Osman's observations (2016, p.45) that sometimes "the need for basic economic survival [which] can restrict media outlets' ability to reach for higher objectives, even if [they] aspire to them." These goals include pursuing truth, publishing balanced news for its readers, and holding power to account fairly, as the Fourth Estate within a democracy. However, "*The Post* supported government policies and benefitted from advertising revenues" (Chama 2014, p.13), thus compromising its professional values and goals. Situating such an argument within the broader literature on the political economy of the media helps us understand the economic factor. As

Stremlau, Fantini, and Osman (2016, p.45) argued, “We can examine the motivations behind owners [setting up] media outlets, and journalists working despite [the many impediments and risks involved].” Before the 2011 elections, the newspaper had built a good reputation and credibility due to its ability to objectively cover news involving various subjects and sources. Most notably, the newspaper was also celebrated for holding power to account, advocating for transparency and the prudent management of national resources. However, this changed post-2011. Because of this, its objectivity was compromised, and its claimed independence became highly questionable, inevitably leading to conflicted credibility. The government closed the newspaper partly because it presented a political, existential threat to the ruling PF. Taking out *The Post* gave the PF a new lease on political life.

Since its formation in 1991 as a weekly publication, *The Post* has endeavoured to shine its light on many government scandals, exposing corruption and other vices and calling for more honesty, accountability, and social justice. Each successive government was at the receiving end of its scrutinizing coverage. For its part, *The Post* newspaper experienced harsh treatment due to its anti-establishment stance, perceived or actual, in news coverage and content. Ellis (2016, pp.10-11) notes about this history, “The paper’s strident coverage exposing government corruption and abuses of power earned it plenty of enemies. Despite its role in helping oust Kaunda and install Chiluba as Zambia’s first democratically elected president, *The Post*’s reporting soon earned Chiluba’s ire. M’membe faced criminal defamation charges, criminally defaming the president, contempt of parliament, possessing and publishing classified documents, publishing false information, treason, sedition and inciting the army to revolt during Chiluba’s presidency. M’membe faced similar charges under subsequent presidents.”

Ellis further chronicles that under Presidents Levy Mwanawasa and Rupiah Banda, the newspaper faced ferocious attempts to silence it through legal and extra-legal means by the state using similar tactics as those employed by Chiluba. “In 2005, he faced criminal defamation charges after he called Mwanawasa a man of “foolishness, stupidity, and lack of humility” in an editorial (Ellis 2016, p.11). Under the Banda administration, he was briefly imprisoned for contempt in 2010 after *The Post* published an article by a

U.S. - based Zambian law professor (Muna Ndulo) criticising an obscenity case against one of the paper's editors." (Ibid). This torrid history is a testament to the place the publication occupied in national affairs. It shows its commitment to its agenda and duty as part of the fourth estate, especially between its founding in 1991 and 2010. Although the paper tried to rebuild its tattered image post-2011 with several key investigative journalism pieces exposing corruption under the PF government, the newspaper was too profoundly entangled in the ruling PF internal politics to retain a critical professional distance.

As illustrated above, the newspaper's political representation was more adversarial (Eriksson and Östman 2013, p.309) than not. It spoke out on issues of national importance and confronted leading politicians with the truth in search of answers. It vociferously pursued accountability, challenging the establishment in line with its watchdog role and promoter of democracy and accountability. The publication was equally vocal in fighting for the continued enjoyment of freedom of expression, the press and the associated fundamental human rights that are justifiably ideal in any democratic dispensation. As illustrated here*, the Post* was instrumental in Zambia's democracy gaining ground through its desire to speak truth to power until the early 2010s.

In acknowledging *The Post*'s contribution to media and the growth of democracy in Zambia, Ellis (2016, p.10) further notes the following: "IPI [International Press Institute] recognised M'membe, (owner and editor in chief) as a World Press Freedom Hero in 2000 for his efforts to bring news and information to Zambians through the newspaper despite arrests, attacks, and intimidation by the government." Based on its 25 years of existence, *The Post* newspaper's ideology aligned more with the drive for liberal democracy. State accountability was the centrepiece of its news agenda during much of its existence, and all this hinged on its determined anti-corruption purpose.

However, its colourful history notwithstanding, *The Post* had challenges regarding objectivity and maintaining its independence in pursuing the truth as news. Due to obvious proprietary influences and other factors, including business considerations such as diversifying from newspaper to dealing in aviation and road transport business, the

owners of the paper themselves veered off course as they traded this independence for convenience, politically, economically, or otherwise. Threatened with imminent closure under the Rupiah Banda era, the newspaper went into survival mode and backed the PF as an insurance policy. Once the publication had decided to support the PF in the 2011 election cycle, its objectivity and independence were questionable, as it had to pander to the state and the ruling PF. Chama's verdict on the newspaper was particularly stinging as he observes in his thesis: "The research found that *The Post* was incapable of contributing effectively to the maturity of democracy [in Zambia]. Its credibility as a tabloid was compromised by joining ranks with ruling politicians. Its traditional watchdog role of exposing political and social elites to public accountability was also suppressed due to political partnership" (Chama, 2014, p.i). Scholarly literature further argues that a news media entity cannot claim independence once tied to political groupings because it tends to be less critical of mismanagement and public accountability of such groups it may support (Ogbondah, 1994). Similarly, the duty of journalists to seek out the truth above all things and to present it to their readers is compromised when they join government supporters (Phiri, 1999).

Despite these normative positions on media's objectivity and independence, the debate about them is not settled, as shown in my Chapter Three discussion. The *Post* oscillated between subtly backing political parties covertly during election cycles, although most of these parties were in the opposition. As Phiri (1999, p.62) noted, "Not only has this paper positioned itself as the mouthpiece of the opposition but published overtly adversarial material. The result has been the failure of the paper to become an independent and respectable forum." If this argument by Phiri reflects *The Post*'s position, then during the mid-1990s, the same can be said about the newspaper's position during the 2011 election cycle and the period immediately after. As Chama (2014, pp.26-32) concluded in his thesis, the newspaper's reportage post-2011 was pro-government and compromised its objectivity and independence. Similarly, Allan observes that some media institutions orient their journalists to adopt reporting styles to suit the temper of their constituencies (Allan, 2004, p.16-17). This became evident in the paper's editorial policy and choice of stories that portrayed the PF positively.

Scholars still argue that media entities and non-partisanship have no absolute objectivity and independence. “Debates on partisan media is central to ongoing debates about mass polarization, as some scholars claim it strongly polarizes the electorate, others claim it conditionally polarizes the electorate, and still others claim it does not affect electoral polarization” (Druckman, Levendusky, and McLain, 2018, pp. 99-100). The authors, however, conclude in this paper that partisan media seem to have more impact on public opinion “that its influence may extend beyond its direct audience via a two-step communication flow.” There has been little to no study to examine this hypothesis within Zambian media. However, one is persuaded to lean more towards this assumption than not.

It is clear from the sketch of the history of *The Post* newspaper that the paper had a role in the growth of democracy in Zambia, in line with liberal democracy models and the expected role of the media. It is also safe to conclude that the newspaper had its shortcomings in how it fulfilled this role. This can be explained, albeit not definitively, by many factors that include the political economy of the newspaper, economic considerations, the ever-evolving political environment within which it operated, and the editorial policy decisions and actions the newspaper undertook and implemented. However elaborate the explanations might be for the flourishing or troubles the paper found during its years of existence, its significance in the birth and growth, reversal, or stagnation of democracy, as some scholars have argued, should neither be idealised nor underestimated.

1.2. A brief history of the *Times of Zambia* and its role in political communication

The *Times of Zambia* stands out among the state-owned print media for two reasons. Its history of private ownership, joint corporate-state ownership and total state ownership give it a unique history. Its dynamic transformations through these ownership phases make an interesting case study. It experienced editorial independence throughout these ownership phases, which eventually dissipated under the weight of government pressures. This indicates how state media ownership across much of Africa has affected the state-media relationship and information and news dissemination.

Secondly, its current state of being inconsequential to the national media landscape and national debates is quite astonishing, considering that its illustrious history is replete with reportage, commentaries and editorials that helped shape and influence national policy and national debates within government and broader society.

An understanding of this history in comparison to its current state will illuminate the metamorphosis of the media in Zambia and, indeed, much of the region. It reveals how politics-media dynamics influence each other, but for our purposes, how the political and governance systems affect and influence media systems and journalism cultures.

The defining moment for the *Times of Zambia* and the *Sunday Times of Zambia* came in 1975 when the Kaunda government started fully taking control through nationalisation. The takeover process lasted until October 1982. Kaunda announced, in the famous watershed speech at the Mulungushi Rock of Authority in Kabwe, that "the party, United National Independence Party (UNIP), would appropriate 100 per cent shareholding in the daily and 50 per cent in the weekly publications" (Chirambo 2011, p.93). Makayi (1997, p.19) adds that, in the speech, Kaunda directed all journalists in the state-owned *Zambia Daily Mail, Times of Zambia, Sunday Times of Zambia, Zambia News Agency (ZANA)* and *Zambia Broadcasting Services* to report information and news that reflected the official thinking of the Party and its Government. Thus, the state propaganda machine fully matured, and this mindset within governments has persisted for three decades since Zambia's return to a liberal democratic governance system.

Kasoma illustrates the *Times of Zambia*'s editorial independence when he shows how the paper covered the government and the ruling party in a critical style while it was still under the private ownership of the London Rhodesia Mining and Land Company-LONRHO (It was not until 1968 when the state bought a 50% stake in the outfit). Writing on the paper's editorials, Kasoma records the following:

> In 1965, the *Times of Zambia* declared that the Government was acting foolishly by trying to repeal the law that forbade the demand of party cards. When the law was repealed, the newspaper constantly opposed UNIP's card-checking campaigns in which people were asked to produce their UNIP cards before using

> public facilities like buses and markets. The practice was in line with the party slogan, “It pays to belong to UNIP.” (1986, p.102)

Kasoma recounts that again, in April 1966, the *Times of Zambia* “accused the Government, in three consecutive editorials, of practising racism in reverse by not restricting the leaders of striking Black miners.” (Ibid). The paper criticised the government’s use of double standards in dealing with similar incidences “when whites had struck two months earlier.” The accusation brought a sharp rebuke from President Kaunda, who told a national development seminar he could not tolerate such a press. (*Kasoma* 1986, p.103). Such editorials and coverage were typical, even within state-run media. Even when there were few viable and influential private media, there was still a critical check on power, as illustrated by state media.

This contrasts with many state-run media still operating in many African countries. The state is overbearing and overtly controls or intervenes in media operations and content. This pattern is still prevalent with a few exceptions, such as South Africa’s South African Broadcasting Corporation, SABC, in many African countries. The *Times of Zambia* and *ZNBC* show how state ownership affects media operations, editorial independence, and political economy, ultimately perpetuating Noam Chomsky’s propaganda model even in the so-called democratic states across much of Africa. Literature abounds in this regard, as illustrated here and elsewhere in this discussion (Chomsky and Henan 1988, p.232).

Chirambo (2011, p.318) records, "The MMD administrations have behaved much in the same manner as their UNIP predecessors in restraining state media since their ascension to power in 1991. Despite democratisation, Zambia’s history is replete with the use of state power to structure the media industry.” He further observes that due to this perceived state interference, the *Times of Zambia*’s decline in circulation numbers is not entirely because of declining social-economic factors but also to do with “increased negative perceptions over time of its *lack of credibility* as a newspaper: The latter being a consequence of political interference” (Chirambo 2011, p.319). The newspaper’s standing, and performance under the PF government has not significantly departed from the above and has arguably moved closer to acting as a propaganda outlet. The readership and the public perceive that its news is effectively government

information. This may explain its ever-dwindling circulation numbers, according to the paper's internal marketing department statistics), which has resulted in severe financial challenges.

Before the government purchased its 100% share of the *Times of Zambia*, scholars recorded exciting facts about the character of the newspaper and its editorial independence at the time. For example, before 1968, Chirambo (2011, p.92) writes, "It was not quite as easy for UNIP to colonise the *Times* newspapers in the same manner as radio and television given that the state had not formally purchased any shares in the Lonrho entity." The independence and ethicality of the newspaper remained despite collaborating with the government in ownership from 1968-1982. The two owners, LONRHO and the UNIP government offered a moderating effect on each other. Makungu (2004) further notes that despite the appointment of the editor by the president, the professional staff of the *Times* remained mainly tethered to ethics and standards of practice, both of which were based on Western values of media freedom, at least by all indications (Makungu, 2004 pp.27-30). During this era (1968-1982), the newspaper remained steadfast and resolute, maintaining its independence by practising objective journalism and producing critical pieces that often unsettled the government. Despite transitioning to full government ownership, it endeavoured to maintain independence under different editors. One such example is Dunstan Kamana, editor-in-chief from 1968-1975. In one of his most stinging editorials, he wrote:

> It will be a sad day when a whole Government confesses its inability to see beyond the buttocks of a naked woman. Indeed, if the Zambian Government, instigating the UNIP caucus, bans our sister paper, The Sunday Times of Zambia, then the emotion will have replaced reason.
> However, before concluding, we feel duty bound to draw the attention of the Government that the question of sex education is not one that only concerns Zambia. It is a world problem. *The Sunday Times of Zambia* has not tried to tell this Government how it should go about it, as there is no doubt in our minds that some people in Government know more about the subject than we do.
> Let it be made clear that the crime this newspaper has so far committed is to bring about awareness among members of the public of an issue rapidly demanding the attention of the entire world. So be it if The Sunday Times must receive its death sentence for this crime.

> But we feel sure that the Zambian Government does not want to go down in history as one that lost its head when confronted with nakedness.[5]

Such writing and critical editorials demonstrate how much the newspaper could stretch its press freedom. Beyond these years, especially after the state's complete takeover of its operations in 1982, such editorials were milder, rare, and far apart. Chirambo (2011) reports that several former senior reporters and editors maintain that the paper continued to enjoy editorial independence under both the Lonrho-state partnership and even when the Zambian government became the sole owner. However, he quickly notes, "There is a mixed impression of how far this freedom extended" (Chirambo 2011, p.186).

Similarly, Karikari (2007, p.15) has observed that "dominant newspapers in many an African country were now ruling party organs and the nationalised publications." In an overt reprimand against most African governments, Karikari further notes that "wherever they prevail, the private press survive[s] precariously in the face of incessant state interference and outright repression" (Karikari (2007, p.15). These circumstances are unfortunately still widespread in many countries in the region, with records of state harassment of journalists in many African countries (see, for example, Matthews and Onyemaobi 2020, Nigeria; Ireri (2017, p.92), Kenya; Omilusi 2017, Zimbabwe). These incidences demonstrate that despite the spread of democracy across the continent, a sense of the one-party-state hangovers from these authoritarian times still endures in contemporary African democracies.

1.3. A brief history of *ZNBC* and its role in political communication

Officially, *ZNBC* is Zambia's public broadcaster as outlined in the *ZNBC* (Amendment) Act No. 20 of 2002. Some of its lofty aspirations, espoused in this Act, among others, are as follows.

(a) Provide varied and balanced programming for all sections of the population.

(b) Serve the public interest

(d) Offer programmes that provide information, entertainment, and education.

[5] *Times of Zambia*, 18 January 1971, p.1

(e) Contribute to the development of free and informed opinions and, as such, constitute an essential element of the democratic process.

(f) Reflect, as comprehensively as possible, the range of opinions and political, philosophical, religious, scientific, and artistic trends.

(m) Broadcast news and current affairs programmes which shall be comprehensive, unbiased, and independent and commentary which shall be clearly distinguished from news;[6]

These provisions in the law might seem to be an ideal model of a public broadcaster. However, a critical analysis of their practice shows a lack of implementation of these ambitious legal provisions. This legislation was enacted to improve the performance of this entity and divest it of the heavy state control through the executive branch of government for more autonomy (Banda 2012) and to encourage a more diverse but inclusive media landscape in the country. However, as I demonstrate in Chapter Seven, the current state of the not-so-public broadcaster (Banda 2012, p.iv,44) is an open propaganda machinery of an incumbent party. For example, Banda (2012, p.4) critiques that it is "perceived *ZNBC* operates in such a manner that it favours the government of the day in the way it portrays political coverage against the opposition…it is still operating as a state broadcaster…creating the impression that it is a mouthpiece of the government and not serving the interests of Zambians."

This trend aligns with that of the print media under the one-party rule by Kaunda, where state monopoly and undue control were entrenched. The roots of the present dilemmas for the broadcast media can be traced to when Kaunda declared that UNIP would be the only party. As earlier highlighted, that watershed speech extended to all forms of media. And as Kasoma (2001, p.18) writes, as Kaunda's grip on power tightened, Radio and Television in Zambia became virtually UNIP outlets to broadcast all forms of political propaganda. Other scholars have argued that public broadcast media under the MMD government, from 1991 to 2011, was not so different from how it performed under the UNIP government despite the MMD being a pro-democracy party. Banda (2012,

[6] *ZNBC* (Amendment) Act No. 20 of 2002

p.29) reports, "*ZNBC* under Chiluba only temporarily abandoned the hierarchical news play of the Kaunda regime. By the mid-1990s, however, there was growing disillusionment with the MMD, as people accused Chiluba of following in Kaunda's footsteps." Further, the MMD dashed any hope for free media as they kept control of the state-owned media and even perpetuated the intimidation of private media. (Moyo, 2005, p.117).

The height of state abuse of *ZNBC* occurred in the months leading up to the 2011 elections. During that time (2010-2011), a documentary called 'Stand Up for Zambia' by veteran journalist Chanda Chimba III made waves on *ZNBC* at the behest of the government through the Ministry of Information headed by the Minister of Information at the time, Ronnie Shikapwasha (Lusaka Times, 2013). The documentary series revealed the worst attributes and historical incidents of the opposition presidential candidate Michael Sata who was experiencing broad public support. To characterise his political demeanour, he was labelled as 'Satan himself' and a 'venomous cobra snake'. Since he was seen as the primary challenger to the then-incumbent Rupiah Banda, this blatant political smear campaign was seen to undercut Sata's growing popularity and stop his surge towards an almost certain political victory. The ferocity was so alarming that when Sata would eventually win, Chanda Chimba III had to briefly leave the country on a self-imposed exile to escape expected retribution (Media Defence, 2015)

The description given of the state of the public media under the successive regimes of the MMD and UNIP is not any different, if not worse, under the current Patriotic Front Party since its ascendency to power in 2011. The PF has been seen to be more directly interventionist in its engagement with the state-owned broadcaster. Under its regime, reports circulated that often, the Minister of Information or the presidential aides would either now call or walk into the studios to have editorial input and scrutiny of stories that would be broadcast and those to be spiked. Media reports show that one-time Minister of Information Chishimba Kambwili (Zambia Reports 2014; IFEX 2013) stormed the state broadcaster studios, barking orders at journalists over unpleasant news reports. At other times, government officials, ruling PF officials, and party cadres have often

forcefully entered the premises to intimidate journalists and demand that their views are aired in support of the President and party.

For example, “On 18 June 2013, PF supporters disrupted an annual general meeting of Mkushi FM and demanded to be elected to the board of the radio station” (IFEX 2018); in November 2018, Presidential Press aide Amos Chanda directed “police [to be] proactive by storming radio stations to stop provocative interviews,” (Zambian Observer, 2018). In June 2014, police and PF cadres were reported to have descended on a community radio station, Isoka FM, in northern Zambia for featuring UPND, main opposition party chairperson Mutale Nalumango. “The cadres who stormed the radio station flanked by Isoka District commissioner Joe Siwila; Council chairperson Moses Simwanza charged that the radio station was wrong to feature an opposition leader without getting a police permit” (Zambian Watchdog 2015). Isoka radio was again targeted in the run-up to the 2016 general elections. In March 2016, Democratic Front (DF) party leader Miles Sampa was to feature on the station but “the police ordered Radio Station Manager Peter Sichali to stop the programme adding that they were following instructions from higher authorities. Sichali was threatened with arrest if he refused to stop the programme and chase Sampa from the station” (Zambian Watchdog 2016). In June 2015, police raided *MUVI* Television for “featuring on of musician Chama Fumba alias Pilato on ‘the assignment’ live TV programme,” (Zambian Watchdog 2016). These examples alone represent significant interference with broadcasters’ autonomy.

Scholars have also reported that in the run-up to the 2016 elections cycle, “State media continued to be heavily biased in favour of the ruling party.” (Goldring and Wahman 2016: 110). One report by MISA-Zambia found that the PF received approximately 45 per cent of the media coverage in the *ZNBC* TV and radio broadcasting, compared to only about 15 per cent for the UPND (MISA Zambia 2016, p.11). The nature of these incidents does more than intimidate the journalist concerned; it signals across the media sector that they either comply or can expect similar treatment.

1.4. *MUVI TV* history and its role in political communication

A Zambian entrepreneur, Steve Nyirenda, established *MUVI* Television in 2002. Its infancy and eventual growth are attributed to finding a niche area of news and programming focused on catering to the inner-city dwellers in the shanty compounds. Most of these populations were marginalized and were always on the fringes of the country's social, political, and economic activities. As such, the station focused on programming and news that resonated with their daily struggles and opportunities (meagre as they were), offering coverage which had been missing on the media front in the country. The station's strategy was to focus on the inner-city areas and concentrate on the urban and peri-urban poor who had been overlooked by and in media coverage.

Scholars have attested to its rise in popularity and relevance in the broadcast media. According to Mbatha (2011, p.1), "Since its start, the television (TV) station has gained popularity amongst its Lusaka viewers, which [has] now extended to [most] parts of the country. Even though it seems to cut across social classes, *MUVI TV* mainly appeals to the working-class majority." Moreover, according to the station's estimates from viewership surveys, it claims that it has enjoyed viewership peaking at 84 % (currently at 85.3 %) of Lusaka's population, with 54 % of these viewers preferring it to other TV stations (MUVI TV webpage. No date)

MUVI's political communication has been a part of its recent branding with its flagship political talk show, '*The Assignment,'* which features prominent political figures in the country. The programme, produced and anchored by *MUVI TV* staff, is a fixture that has run every Sunday evening since at least 2015 and continues to run at the time of completing this thesis, i.e., October 2022 (*MUVI TV* homepage, 2022). Political and other social leaders explain their programmes and policy positions on various societal matters. The combative nature of the interview with open interactive sessions with viewers via call-ins using phones and a studio audience has generated much interest across the country. Its coverage of daily news events in the political realm, however, remains that which still has embraced the voices of underprivileged people in the urban areas and the vulnerable to bring their voices into the palaces of national leaders. Most voters identify the station as a platform for their votes and political leaders, with both the

ruling party and the opposition using it to respond and engage with the people. However, as has been a normative tradition, *MUVI TV* is often perceived to lean more towards opposing voices regarding content and sources.

As a result, the station's history has been one chequered with clashes with authorities due to the wariness among ruling party elites of the influence an unfettered news outlet would have on their political fortunes. Together with other private broadcast houses, the station has suffered incidences of suppression of their press freedom, usually on trumped-up grounds. This becomes more common during election cycles, with reports of the challenges already being alluded to here. These are reminiscent of the one-party state era when alternative views were never afforded space in the national debates. For instance, the trusted African Media Barometer by FES 2017 Report jointly published by MISA and Freidrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) records the following: "Immediately after the 2016 elections, two radio stations and a television station, *Komboni Radio*, *Itezhi Tezhi Radio* and *MUVI TV*, had their broadcasting licences suspended and their equipment seized by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA). The IBA chairperson, Brigadier General Justin Mutale, accused the three independent media houses of conducting themselves in an unprofessional manner and cited them as being in contravention of the provisions of the IBA Act" (FES 2017, p. 8).

However, critics such as MISA Zambia PANOS Africa Zambia (MISA Zambia 2016) wondered why the suspension happened after the elections and not before if they posed a security risk to national peace before the elections as had been alleged by the IBA. Analysis and observations by these organisations (MISA and PANOS) showed the likely cause was the political tension that gripped the nation after the election results had been inconclusive, which saw the two leading political parties take matters to the Constitutional Court for resolution and final determination of the winner. It would seem that due to insecurities within the ranks of the incumbent party, the PF stifling national discourse was a way to contain this political challenge posed by the opposition UPND and their allies. To achieve this, as demonstrated earlier, the government had to rely on propaganda, according to Noam Chomsky's 1988 propaganda model (Herman and Chomsky 1988, pp.21-23), which meant controlling information flow by allowing the

official version while blocking or stifling independent and alternative views. *MUVI TV* and other private media outlets were identified as key to containing the spread of unwanted information; therefore, authorities felt they had to be stopped at all costs.

The scenario above exemplifies controls and propaganda tactics, as presented by Herman and Chomsky. Therefore, it is often challenging for the private media to walk the fine line to avoid confrontation with authorities, even as they seek objectivity and balance. These practices are exclusive to Zambia and shared in many other regional countries. For example, in Zimbabwe, '*The Tribune* newspaper was suspended for one year "on allegations of breaching Section 67 of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA)." (IFEX and MISA Zimbabwe 2004). Freedom House also recorded that "Broadcasting licenses have been consistently denied to independent and community radio stations." (Freedom House 2004)

This chapter has outlined the significant events within Zambian journalism and the political landscape that impacted how the four selected organisations performed their roles. The branch, relying on the earlier Chapter Three, by discursively analysing Zambian journalism practices based on the sampled media outlets, contributes to a deepening understanding of the opportunities and challenges that shape and affect Zambian journalism. This is important to situate the discourse within the broader debate on African journalism, using national contexts to build a more detailed understanding of the variations in patterns, local conditions or factors that influence how journalism is conceptualised and practised. In the end, this type of discourse contributes to a broader yet detailed and context-specific understanding of journalism models in Africa, contributing to the knowledge of the local journalism models—data analysis in Chapter Six and even builds on the contextual insights here. In the meantime, the next chapter (Chapter Five) discusses the methodological frameworks and methods used for my data collection, research process and subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORKS AND FIELD RESEARCH PROCESS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approaches used in the thesis to collect and analyse relevant data. It also discusses the appropriate research instruments, objectives, aims, and questions. The chapter also highlights the limitations of the methods that impacted the conduct of the research as well as ethical considerations aimed at avoiding any adverse effects on the research subjects.

Research design and methods adopted.

I designed this research to be a case study as it allows me to answer the " (a) "how" or "why" questions being posed, (and because) (b) the investigator has little control over events, and (c) the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context," (Yin, 2009, p.2). As such, this design allows me to address the most crucial question of the thesis, which was to consider factors beyond the media text to investigate the news-making processes, the decisions made, and how and why those decisions must be made, resulting in the news text. To address the how and why questions of journalism culture and political representation in media texts. What are the underlying factors that affect the way journalists report about elective politics? What precarities do professional journalists encounter in the process? To address these questions, I decided to examine media texts from selected news media outlets to evidence the culture, precarities and representation of various political actors in Zambia. The sampling of specific stories is discussed below. With more past research and studies, especially within the Zambian context, leaning more towards examining media texts (Ndawana, 2011; Gondwe, 2014; Hamusokwe, 2015), I decided to broaden that by investigating relationships existing between journalists and news media institutions that produce these texts, hence pivoting towards journalism culture. This was achieved through interviews with sampled journalists using the criteria I explain below.

Informed literature argues that "if the investigator is a single researcher, [and] time is a problem, an embedded model of design emphasizes the use of a recognized research

design, which includes a minor form of data collection [such as] a few interviews with some of the participants," (Creswell, 2014, p.283). This factor was significant in the choice of case study approach as the research design. As Yin (2009, p.2) argues, this model "uses multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion." Bryant and Charmaz (2019, p.135) posit that "the main idea of triangulation is to use several methods, differing theories [so] as to do the research and results more credible and fruitful." With this inherent desire to make this study more credible and responsive to the research problem statement, the study design I chose enabled me to investigate my subject more deeply through interviews with key media personnel, as well as analysis of selected media texts, to unravel the processes involved in news discourse production.

These limitations informed my choice of only two media outlets, *The Post* and *Times of Zambia,* for textual analysis purposes instead of the four as initially planned. I also examined relationships within media organisations and newsrooms and between journalists and editors and how these affect the production of media texts. These back-and-forth investigations between personnel relations and the production of media texts were vital in establishing linkages and causality in the media's representation of politics as the overarching objective of this thesis. As Creswell (2014, p.283) argues, "the fact that both forms of data are not equal in size and rigour enables the study to be reduced in scope and manageable for the time and resources available." Setting achievable data collection parameters to manageable levels allowed me to undertake this within the limited time and resources. I collected more textual data than interview data that complemented each other through triangulation to produce a credible and detailed analysis that meets acceptable standards.

Analysis of textual data and data from journalists' interviews allowed me to show how journalists process political news. It also reveals relationships within media organisations between journalists, editors and owners that influence the production of such texts. To this end, Van Dijk (1988, p.11) illustrates, through the "use of thematic analysis, how news discourse [is] produced and [can be] deconstructed through the interface of the producer mental models of journalistic conventions and communicative

events." Additionally, Fairclough (1995, p.211) argues that "text analysis aims at uncovering text structure, semiotic patterns, and discursive devices, discourse analysis covers processes of text production and comprehension, including institutional routines and discourse transformations over time that affect the production and comprehension of [news] discourse." Thus, through thematic textual analysis in Chapter Six and critical discourse embedded in Chapter Seven, this thesis has established relationships between texts and production processes, interfacing with institutional routines, journalistic conventions and practices within the Zambian context. The thesis was, in this way, able to show relationships between the type of coverage and the culture and routines within the selected media organisations, such as the link to precarious professionalism, as Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1838) postulate and to polarised pluralism, that Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.54) discuss extensively. The study establishes that the worsened polarised coverage exhibited within the media results from censorship, editorial interferences, and fear of job losses and reprisals among journalists, themes I discuss extensively in the following two chapters (Chapter Six and Chapter Seven). I will now discuss in more detail my rationale for the various aspects of my overall research design.

Methods choices rationale (background factors)

The study uses mixed-methods or multi-methods research approaches to address different dimensions present in the research subject. As Bryman (2016a, p.111) argues, "Multimethod research [is] firmly rooted in the tradition of measurement, particularly triangulation. [It] has increasingly been stretched to include the collection of qualitative as well as quantitative data." Further, Campbell and Fiske (1959) note how this approach is relevant to "employ both structured interviewing and structured observation for each trait." Interviewing as a methodological choice was informed by the nature of the research design that targeted key informants to allow for a deeper and broader understanding of the subject. As Bertaux (1981, p.39) posits, "Subjects of inquiry in the social sciences can talk and think. If allowed to talk freely, people appear to know much about what is happening." Thus, "Interviewing as a mode of inquiry [allows for the] recounting [of] narratives of experience" (Seidman 2006, p.8). In this research,

interviewing method was best suited to bring out the personal and professional experiences of journalists, just as Seidman (2006, p.10) has argued that “at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyse the interview data gathered from interviews with journalists. I will return to this by discussing this aspect in detail shortly.

Equally, textual analysis as a methodological approach is helpful in this research as it focuses on the use and meaning of texts used within context (Bryman and Hardy 2004, p.530). Other scholars such as Riff, Lacy, and Fico (2014, p.214) argue “this approach provides groupings of text to evaluate [their] meaning.” Textual analysis is not the mere comprehension of the meaning of texts but seeks to appreciate the choice of specific texts to discuss certain events. Elsewhere, Bryman and Hardy (2004, p.531) posit that this involves analysis of “how words in a text are associated with one another such as the range of words which appear within some distance having some analytic interest.” For example, the use of words such as ‘corrupt’, ‘tribalist’, ‘bad leadership’, ‘interference’ ‘freedom’ in describing the political discourse as carried in the newspapers alongside words describing political leaders or groupings buttresses the kind of message journalists intend for the readership. I demonstrate this more elaborately in Chapter Seven, where I engage in the analysis of media texts.

1.1. Research Tools

To obtain textual data that could be triangulated alongside interview data, I also collected back copies of newspapers covering the election campaign period between 16 May 2016 and 10 August 2016. A total of 170 newspaper back copies were captured using Adobe OCR PDF scanner during the field data collection phase using predefined criteria (i.e., each story was to have at least one of the following keywords or phrases or similar; Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), party name/party official, or election, etc. Secondly, the story substantially referred to the election process as the subject). One hundred forty newspaper copies were coded and analysed using the NVivo software based on codability or saturation criteria. However, not all scanned newspaper copies were of good enough quality to make the coding and analysis possible.

1.2. Journalist's sampling and method of analysis of interview data

I used semi-structured interview questions and a digital recorder as the research tools to capture the data. Using pre-set Risk Assessment (RA) protocols, I interviewed journalists in secure locations. Thus, their views and responses represent the journalism community regarding the research questions in many respects. To this end, I used semi-structured questionnaires (Appendix i) with In-Depth-Interviews (IDIs) to interview 22 journalists and other media professionals that met the sampling criteria. For journalists to be sampled, they must be adults (above 18 years) who have worked in the media since 2015. Of the total tested, seven were active editors. Three were retired editors, one was an official from a media regulatory body, and the other 11 were practising journalists at various stages of their careers.

Further, at the time of interviews, 13 respondents were drawn from State-Owned media, while the other nine were from Private-Owned media. Among the 13 working in the State-Owned media, five were editors, while eight were reporters. Three of those from the Private-Owned media were editors, while 6 were reporters., As I reiterate later in Chapter Six, Some of them had previously worked for private media outlets and vice versa before the interview. Appendix v shows this distribution of the sample. Participants were contacted initially by email while taking precautions in the Risk Assessment Protocol shown in Appendix ii. As other researchers posit, I used purposive and snowball sampling to identify interviewees. For example, Bryant and Charmaz (2019, p.318) report that they "followed a purposive and snowball sampling approach to find interview participants, initially using connections and networks, followed by some referrals." Further, my previous research and knowledge of the industry and professionals were helpful in this regard.

In "snowballing, also known as chain referral sampling, participants with whom contact has already been made use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate or contribute to the study" (Mack *et al*., 2005:7). As Chama (2014, p.101) observes, sampling willing, and influential respondents, who later persuade others to cooperate makes it more feasible to have a good sample. Starting with the most willing respondents and working towards those more reluctant is

advisable (Iorio, 2004, p.97). I used my old connections and networks from previous research to find participants who later referred other journalists. All participants were given at least three days to decide whether to participate in the study. I discuss these considerations and steps in detail below.

Literature shows that no specific number of respondents can be interviewed to guarantee validity, but it depends on the size of the case under investigation (Kvale, 1995, p.25). Bryman, Liao, and Lewis-Beck (2004, p.995) also buttress this, arguing that "saturation is reached when no new data appear, and when the researcher has "heard it all. […] … when the sample is adequate and right, and the study has a narrow focus." In this case, all four media houses sampled would have less than twenty political news reporters (Mungonge, 2007). Finally, because qualitative research is labour-intensive, analysing a large sample can be time-consuming and often impractical (Mason, 2010, p.3). Therefore, the final interview participants list of 22 journalists and editors was determined by their availability and willingness during my data collection fieldwork and the established criteria. The in-depth interview data were analysed manually through transcribing and later coded using the NVivo software, categorizing into themes and subthemes, and drawing conclusions.

I interviewed these key informants to get insights into journalistic cultures and to gauge attitudes towards professionalism and ethics in their execution of work, especially within a precarious environment such as Zambia. How, for example, do journalists balance their need to be professional while ensuring they have a livelihood from their jobs? How do they respond to widely held public beliefs that state-run media organisations preponderantly cover any government or incumbent party news more favourably, in a biased manner? At the same time, they denigrate alternative views and opposing political parties and other interests in the wider society. Equally, how do practising journalists from private media organisations respond to similar sentiments that disagree with any favourable coverage of incumbent political parties and governments within this environment? These interviews are best suited to broach discussions of such tensions and complex ethical dilemmas these professional journalists face.

Researchers find that using in-depth interviews results in a richer set of data, as information extracted from the interviewees is more profound and broader in terms of the insights it offers (Mack et al., 2005, p.2). This fits well with my research aims as I seek to gain a deeper understanding of the journalists' culture regarding their personal and professional lives in covering political news. Further, Flick (2013, p.298) argues that a researcher "generates interview data that align with their research purposes. For example, suppose a researcher aims to generate information concerning a research topic. In that case, much thought is given to whether multiple sources of data might be helpful to verify participants' interview reports." This principle guided my choice of using IDIs since the interviews allowed me to collect as much information as possible on how they cover political news and how this interacts with other aspects of their personal and professional lives (Moyo, 2009, p.557). Considering the benefits of both approaches in their totality, I decided to use both interviews and textual analysis. The sample represents journalists from various backgrounds, organisations, career stages and positions within media organisations, which is a promising industry representation.

To maintain the safety and confidentiality of participants, I anonymised all such data and chose interview locations discreetly. As per LJMU IT staff advice, the storage and transportation of data was to transfer data from encrypted recording devices to encrypted hard drive storage after each recording. The details of the ethics guidelines are contained in Appendix vi.

1.3. Critical Discourse Analysis

I utilised a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to analyse the interview data. Hodges, Kuper and Reeves (2008, p.570) argue that "Researchers use the term critical discourse analysis to encompass a wider sphere that includes all of the social practices, individuals, and institutions that make it possible or legitimate to understand phenomena in a particular way and to make certain statements about what is "true," Fairclough (2010, p.117). Critical discourse analysis is particularly concerned with power and is rooted in "constructivism" (Flick, 2013, p.297). Bryman, Liao and Lewis-Beck (2004, p.214) argue that "critical discourse analysis (CDA) sees language as one element of

social events and social practices that are dialectically related to other elements (including social institutions and aspects of the material world). Its objective is to show relationships between language and other elements of social events and practices." In this thesis, CDA therefore helps in showing and linking these social events, in the form of political or election-related news coverage by journalists.

The language journalists use to describe the existing relations with media institutions constructs a power-relation dynamic that explains the reasons behind how and why the news is processed and produced in the manner it is. Thus the Foucauldian discourse analyses, for example, illustrate how particular discourses "...systematically construct versions of the social world" (Hodges, Kuper and Reeves, 2008, p.570). In this research, CDA helped construct journalists' views on how the political landscape and media landscape/organisations symbiotically interact and how this, in turn, influences their culture both in their personal and professional lives. Further, Hodges, Kuper and Reeves (2008, p.570) postulate that "discourse analysis at this level involves not only the examination of the text and the social uses of language but also the study of how the very existence of specific institutions and of roles for individuals to play are made possible by ways of thinking and speaking." In this case, CDA aids in examining how the communicative elements within which media personnel operate influence journalists' thinking, attitudes and role performance in covering politics.

1.4 Qualitative Content Analysis-Software-Assisted (newspaper data)

The content analysis employs a systematic approach in line with the standards and principles of social research. (Bryman, Liao and Lewis-Beck, 2004, p.889) argue that "qualitative content analysis examines significant aspects of texts that are not amenable to quantitative techniques. Such techniques measure patterns of frequency and regularity in many texts." Content analysis is a prominent methodology used extensively to study news representations. The focus is typically on identifying and, in its quantitative guise, enumerating critical features of a body of news items, such as sources, positive or negative orientation, settings and ideologies (Krippendorff, 2008, p.333). Researchers often take samples from particular periods, and this approach is more suited to ongoing issues (Schreier, 2012, p.279). Berger (2016, p.391) sees

content analysis as a “technique for systematically classifying and describing content according to certain usually predetermined categories. It requires that the categories of classification and analysis be clearly and operationally defined so that other researchers can follow them reliably.” In this thesis, these categories are in the form of themes determined after thoroughly coding the media text using the NVivo software, a process I will return to shortly.

The Software-Assisted Qualitative Content Analysis (SAQCA) helped analyse the sampled newspaper media texts. Software-assisted data analysis helps in managing and analysing data more efficiently, maintaining a high level of transparency (Bazeley, 2009; Bazeley, 2013), and handling large volumes of data (Kaefer, Roper and Sinha, 2015) as well as achieving a high level of accuracy (Berger, 2016). I used NVivo 12 software for data management as it met all the qualities above regarding being dependable and trustworthy. Additionally, the software package is readily available under the University licence, allaying any costs for the licence and being trained in using it. As Kaefer, Roper and Sinha (2015, para. 21) caution, “selection [of software] must also take into account practicalities, such as whether or which software programs are taught at your institution and the license fees.”

Purposively sampled content from the *Times of Zambia* and *The Post* is analysed. Sampled stories were deemed election-related and selected for analysis on predetermined criteria highlighted earlier in the chapter. The sample period encompassed the official campaign period as pronounced by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ), which ran from 20th May 2016 until the 9th of August 2016, two days before the general election of 11th August 2016, to be exhaustive, as Wood et al. (2014, p.579) suggest. Duplicate articles within the same outlet were excluded from achieving a clean data set, as recommended by Kaefer, Roper and Sinha (2015, p.13). All selected articles were read to identify critical themes around elections to develop the coding frame. As Strauss and Corbin (1994, pp.65-66) argue, “All research is guided by an approach and a perspective - assumptions about how one can learn and know the nature of concepts of change and units of analysis.” Glaser and Strauss (1967, pp.236-239) further argue that this approach focuses on the interpretive process of observed

reality, while (Gephart, 2004: 457) posited that the interpretive approach involves analysis of "the actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings" This approach helped guide me to read and interpret selected articles with the aid of NVivo software.

Therefore, content analysis follows "the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" Kaefer, Roper and Sinha (2015, p.3) within the media texts. This process allowed for identifying themes in the coverage of the 2016 general elections across Zambian media. But perhaps more importantly, this aided in situating and "establishing how media [represent] political communication" in Zambia during elections, as Amadeo (2007, p.67) describes themes discovered through a combination of "content analysis, public opinion polls and either newsroom observation and in-depth interviews with journalists and chief editors of the media being researched." Thus, this deductive approach is one of the critical aspects helpful to achieving this goal. The next section discusses in detail the coding process that was undertaken. The table below summarises the quantitative details of the newspapers sampled for analysis.

Newspaper	***The Post Newspaper*** **(Privately owned)**	***Times of Zambia*** **(Public owned)**	**Total**
Period covered	May10-August 9 2016	May 10 -August 9 2016	
no. of copies	80	90	170
no. of copies coded	71	69	140
no. of all stories coded	639	552	1391
no. of lead stories coded	56	51	107
Av. no. of stories/edition	9	8	17
no. of headlines	639	552	1391
no. of lead headlines coded	56	51	107
no. of Editorials coded	33	28	61

Table 2: Number of stories and headlines coded for analysis by media house/ownership.

1.5 Data coding of newspapers

After a physical survey of hardcopy newspapers available and retrieved from the National Archives and MISA Zambia Library, 80 copies of *The Post newspapers* and 90

copies of *Times of Zambia* were available for scanning and, later on, coding using Nvivo, giving a total of 170 potential copies. After scanning, a sample of the scanned copies showed estimations of potentially 1400 stories (N=1400) to code and analyse. This was from 140 newspaper published editions of the *Times of Zambia* and *The Post* newspaper covering the period between 10th May 2016 to 9th August 2016. The number reduced from 170 due to damages during the scanning process, as not all scans maintained the expected quality. On average, *The Post* newspaper copies contained nine qualifying stories per edition, while the *Times* had an average of 8. Based on this information and time limitation, a decision was made to analyse only election-related headlines and lead stories on the front page of each newspaper copy, totalling 107. Editorial opinions of the two newspapers that met the criteria (commenting on the election process as defined earlier), totalling 61, were also coded and analysed as captured in *Table 2.* above. This yielded a total of 107 lead stories coded for analysis. Additional to the rationale explained earlier, this decision is based on the following reasons:

Story prominence – Boukes, Jones and Vliegenthart (2022, p.99) have posited that ”prominence reflects the degree of importance given by journalists and editors....” Boukes and Vliegenthart (2020, p.280) argue that ”newsworthiness can be found either in the inherent characteristics of a real-world event or may be constructed by the journalist.” However, Boukes, Jones and Vliegenthart (2022, pp.99-100) later argued that ”an event is not newsworthy in itself, but is accorded its newsworthiness by discursively ascribing news factors through language, image, and typography to sell an event as news.” This illustrates that news is constructed rather than a neutral, discovered and self-evident entity. It is a common editorial practice within the media to place the most significant or prominent stories based on a defined criterion in notable spaces, usually front page or as a lead. Scholars have explained this, noting that the placement of the stories is done with full awareness and deliberate intention to reach the maximum exposure and maximum audience possible. This accounts for my decision to specifically focus on analysing the front page lead stories as they were deemed most prominent.

Time factor – It was determined at the beginning of the coding and writing that it was impossible to thoroughly code, analyse, and present the findings of an average of 1400 stories. Therefore, the approach finally adopted was more appropriate and practical to pursue as a single researcher. As demonstrated earlier, the initial coding using NVivo aided in identifying relevant stories that met the criteria, which was later followed by coding for themes starting with the most prominent, using Nvivo software manually. Using NVivo, I ran some word queries, frequencies, roots, and similar words or synonyms. Once that was done, I manually searched for the most prominent words by context, which I pulled into the nodes to create themes.

Figure 1 below summarises the significant codes identified through the coding process based on the criteria described above. I recognised these codes inductively by reading through the stories and pooling stories with similar subject matter in significant proportions under each emerging theme. Files indicate the number of newspaper editions, while references are the number of nodes drawn from stories across each theme. The last four columns show the date when each code was created, the name of the coder, the date of modification and the modifier, respectively.

Name	Files	Reference	Created On	Creat	Modified O	Modifiec
Demographic information /Personalities	19	82	43994.62384	NY	44022.68	YN
Journalistic culture	23	181	43752.62292	YN	44019.86	YN
Journalists Challenges	19	94	43752.62258	YN	44021.03	YN
media environment	21	110	43985.81179	YN	44022.68	YN
Media independence vs state control	24	138	43986.74783	YN	44022.68	YN
Media legislation & regulation	20	136	43986.7142	YN	44022.69	YN
Media Ownership	24	131	43752.62218	YN	44022.03	YN
media political economy	17	91	43986.75541	YN	44022.68	YN
Media, democracy & governance	17	88	43986.41279	YN	44022.68	YN
Portrayal-representation	14	73	43993.05376	NY	44022.68	YN
Public shphere	0	0	44022.65507	YN	44022.66	YN
Recommendations	16	72	43752.69365	YN	44022.01	YN

Figure 1; Summary of codes from interview transcripts

1.6 Data coding steps

The first step was to select and import the data in NVivo from a local folder, as Kaefer, Roper and Sinha (2015, p.9) suggest. The snapshot below in *Figure 2* in Appendix i illustrates this first step and how the data was, once imported into NVivo. The second step was to run word frequency queries to discover the most occurring words from the stories by each newspaper category. After this, I grouped words that had similar meanings or referred to concepts in common. Below are word cloud representations of what the frequency query produced. Of significance is the frequency of words, as shown in *Figure 3*. Zambia, Lungu, violence, police, PF and UPND, and peace show how much media attention these subjects received. This also points to the media polarisation as Figure 4 (word cloud) shows the contrasts in frequency between Lungu, the incumbent during the research period, and Hichilema, the opposition party leader at the time.

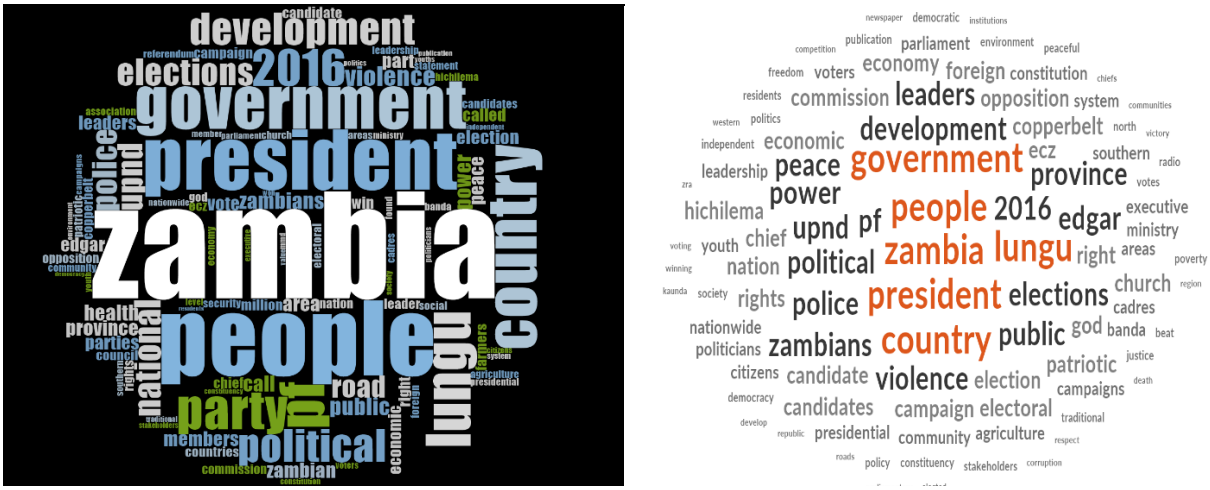


Figure 2. Word frequencies from newspaper files generated with NVivo software.

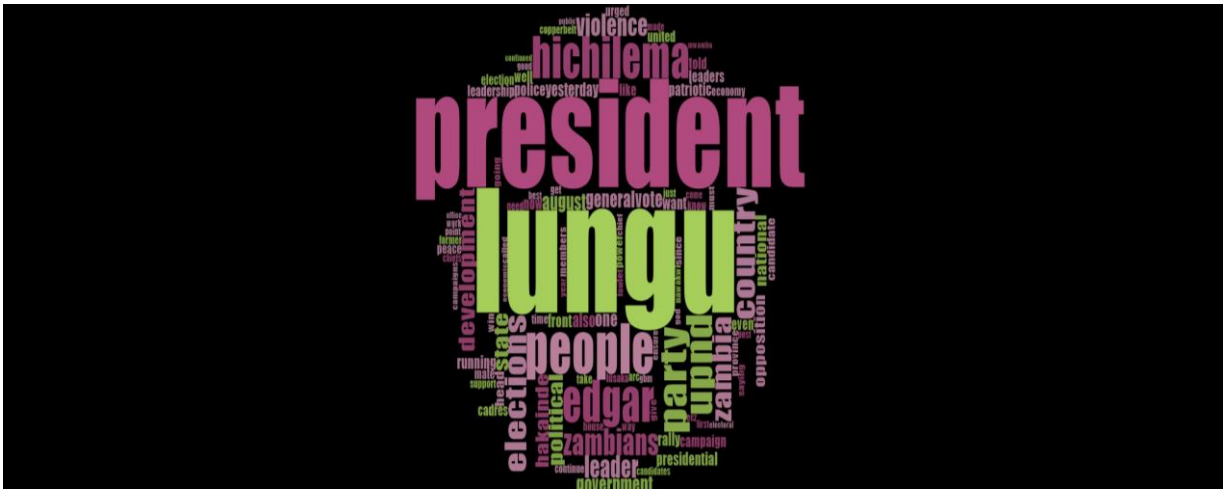


Figure 3. Contrasts in frequency between President Lungu and opposition leader Hichilema.

I then used the inductive approach to identify emerging themes from the data beyond the predefined sets. This approach, as Smith and Firth (2011, p.34) argue, “is not strictly predefined but developmental in response to the data” (p.2). Braun and Clarke (2006, p.79) argue that “thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data set in (rich) detail.” After processing the identified stories using the pre-set criteria using NVivo, by running word frequency queries, I manually read the stories that contained the most frequent words, which included synonyms and roots to help scope the substantive subject of each story. Combined with this process were the transcript notes from journalists' interviews where many observed the most prominent or concerning issues that characterise political campaigns in Zambia, especially in the most recent past. Out of this combination of efforts, I identified the themes as I discuss them in Chapter Seven. The approach relied on the following practical and theoretical considerations to gain meaning from the data:

a. The study adopted the SAQCA to analyse news output by *The Post newspaper* and *Times of Zambia* newspapers.
b. This approach promised to illuminate the ideological representation of electoral political campaigns generally but more so within the African context, as illustrated in Chapters Six and Seven.
c. I used SA-QCA to analyse news articles and identify the linguistic devices and semantics used to extract sociological, contextual, and associated meanings. Specifically, this was the analysis of news stories telling events and the inclusion or exclusion of political actors in representing events in the news.
d. The approaches were also valuable in analysing the tone of the language used and the overall slant, reasoning, or arguments for or against news story subjects by the totality of the text in the news article. This was inferred implicitly by the researcher/ news media or stated explicitly by the news media.
e. Thematic analysis aided in equipping the study with an analytical framework I used to assess the political messaging in the news during the campaign period. Braun and Clarke (2006, p.78) suggest that thematic analysis provides a “flexible and

useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data."

f. The study comprised an analysis of the news to expose significant and impactful events and narratives that appeared during the news coverage by the two publications.

My next step was coding nodes, which I used to analyse the issues related to the different thematic areas. By defining what each node denoted, themes emerged that allowed me to gather data to analyse and formulate conclusions using the literature and theoretical frameworks discussed earlier. A snapshot of this is presented in Figure 5 below. Column one shows the emerging themes, with column two describing the nature of the nodes pulled into the emerging themes. Column three shows the files or number of editions that contributed nodes to each theme, as shown in column four.

Emerging themes	Descriptors	Newspaper editions	Nodes
personal attacks	Verbal remarks or characterisation targeting politicians or journalists	9	25
Political parties	How political parties are treated	11	26
Political violence	Political violence, physical or otherwise targeting both politicians and journalists	15	73
politics perception	Perceptions from citizens, journalists and voters	10	50
Political polarisation	nation polarised along political lines. This is affecting how media views and relates with sources and how they report or cover the sources.	11	31
Portrayal-representation	How and why journalists represented news the way they did	10	65
Press freedom	Press freedom views, perspectives and hopes, status as well as hurdles	12	79
Private media	Views from private media journalists and orgs on issues covered	12	73
propaganda	Sentiments from journalists expressing their view about propaganda information	9	39

Figure 4. Snapshot of coded nodes used in thematic construction and analysis.

The analyses of the news data brought to the fore the kind of messaging and characterisation of the political news events that the media conducted and how these related to the broader narrative surrounding the coverage of politics in Zambia. As Meyer (2001, p.20) argues, CDA, as part of the "linguistic theories of argumentation, of

grammar, and of rhetoric, try to describe and explain the pattern specific to language systems and verbal communication" (see also Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough and Fairclough, 2012).

Interview data were collected using the semi-structured questionnaire, which had explorative questions to ask journalists' views on a range of issues that I was already familiar with from my past research and literature review, which included the 2016 election period newspapers. This helped in scoping and mapping out possible lines of inquiry during the field trip mid-2019. After the interviews, I manually transcribed the interviews, which allowed me to immerse myself in the data. This significantly helped deepen my understanding of the most prominent and cross-cutting issues that affected most participants. Following this, the initial coding of interview data using NVivo relied on this set of potential themes. Still, I retained flexibility to include new, emerging themes based on the most prominent. Using NVivo, I ran word queries and frequencies, including word roots. Once that had been done, I manually read the search for the most prominent words by context, which I pulled into the nodes to create themes.

Thus, in Chapter Three, journalistic culture and models were analysed as integral factors in the same political news messaging in a complex symbiotic relationship, as discussed in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven. Further, the operating environment that included the legislative, policy and regulatory measures I mentioned in Chapter Four reveals the precarious conditions under which journalists work as journalists recounted in Chapter Six. In discussing the formation of collective perception within social groups, in my case, the Zambian journalists, Meyer posits that "social actors involved in discourse do not exclusively make use of their individual experiences and strategies [but] mainly rely upon collective frames of perceptions, called social representations." (2001, p.21). The journalistic culture present in the Zambian context, as demonstrated, forms part of this 'social representation' as a collective perception of individual journalists and media houses aggregated as a result of careful analysis of the interview as I describe above.

As I demonstrate throughout the thesis, these factors, the journalistic practices, the operating environment, and the media text, are intricately interlinked at both the macro and micro levels, producing complex relationships that affect the media's representation of political news and messages. The macro level implies the overall media organisations, operations, how the operating environment affects these operations and measures that media institutions put in place to respond, absorb, or deflect those measures that may be inimical to smooth operations. The micro level reflects the daily routines and decision-making practices of individual journalists, both collectively as part of an organisation and individually, to respond to and navigate the challenges and opportunities in their work. These form habits which become journalistic cultural identifiers. The ownership structures are equally significant in the analysis, as Islam, Djankov and McLeish (2002) and (Ogenga, 2010) argue that they have a considerable bearing within the broader media operating context and affect how journalists undertake their professional work. The interview data analyses in Chapter Six reveal the thought processes and other considerations journalists make. This corroborates Bennett et al. (2005, p.9)'s proposition, which argues that journalists' actions "amplify existing predispositions that constitute the dominant culture." However, journalists have been pushing back against the status quo, such as odd collaborations and negotiated performance that gives them leeway to be more professional, which I discuss in Chapter Six.

As other studies have shown, I chose to focus on the most politically active period of election campaigns to maximise the chances of delivering a more persuasive case for the textual analysis. This is because there are often abundant raw media text data for research and investigations. This combines short-term focus and intensity with the interview data, focusing more on how journalism practices evolve and become embedded over time. Therefore, the mixed methods approach covers both aspects of this research.

Ethical considerations and clearance

Flick (2015, p.604) has argued that “research ethics, informed consent, and a review by an ethics committee are important contributions to making research better and improve researchers’ responsibility for their participants.” Therefore, having obtained ethical approval from the University Research Council for this research, all data collection, storage, and usage were done following standard ethical guidelines of social research, adhering to the principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, anonymity, privacy, confidentiality, and no harm to subjects. To achieve this, I collected and stored it in the secure LJMU M-Drive until I could access it from a safe location for analysis.

Fuji (2018, p.55) argues that “researchers should describe what the project is about; how they plan to use the data; how they plan to protect people’s confidentiality and anonymity, if necessary; and the participant’s right to refuse an interview, refuse to answer specific questions, stop the interview at any time, or withdraw from the study at a later date.” Carlo et al. (2017, p.51) note that there is “the potential increase in participation rates [due] to the possibility to answer extremely sensitive questions while masked behind a monitor (increases in terms of the perception of anonymity), in the safety of the respondent’s own home, and with the ability to use as much time as necessary to provide complete answers to complex questions.” Interviews took place at secure locations, including the MISA Zambia premises, which I previously used for research and professional networking. The premises offered a safe space for uninterrupted discussion. The University of Zambia premises was another secure and friendly location for conducting interviews. However, some interviews took place in locations that were not planned due to logistical and practical considerations that included interviewee preferences. However, I had to ensure the participants' safety was always guaranteed. I took any necessary remedial measures in cases where this was possible according to the guidelines spelt out in the RA tool.

Limitations of research design and methods

Bryman (2016b, p.9) states, “Time and cost issues always constrain the number of cases we can include in our research, so we almost always have to sample.” This was

the case with this study. Several limitations highlighted earlier relating to time and resource constraints meant I could not embark on a full-fledged data collection. This meant I had to revise the scale of the sampling range and data sources.

Firstly, I could not access video and audio news copies to analyse the broadcast media outputs as initially planned. This was because of the prohibitively expensive cost to access the material as I was to purchase from the two media outlets sampled, *ZNBC* and *MUVI TV*. Alternative sources I sought to access the material, such as YouTube official pages, proved difficult since the copies available were not organised systematically, and several copies were missing or not posted. It would also be difficult to guarantee the authenticity of the broadcast if not uploaded by credible actors. As such, a decision was made early at the field trip planning stage not to pursue this objective further once both limiting factors had been established. This also meant analysis of election stories included only print rather than TV journalism.

Additionally, the safety and security concerns in the field meant I could not speak to all my originally sampled interviewees as some were afraid of possible reprisals or other unspecified threats, especially among respondents from the state-owned media. Further, several security and safety threats occurred, putting me or the interviewee in danger, although I could deploy the safety measures outlined in the RA (appendix ii). Although these factors inhibited this from going as planned, I identified and interviewed alternative replacements recommended by some of the participants.

Research questions

The questions below served as the basis for the formulation of the semi-structured questionnaire used during the interviewing phase of the data collection, as shown in Appendix i.

i. What frames do media mirror during election campaign periods and aftermaths?
ii. How does the policy, regulatory and legislative environment affect journalistic cultures?
iii. How do media ownership structures affect journalistic culture?

iv. What effect do journalistic frames have on ethnicity and culture?
v. How does the current newsroom culture reflect in the news content produced?
vi. What impact does social media have on political debates in mainstream media?
vii. What changes would improve journalism culture and professionalism?

CHAPTER SIX

TRACING JOURNALISM CULTURE AND REPORTING POLITICS IN ZAMBIA; A QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Introduction: precarious professionalism in journalism

This chapter presents, and analyses data collected using an in-depth interview method targeting journalists from across Zambia (Lusaka, Ndola, Kitwe, Livingstone). The chapter draws on journalists' experiences during the different significant social-political periods drawing on the Political Economy theory as the framework of analysis that I outline in Chapter One, as summarised in *Table No.1*. In attributing interview data to different respondents. I use codes representing their professional affiliation but not giving away any vital detail that risks unmasking their identity. In this regard, all the respondents coded with the letter A belongs to Private-Owned media organisations, while all the others coded with B belong to State-Owned media. Thus, any reference to either code should be understood in this operational sense. These periods saw significant developments affecting the legislative or policy environment and political leaders' disposition towards state-media relations. These factors affected the coverage of politics within the Zambian context. It demonstrates the gradual deterioration of the operating environment under successive administrations since 1991 towards a more restrictive and intolerant one, which was prevalent during this study in 2016 under the PF government. The chapter is anchored on the concept of "precarious professionalism," elucidated by Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1836), to examine Zambian journalism within a regional context while also highlighting unique features that distinguish Zambia's precarities in journalism.

Using 'precarious professionalism' as a critical analytical concept, together with other theoretical propositions within journalism culture such as Africanity and Modernity as espoused by Shaw (2009) and (Nyamnjoh, 2005b) discussed earlier in Chapter Three, extends the discourse on professional precariousness in journalism as experienced in the Global South based on Zambian journalism. This helps situate some of the

emergent phenomena of journalism cultures within this study that do not easily fit into known models due to the fluidity within the operating environment.

The chapter is organised in a manner that briefly highlights the significant findings of the thesis from the interview data as follows.

i. The overarching result from the analysis of interviews is that the media environment is deeply polarised as journalists recount their experiences and observations.
ii. Secondly, the thesis establishes the presence of a contingency-based journalism culture because of the harsh and unpredictable operating environment characterised by fear and self-censorship.
iii. Third, this thesis also establishes the presence of odd-collaborative efforts between journalists and other key stakeholders such as ‘rival journalists’ political parties, among others.
iv. Further, the thesis establishes the presence of an ideologisation agenda within sections of the media for social-political causes.
v. This thesis also demonstrates ownership's vital role in influencing journalists' practice in their work.
vi. Because of these conflicts and disparities, the thesis also reveals the emergence of divided newsrooms and, to some extent, media organisations, exacerbating the precariousness of the journalism profession at several levels within Zambia.
vii. Despite all these features and tensions that characterise Zambian journalism, this thesis also reveals the presence of continuous efforts to promote democracy and good governance practices alongside continual striving for professionalism and autonomy among journalists.

Together, these seven headline findings show a comprehensive picture of how the media consider their role within the Zambian context in covering and reporting on politics. Further, these results show a correlation with the emerging journalistic cultural nuances within the profession of journalism. Therefore, the following analyses provide

the fundamental and contextual relationships evident and demonstrate how they all combine to give an awareness of the role of the media in political news within the scope of this study.

Understanding the cultural disposition of journalists in their practice is essential to explain phenomena emerging in media themes present during the 2016 elections in Zambia. As literature shows, journalism culture, itself borne out of unique environmental factors and challenges such as unstable and emerging democracies (Hanitzsch et al., 2011); (see also Branch and Cheeseman (2008); Goldring and Wahman (2016), shapes professional and ethical inclinations of many journalists. Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1838) argue that professional precarity in the Global South is dominated by "constraints such as censorship, clientelism, [which are] pervasive legacies of colonialism", departs from that in the Global North where there are relatively more stable environments. This precarity in the Global South is compounded by state ownership and control of substantial portions of media resulting in mounting political pressure and intimidation. Further, they argue that professional precarities such as job losses among journalists in the Global North are down to "technological advances and industrial changes within journalism to considered norms of fixed roles and permanent employment" (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020, pp.1838-1840). In addition to journalism sectors in the Global South being much smaller and technologically undeveloped, journalists still face precarious working conditions such as poor journalists safety and low remuneration rates.

However, in the Global South, a distinct set of precarities apply. As the case of Nigeria shows in their study, which shows similarities to the Zambian case in many respects, journalists face precarities centred around the question of "ownership and control, [some of which relates to direct "operational control" over journalists], (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020, p.1839). This thesis argues that many journalists either complain about a lack of autonomy amidst editorial interference from owners or base their work-related decisions on the desire to operate according to the dictates or desires of the

owners. Recognising the small journalism market within Zambia, as Hamusokwe (2018, p.8) argues, many journalists are wary of the risk of job losses due to the politically intolerant operating environment and the scarcity of job opportunities. Based on this, many journalists opt to retain employment when faced with tough choices between a livelihood and maintaining professionalism. These choices/decisions extend beyond this binary to include several other considerations in practice, as I will show, due to the volatile nature of the Zambian socio-political context. As I discuss later in this chapter, there are several other conflicts of interest and tensions that journalists must continually contend with in their work.

However, some journalists, especially in the public media, suggest that there is more job security within their sector than is often perceived. Several of the journalists I interviewed sum up their views as one of them puts it, that “it is difficult to fire an employee here in the public media as the process to get rid of one journalist is rigorous and not straight forward.” (Journalist B1(1), 2019). Countering this, though, are unconfirmed rumours of journalists who were relieved due to insubordination as experienced elsewhere, such as in South Africa. Daniels (2020, p.4) has argued that journalists were “fired—for example, on the grounds of insubordination. In some instances, journalists were charged with “insubordination” because they were attempting to be independent and loyal to their professional codes of conduct instead of toeing the ideological line of the owner.” Often these are similar charges or reasons advanced by those who allege journalists’ firings within the public media. Due to the sensitivities surrounding such occurrences, none of those interviewed was willing to put forward names of journalists who had gone through job losses for me to be able to confirm directly and document their own experiences. While this is plausible, it is difficult to state the prevalence of such happenings clearly. However, considering evidence of rewarding loyal journalists with promotions or better jobs, the possibility of punishing journalists viewed as insubordinate is not far-fetched, as discussed in Chapter Four.

These lived experiences also explain why “journalists hardly fulfil their roles to deepen democracy given the precarity of their job situations” (Daniels, 2020, pp.1-2). Evidence from the media outlets analysed in this thesis shows that the “collective effort of newspapers to bring about independence diverges into personal ambitions and interests of their owners, be those financial or political” (Adesoji and Alimi, 2012, p.365). The case of Fred M’membe, owner of the defunct *The Post* newspaper, is instructive on this score as highlighted in Chapters one and Four. As a result, “journalists experience constraints on their editorial independence and professional practices at the same time as confronting pressing financial situations,” Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1839), experiences that are all too common across Zambian journalism Journalists’ interviews reveal that these factors influence journalists’ practice and professional dispositions, and how they cover stories, select, and treat sources, story placement and portrayal (de Bens, Golding and McQuail 2005, pp.2-4). These challenges within Zambia exist in forms such as journalists’ fear of possible retribution from both owners and powerful external forces, especially the politically connected; conformism; and (coerced) loyalty to power centres (Zhu et al., 1997; Griffin, 2010). However, even within the Zambian context, these elements of journalism practice are not homogeneous. This thesis also shows that journalists from both private and state-owned media make efforts to claim their autonomy against several negating factors, including owners and market forces like advertisers, in line with Couldry 's (2005) conclusions. These efforts and practices are discussed in the following sections.

Overarching culture of media polarization

Interview responses illustrate the deep-seated polarisation of Zambian journalism culture during the 2016 election period. For example, a top executive from a public media organisation argues that many journalists in the public media cover incumbent parties favourably to curry favour while covering opposition voices negatively:

> “It is historical and may also be because of the polarization of the country from the political perspective. There is the media for the government or the ruling party and the media for the opposition. I have all the copies of the daily papers on my desk, and you can tell from these copies; we are trying to project ourselves slightly

> differently from the rest, as you will notice we have no political stories as opposed to others in today's publications." (News editor B2(7), 2019).

Another journalist who once worked for *The Post* newspaper illustrates this by sharing views on how media owners would align with the government of the day, usually in exchange for favours and business opportunities:

> "I saw a lot of divides between the various media owners; some aligned with the ruling party in the hope that they would give them business. The ruling party was throwing in a lot of money through various programs in various media houses. Media houses cashed in at the expense of principle. They did not care what information or propaganda they gave the public." (Journalist A2(4), 2019).

A different argument by another respondent who worked for multiple private media organisations reveals the irreconcilable tensions around the need for professionalism while ensuring journalism outfits care for their bottom line. Recollecting from experience, they noted that "[The business factor] has a significant impact. Both owners I have worked for are businesspeople looking to develop their businesses. We do not compromise on good programming. We must make sure we balance the money factor and professionalism." (Journalist A1 (3), 2019). This, however, does not compartmentalise these factors. Practice and journalists' recollections show that business interests often prevail over the professional imperative, no matter how disguised. These experiences, therefore, expose the continuous tensions that exist, which tensions cannot easily be resolved, especially given the small journalism market within the Zambian context.

Another respondent confirms the conflicts existing in the decision-making process where non-professional and non-ethical factors influence polarisation at the ownership level in addition to financial motives. They observe that some owners hold political ambition, which plays a part too.

> "Some media owners align with the ruling party for financial and political benefits. Additionally, they hoped that when/if the PF [retain power], they would continue to be supported, and some would get public sector jobs. Others also had other political

> ambitions. We only came to know about this afterwards. Some of them eventually formed political parties. Little did we know that they would be politicians" (Journalist A2(4), 2019).

These views strengthen the perspective that tensions exist between professional imperatives and personal or business interests among private media owners. Inevitably, this affects the editorial policy and content of outlets, with journalists often asked to follow the owners' agenda. However, while some journalists from both the state media and private media argue that professionalism must supersede all other considerations in the newsroom, most journalists and media owners in the private media argue that the financial interests of media outlets are equally essential and therefore must be factored into the news processing equation. Other views show a third dimension to these tensions: that the ownership structures in some private media include individuals who are also politicians and, therefore, cannot be expected to be non-partisan, let alone oppose their political grouping. In this instance, polarization is embedded within such ownership structures. To buttress this point, the owner of *MUVI Television*, Steve Nyirenda and the former managing editor and part-owner of *The Post,* Fred M'membe, both ran for political office in the 2021 general elections in Zambia as presidential candidates. As one editor relates:

> "The ownership of the newspapers in Zambia, especially private newspapers, you will discover that most of the owners are politicians, and most are in the opposition. Therefore, if that is the ownership structure, with varying higher shareholding of up to 70%, it is in the hands of active politicians. We do not expect those publications to be against the opposition." (News editor B2(7), 2019).

However, this represents an entrenched view that private media are inevitably opposition-aligned and are not expected to cover ruling parties favourably. The assertion treats all private media organisations as homogeneous when they hold different political outlooks in practice. Nevertheless, based on the journalists' comments, owners and editors promote these polarisations (as illustrated in Chapter Seven) for their varied interests, as evident in skewed editorial policies and agendas and which often lead to the spiking of stories and editorial censorship along the way. These

represent professional precarities that journalists must put up with. One respondent recalls:

> “Even as much as you want to be professional as a journalist, there is that intermittent and sometimes regular interference by the media owners. Editors would discuss good stories from us, recommending particularly good stories, but they would say what the owners would say about such a story; they will be on us, just changing the story content. (Journalist A2(4), 2019).

The polarisation is noticeable across both private and public media ownership types. However, the tensions between professionalism and commercial interests are more prevalent within the personal media than the public media, where political pressure and editorial interference in the news process dominate, presenting different precarities. Further, threats to job retention and political interference are more pronounced and directly affect journalists in the state-owned media. However, this study suggests various positions among public media journalists regarding autonomy. While some interviewees indicate that they are independent in their daily operations, only constrained by what they term as systemic limitations and traditions, others expressly show that they are afraid to attempt the slightest show of independence and professionalism as it poses a risk of job loss. These fears and uncertainties among journalists show how precarious the journalism profession is in Zambia.

I, therefore, argue that the actual situation may lie between independence and a lack of autonomy. This study argues that the polarised environment reproduces several idiosyncrasies and typologies of journalism culture within the Zambian context. Among these are a culture of fear, a culture of willing conformism, especially among public media journalists, and (coerced) loyalty to power centres. Others include choosing monetary interests and job security over professionalism, resignation to the status quo and sporadic events of pushback by journalists in their attempts at reclaiming their autonomy. I demonstrate this below by comparing how journalists working under private and public ownership discussed critical issues around professionalism and the journalism industry in interviews.

1.1 Private coverage of governance and corruption

Assessment of *The Post* newspaper's coverage of corruption and governance (detailed in Chapter Seven & Chapter Four) shows it promoted good governance efforts by emphasising democratic values. This coverage closely aligns with the monitorial and facilitative roles of the media as espoused by (Christians et al., 2010) and the radical role of journalism as espoused by Christians (Couldry, 2005 &; Christians et al., 2010), discussed in Chapter Three. The newspaper covered corruption and abuse of power and published editorials denouncing corruption. Chama (2019, pp.26-28) argues, "*The Post* implicated high-profile government officials for making slush funds available for the president to distribute. It exposed others such as Stella Chibanda, explaining how money was being stolen and channelled" elsewhere. Meanwhile, Phiri (2008, p.26) asserts that *The Post,* in typical "muckraking model [exposed corruption] at the Ministry of Lands. *The Post* published an investigative story detailing how the Minister, Gladys Nyirongo, awarded land to herself and associates without following procedures." (See also Larmer and Alastair, 2007; Gondwe, 2014).

The public and private media's coverage of corruption and governance-related stories differed. "*The Post* often ha[d] a head-start on anti-corruption news while *The Times of Zambia* and The *Zambia Daily Mail* tend[ed] to wait for cues from the government before aggressively reporting on corruption stories (Phiri, 2008, p.16). Hanitzsch et al. (2011, pp.275-276) characterise this style, adopted by *The Post,* as "*Interventionism*, [which] reflects the extent to which journalists pursue missions and promote certain values." They are willing to be partisan to achieve their objectives. As Donge (2009, p.83) argues, "*The Post* seldom wrote favourable comments on those in power," In the case of Zambian journalism, evidence shows that public media was used to propagate a partisan agenda similar to Hallin and Mancini (2012, p.106)'s "instrumentalism" in South Africa as detailed in Chapter three and later in Chapter Seven. Mellado, Hellmueller and Donsbach (2016, p.1) argue that these differences in role perception between public and private media journalists "impacts on political and democratic life" of society. The findings suggest that Zambian journalists make efforts to "balance and [achieve] objectivity…[which] are invariably [a] product of a complex combination of political

pressures, negotiations with governments over media policy and access, exchanges among editors" etc. (Griffin 2010, p. 35).

Contingency-based journalism culture

Secondly, this thesis shows the presence of an unpredictable and harsh operating context. Often, journalists must depart from their professional routines to in their work to negotiate around risks and tensions that exist within the broader social-political operating environment, as discussed in Chapter One and Chapter Four. As pointed out, evidence suggests that democracy in Zambia is still fragile and therefore presents difficulties in predicting operating environment trends. This is because laws have often been abused to target dissenting or opposing voices, where the private media is stereotypically lumped together. To manage their work within such an unpredictable environment, journalists often resort to contingent decisions that work around these potential pitfalls, even as they try to uphold professionalism. Therefore, this thesis extends scholarly discourse beyond the identified contingencies such "as lack of time and resources, interfere with journalists' democratic intentions" Wolfgang, Vos and Kelling (2019, p.1992) by examining other contingencies that Zambian journalists use positively to help them manage their work professionally under challenging conditions. Through journalists' experiences, I show below some of the factors that cause these contingent measures, a practice that has been routinised over time. The analyses also show that this contingency-based-decision making is a journalistic culture emerging within Zambian journalism.

1.1 The invisible hand: fear, coercive loyalty, and censorship in the newsroom

The polarised environment promoted by the owners and implemented by editors has meant journalists have had to operate in a nearly binary worldview. However, the practice goes beyond this to include several alternative perspectives. This promoted a culture of fear, conformism, and contingency among journalists as a coping mechanism. Although this is more present within public media, there is unanimity among journalists interviewed from both public and private media that such trends exist in both sectors.

One interviewee having experience within the public media (Journalist B2 (6), 2019) observed that.

> “When you authored a story about the opposition, they were never published. However, even when the [ruling party] spoke, they would be covered even when insulting the opposition parties. We, however, would cover political meetings for the opposition, and we were always told to focus on the negatives. Even when covering an opposition party, you engage in self-censorship; you know that you had to choose what had a chance to be published, but most often, stories would get spiked. They would even guide us on what to focus on, usually to defuse negative perceptions about the ruling party. These would usually be verbal instructions. There is fear of the 'unknown' in the public media. People fear losing jobs when you author an article which may be against the ruling party. Being a public media organisation, we are different from the private. As I said, we need to have autonomy and independence. Some time back, there was a talk that if we offload shares on the stock exchange and have truly public ownership, this fear of the unknown might go [away]. People are afraid because the government still has the power to make decisions about our work. No one controls us, but there is this fear that since we are a public media, we are answerable to many things.”

This reveals several conflicts and tensions within the newsroom. The journalists mention that they have no direct control over their work, citing ‘verbal’ instructions. Their comments suggest that journalists have been conditioned to think and act in ways that are in keeping with expected in-house behaviour, something Hanitzsch et al. (2011, p.274) describe as “journalists’ professional role conceptions, ethical views, editorial procedures and socialization processes”.

However, the same journalist cautions that things may change as editors encourage journalists to cover opposition political parties without fear or favour. This coexists alongside the ingrained culture within Zambian public media management structures of pervasive autocratic-era control measures over journalists (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021). The respondent (Journalist B2 (6), 2019) states:

> There is change coming now. But as I said, we would like to cover the opposition, but we do not know their activities since they do not let us in. Look at this about a press briefing for Hakainde Hichilema (showing the researcher a message on her mobile phone). This is our newspaper WhatsApp group. The boss posted this, and our news editor wrote, *"This must be covered at all costs; there must be no*

> *excuses"*. There is a lot of pressure on the public media to cover the opposition. I remember when Mr Chipampe was the MD, there was a question about whether an invisible hand controlled the newsrooms. He stated that they do not tell these reporters what to write. They do self-censorship based on the fear of the unknown.

In interviews with other respondents on whether they ever challenged the dominant culture within their organisations that breeds this 'unfounded' fear within the public, their response captures poignantly what this fear is about and what feeds it:

> I cannot even try that (challenge authority). Because we are always thinking if I try, where will I go? My kids are still small. (*Long emotional laugh and then long silence…*) That is the greatest fear that most of us have. In Zambia, if you are privileged to work for *ZNBC*, the national broadcaster, you have made it big in your journalism career. This is because *ZNBC* does not only pay well, but even the exposure, the training, and the C.V. become rich. There is this fear of the unknown. We fail to assess the system to see how much they can tolerate. There is a lot of self-censorship. Sometimes this self-censorship makes us fail to do jobs that are possible. Most of the time, we keep to our lane. Everyone sticks to their lanes. (Journalist B1 (2), 2019)

As Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020) argue, journalists are faced with these precarious work-related situations that do not only require them to make decisions on their professionalism but also decisions that relate to their personal lives with far-reaching implications. This thesis explores these precarities of journalists within their professional environments, which shows that this extends to journalists' personal lives, which depend on continued employment.

Some interview assertions are seen as contestable by other interviewees. This amplifies the differences in perceptions of roles and operational environments among journalists working within the same sector, let alone the same media organisation. Another respondent from another public media outlet dismissed the fear as a figment of imaginations by individual journalists:

> I will give you an example of reportedly fired people, such as Inutu Himanje, Cleopatra Himambo, and Charles Mucholo. Some of these were transfers. It was a pure miscommunication, and those journalists continued to work within *ZNBC*. It is difficult to fire someone at *ZNBC*. I do not think even the threats of losing a job impact the practice of journalists. As I said, it is personal fear. I do not know where this personal fear comes from. It takes a long to fire us, except for those directors

> who are on contract. The disciplinary process is so thorough and complicated, and if you are fired, you will go with your full benefits. (Journalist B1 (1), 2019)

This journalist points to the organisational structure within the public media sector as one element that insulates journalists from intimidation, as elaborated by the previous response from another respondent. This questions whether this fear is real or perceived and why some journalists within the public media choose to espouse conformism and discard objectivity and professionalism willingly. As another respondent noted,

> I always tell those in the opposition that we are a government newspaper. However, where an opposition official raises a policy matter, which is easy to write and publish in a balanced manner... However, being government owned, we are supposed to churn out government policy to the public and get feedback. As a newspaper, especially towards the election, not just stories but even opinions, we supported the Patriotic Front and Edgar Lungu, the incumbent president of Zambia. I am unaware of the basis for that decision as I am not privy to the process. All I know is that the Managing Editor and the Deputy Managing editor decide. (Journalist B2 (1), 2019)

It shows how divergent views exist and illustrates the different outcomes of the contingent decisions that individual journalists make when tensions between professionalism and other competing factors arise in their course of work. This creates broad analyses of the trends challenging to grasp but more so the complexity of the operating environment in fragile democracies (Branch and Cheeseman, 2008; Goldring and Wahman, 2016) and, therefore, the fragility of journalistic environments. Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020, p.1836) write of “precarious professionalism based in fragile professionalism, ingrained in-job instability as well as challenges to both their professional and personal selves”, which is highly relevant to the Zambian context.

The same respondent notes that political sources often occupy dual positions as public officers as well as political operatives:

> However, the ruling party are covered in two aspects: as aspiring candidates as well as being in government, such as the Republican president. Therefore, you will notice that the president will always be on the front pages while opposition political party candidates may be on the inner pages. This is because the president or the ruling party officials wear two hats, as a ruling party and government functionaries.

> Another issue is that it is easier to travel with them when campaigns begin because the PF usually has a media budget to carry journalists. Most media houses and journalists do not have a budget for election coverage, especially to cover events outside town. The PF has always had a budget of twelve journalists. That is how it worked in 2016." (Journalist B2 (1), 2019)

These comments reveal several interesting issues that influenced how public media covered the 2016 elections. First, the belief among journalists in the public media that they were obligated to cover the ruling party out of duty and loyalty. This respondent's justification was that the state employs them and, therefore, "you cannot bite the finger that feeds you" (Journalist B2 (6), 2019). Secondly, financial incentives are another factor that journalists consider when choosing which politicians to cover. A third factor is a conflating of the roles of the politicians when treating them as sources. The respondent shows this with the "two hats" analogy.

1.2 Fear of the visible, party cadres and state security agents

Another form of fear experienced by journalists from the private sector comes from state surrogates such as party cadres or even state security agencies and agents. Like the reaction to the invisible hand above, journalists used the contingency-based-decision making rule to navigate these identifiable threats to their professional work. According to some respondents, this fear is sanctioned by the top political leadership, in this case, the Republican president, Edgar Lungu. However, they did not supply direct evidence for the claims. They note that.

> "[President] Lungu was very vicious at the time, making sure he used state machinery viciously to deny the opposition any opportunity and space to market themselves to the electorates, such that we saw a lot of brutality to the opposition including journalists, especially us who were not aligned with the ruling political party, many of our colleagues were brutalized by supporters of the ruling party." (Journalist A2(4), 2019).

This connection to the president by some respondents was made because he barely condemned the attacks against opposition parties and journalists. One incident in the southern city of Livingstone where a journalist was harassed by one of the known cadres illustrated this point, as well as showing that these cases of harassment and

attacks against journalists do not only come from ruling party cadres but also from opposition parties:

> "Those always get nasty. In Livingstone, Max Chongu, the PF die-hard cadre, airlifted me and harassed me during the 2016 elections. He was unhappy with me, so he pounced on me. He just told me we do not want *MUVI TV* here. We were waiting for President Edgar Lungu, the PF [presidential] candidate, at the airport. I was forced to leave the place. It was not a nice situation. I was saved by his fellow PF members, who intervened and brought a taxi that whisked me away. I have also had death threats from the opposition. One time I was reporting on the mayor who had allegedly conspired with some council officials to allocate themselves some plots. Most of the time, I would receive calls, death threats, but I stood my ground. It does instil fear in you." (Journalist A1 (2), 2019)

Another respondent, a senior editor in a public media outlet, expressed worry that dislikes from politicians towards journalists sometimes puts them in danger:

> "They have had leaders like the Mazabuka MP, Garry Nkombo, who, immediately he hears *Times of Zambia*, he is livid. The way they have been coming out has not been encouraging. At one time, even reporters were afraid to cover their events because they feared for their lives from cadres and political violence against journalists." (News Editor B2 (2), 2019)

As journalists recollect, these events have increased since the early 2010s and have spread in several parts of the country. Sometimes even state security agencies either ignore the abuses or participate in them, as respondents recount:

> "Political news reporting will be far better when politicians stop using state agencies such as the Police, [Drug Enforcement Commission] DEC, [Zambia Revenue Authority] ZRA to target certain individuals. Because currently, if you report on an individual, a good report, the next day, the police are sent to search your house. That is intimidation. Politicians have not learnt that they will not always be incumbent; tomorrow, they will not be there." (Journalist A1 (2), 2019)

Another respondent narrates their ordeal at the hands of state security agents, one of the more extreme experiences for journalists covering political news events in Zambia.

> "In 2011, I was kidnapped by cadres belonging to the PF. They brutalized me. However, the police could not give me protection despite alerting them that I was risking my safety. They were carrying pangas and other weapons. At the radio station, they forced me to go live on air to retract and reverse my earlier report. I could not refuse as they had already started beating other colleagues and were threatening to take me in the bush and do anything to me. I ended up reversing whatever I had said earlier to save my life. That was the worst experience for me.

> When I covered the 2015 elections while working for *MUVI TV*, I was attacked a few times by PF cadres again. They accused me of filming clips promoting Hakainde Hichilema, the biggest opposition party leader. I ended up being the target of the cadres and was beaten." (Journalist A1(3), 2019)

This shows the historical nature and the growing intensity of these attacks against journalists. The journalist narrates similar episodes from 2016, this time directly involving the police:

> 2016 there were more brutal attacks while I was managing *MUVI TV's* northern region, based in Kasama, where I was a news editor. During that time, Hakainde Hichilema, the UPND party president, visited Kasama to conduct campaigns. He had paid for a radio programme at Radio Mano in Kasama. Over two hundred police officers just came and surrounded the radio station. When I reached the radio station, I found the police stopping everyone. I remained there to get a clip of what was happening even when I knew things would worsen. The police warned me, saying, *"This is not BBC, and if you think you want to promote yourself by reporting this to make headlines, you will bring trouble to yourself."* We argued until they dared me to film them and see what would happen. I went ahead to film them to see what would happen. They bundled me in their vehicle, beat me up, grabbed my camera, deleted all the footage, and took me to Kasama central police station. They detained me for two hours and shortly released me since they realised I had committed no offence and only wanted to stop me from covering the illegalities they were engaged in at the radio station. This was another terrible experience that I went through." (Journalist A1(3), 2019)

Under extreme pressure, journalists strive for autonomy and professionalism, with evidence showing some journalists resisting control while others are readier to oblige politicians and their agendas.

1.3 Self-censorship and job security: pervasive culture for Zambian journalists

Because of the fear of harassment that journalists and media houses face, a culture of self-censorship has evolved, a culture that is in keeping with trends elsewhere, such as in Nigeria (Aimufua, 2007, pp.2-6) and Tanzania (Ramaprasad, 2001). Our recently published paper argues that these pervasive autocratic tendencies have made it hard for journalists to freely engage in their work even in the face of political pronouncements of a free media (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021, pp.6-10). Evidence also shows that even when there is no direct interference by top officials from the

government, journalists censor themselves to avoid sanctions due to many years of intimidation, harassment, and spiking of ‘undesirable stories’ by editors.

Coupled with a small media industry and market (Hamusokwe, 2015, pp.205-206) and scarcity of good jobs in the media (Daniels, 2020, pp.4, 8), many journalists make deliberate decisions to protect and retain their jobs by ceding their professional ethics. The situation is heightened when dealing with political news, especially elections, where press freedom and editorial independence are severely curtailed during intensified political competition. These experiences align with what other scholars have written about the conflicted views of journalists’ roles (see Cohen, 2015; Mellado, Hellmueller and Donsbach, 2016). However, in the case of Zambia, heightened political contestation imperils press freedom and has other effects on the culture of journalism, as detailed here.

In Chapter Three, I argue that as Griffin (2010, p.35) argues, journalistic cultures are a “product of a complex combination of political pressures, negotiations with governments over media policy and access, exchanges among editors”. However, Zambian journalists’ experiences can be compared with Curry and Curry's argument (1990, p.33) that a situation existed in communist Poland for journalists where “amidst the official state ideology that conceived the media as instruments of the Party,” Polish journalists resisted co-option, and instead forged a resilient professional culture despite the “prevalence of censorship, state ownership of the media and political repression.” In contrast, journalists in Zambia operate in a semi-democratic state with a greater level of press freedom than was the case in communist Poland. As such, a more progressive journalistic culture might be considered possible within Zambian journalism than the case is currently.

In practice, however, as Branch and Cheeseman (2008) and Goldring and Wahman (2016) argue, Zambia is a less democratically liberal state than it might appear on the

surface, with a fragile democratic culture that has lasted well into three decades since democracy was reinstituted in the early 1990s. The manifestation of similar state-media relations as in the autocratic Kaunda era makes for an interesting and curious result. This study, therefore, argues that despite theory and literature situating trends in defined classical political contexts such as liberal democracy and free press, evidence suggests that Zambia's case is best characterised as a totalitarian democracy (Talmon 1952), which is visible elsewhere within the region such as in Zimbabwe. This new knowledge and insight into the operating environment, therefore, contribute to a deepening understanding of how the media fares in similar political systems and environments/contexts that are geographically and culturally disparate.

What is clear here is that conditions that exist in a democracy in one part of the world cannot easily be extrapolated to other geographical and social-cultural contexts. Despite these disparities in circumstances and conditions, Splichal and Sparks' work (1994, p.79) notes "a striking similarity in the desire for independence and autonomy" among journalists with very few exceptions (see Chapter Two). Similarly, Deuze (2005, pp.446-447) discusses the phenomenon of ''shared occupational ideology among news workers." Just as Curry and Curry (1990, p.41) argue that (Communist) Polish journalists had a "strong sense of distinct identity and a distinct role in society, and resisted intrusions of outsiders into journalistic work," so Zambian journalists continue to resist similar pressures that are largely politically and market-driven inhibiting their autonomy. Despite increasingly intolerant conditions, journalists show resilience as they try to retain their professionalism through innovative ways, such as data journalism that circumvent existing restrictions (Chama 2020, pp.26-28). This study, therefore, buttresses this key observation, arguing that this is a distinctive element of Zambian journalistic culture, which supports some aspects of a free press and autonomy among journalists while continuing to entrench support for the democratic experiment.

In parallel with Matthews and Onyemaobi (2020)'s argument about Nigerian journalism and journalists, Zambian journalists have been increasingly required to make decisions

about their professionalism and risk themselves and the people in their lives. Journalists, therefore, worry about other repercussions of their decisions beyond the professional and ethical ones. Chama (2019, p.5) writes, “In many African countries, the fear of being put in jail, the threat of expensive libel suits, the risk of the licence being revoked, and even the loss of advertising revenue and other financial resources, impose a burden on journalists and their newspapers, encouraging a culture of silence.” I argue that personal attacks and threats to family members of journalists compound this precariousness among Zambian journalists Further, the study shows that journalists devise coping mechanisms against challenges to their professional work, which I discuss later in the chapter. Thus, this research extends and confirms the risky nature of the journalism profession in Zambia and aims, like Matthews and Onyemaobi's (2020, p.1848) work, to “uncover the contextual factors that shape journalists’ lived experiences in the Global South and emerging democracies.” In the Zambian case, a hugely significant factor is the widespread, high frequency and intense nature of the harassment directed towards journalists.

The peculiarities of three tiered-collaborative cultures by journalists

A novel feature of Zambian journalists’ resilience was the presence of collaborative efforts that journalists practised to either overcome censorship or for their safety. As the journalists recounted during interviews, these efforts were distinctive and emerged for the first time during this study. Examining this feature adds a new perspective to understanding journalism practice and culture within the Zambian context and broadly adds to the literature on journalism culture. Graves and Konieczna (2015, p.1967) argue that although “this collaborative trend is difficult to quantify, journalism includes many forms of cooperation among news organizations by which rival news outlets work together to produce or distribute news”. This lays out a historical exposition of collaboration as a practice among journalists and media firms in the US and Western Europe, Høiby (2020, p.79) discusses collaborative efforts in the Philippines between local and non-local journalists, arguing that “local journalists try to get the big picture, while the national and other foreign journalists often depend on specific events and official sources.” It is interesting to observe long term whether the collaborative culture

within Zambian journalism evolves and becomes entrenched to the level of organisational collaboration as practised elsewhere, (Graves and Konieczna, 2015). Collaboration can take a variety of forms, as I will show.

Therefore, this third key finding of this study shows the presence of peculiar collaborations among journalists and other stakeholders at various levels. From interviews, both journalists were keen to utilize these collaborations whenever they were assigned to cover what they perceived as hostile groups' sources, especially political meetings such as campaign rallies. To illustrate, most State-Owned media journalists were keen to collaborate with their colleagues from the Private-Owned media if the political forum covered involved opposition groups. On the other hand, reporters from the Private-Owned press were keen to collaborate with their colleagues from the State-Owned media whenever they covered ruling party-political meetings such as campaign rallies. This includes collaborations between journalists and various political players. One group of politicians usually belong to the ruling party and collaborate with private media journalists, usually overtly, to ask for favourable coverage in exchange for favours, incentives, job security, and in some instances, promotions to better-paying jobs within and outside of journalism. The second group of political stakeholders are those in the opposition who collaborate with State-Owned media journalists to ensure their safety while covering their activities and promising favours if they gain political power and form government.

Three types of collaboration can be identified, with the first being between journalists and politicians of different affiliations. The second type of collaboration is between and among journalists from 'rival media outlets', which is often discreet. As journalists explained during interviews, this is done to avoid any suspicions against themselves or their colleagues by the prying eyes of the owners or editors. The third type of collaboration, which also occurs under the radar, is collaborations between journalists and state operatives such as security agents to help journalists in precarious situations

such as immediate dangers or for long-term personal security and safety measures. Journalist (A1(3),2019) narrates:

> Sometimes we protect one another as journalists in the field. We had an experience in Chilanga where journalists moved in one vehicle from state-owned and private media. Political cadres just came to our car and asked all the journalists to show their party symbol. They wore civil clothes, and it was hard to know what party they belonged to. We do not trust any cadre in the field. We must make sure that we stay safe and secure out there.

Journalists' collaborative efforts with fellow professionals ensure they manoeuvre and negotiate their way around the restrictions and power structures that control their work. Respondents recounted experiences where they would swap stories from two utterly dissimilar events in context and content, which meant their stories would not likely be published in their respective media houses. These journalists created cahoots where they would assign each other to cover events where the other would find it hard or impossible to be granted access to cover the story. Afterwards, journalists exchanged notes or voice recordings from the two events, adopted the story as though it were their own, and published it in their outlets. One interviewee recounts,

> Some reporters do not like covering opposition political party events because they know their story will not be carried in the newspaper anyway. Sometimes, a supervisor might not want to bring an opposition story. After all, they are worried it may tarnish their name with the ruling party. I also had a friend in the private media working for *The Post*. So, we hatched a plan always to swap notes to cover the two camps and be able to publish truthful versions of the events. (Journalist B2 (1), 2019).

Other instances demonstrate how journalists collaborate, as one notes, "Yes, we do collaborate, especially when it comes to court stories; if I miss a story, I will still get it from a colleague in the private media." (Journalist B1 (1), 2019) while others had protected each other's safety, as when one journalist "had to switch vehicles and jump

into a colleague's vehicle from the private media for my safety." (Journalist B1 (2), 2019). As earlier argued, in 1.2 above, other respondents relate how these collaborations help them avoid attacks against them. Illustrative of this factor, one respondent (Journalist (A1(3),2019) recollects, as above, these efforts in the field that minimise potential risks of attacks while they are covering political campaign events, especially during election campaign periods.

One context for this collaboration between journalists and political parties is when they are embedded with the party to cover their activities in communities or political campaign events. Often, political parties that request coverage from these journalists are 'friendly forces'- a term used to describe how the dynamics play out between political parties and media outlets and journalists. Due to limited resources within media outlets, sometimes journalists have accepted invitations to embed with a given political party, much like journalists who embed with armies in war situations (McNair,2011, pp.202-203), to extensively cover their mobilisation activities usually in far, hard-to-reach places. However, this does not preclude journalists' ability to cover any other newsworthy activities within the area if they occur while there. As a condition for this, political parties commit to paying the journalists' expenses while out in the field and guaranteeing their safety from attacks from rival political groupings operating within the area.

Although this practice raises ethical issues of its own such as "conflicts of interest [where], journalists receive freebies that improperly [influence] what and how they report" (Froneman and Swanepoel (2004, p.27), this study's primary concern is to explore its role in ensuring the safety of journalists in a precarious environment such as Zambia. According to one interviewee, this is a decision taken in advance as part of the risk and security assessment before any scheduled tours of duty. They narrate:

> We plan for our safety to evade dangerous situations. A key factor is the issue of movements. Usually, political parties will not allow you to go using your car. They

> want you to be embedded within the camp and assume you are much safer with their protection." (Journalist A1 (3), 2019).

However, even then, the volatile nature of the hosting political party cadres can still threaten the safety of journalists. One respondent recollects an incident where they were invited to exclusively cover a procession that unfortunately did not go according to plan:

> I have been beaten before by cadres at Inter-city even after they called me. At the time, Commander Ino (Innocent Kalimanshi) called me … The security people at the mall saw me with cameras and became suspicious. I told one of them to be ready as cadres were coming to strike at the mall. I said this as a responsible citizen. The security officers called the police, who came and hid inside the mall. When the cadres arrived, a fight ensued between the police and the cadres. I started filming the altercation and witnessed several injuries to both police and cadres, with two cadres ending up being arrested and put in custody. I saw Ino on the phone and later noticed the tone had changed. Ino told me the story must not run and asked me to delete the footage. I told them I could not do that as I had already told my boss. They roughed me up, got my camera, deleted all the footage, and slapped me. Ino later apologized for what had happened, saying it was because I did not cooperate. The following day we only aired a dry story. These experiences have taught me to be careful. (Journalist A1 (3), 2019).

These journalists' experiences show how precarious situations sometimes require second-by-second contingent decision-making to avoid danger. These also demonstrate how on a broader scale, journalists make decisions based not only on conflicts of financial or other interests but also on their physical safety and security, a feature that is perhaps unique in the sense of a peaceful yet precarious operating environment, combining stability and inertia with these forms of precarity and danger.

Instances of the third type of collaboration, often discreetly done, involve journalists and government agents, usually those that are media-friendly. Journalists protect their identities and are grateful for the support they offer. An illustrative example relates to a journalist working through a highly precarious political environment fraught with risks and threats to the family:

> In 2016 when *The Post* was no longer in good books with the ruling PF, covering them was difficult. We had to stay in the background or give the recorder to someone to record for us and then use the content later for stories. However, we would not be visible, and that is how guerrilla journalism came into play. We authored good investigative stories. Even when President Lungu collapsed at Heroes Stadium, our cameraman was arrested, and his card was wiped clean of everything about the occurrence. We, however, still found a way of getting the pictures. Because *The Post* existed for over 25 years, within and outside government, some would still agree with us even when people do not agree with us." (Journalist A2 (1), 2019).

This respondent further discusses these collaborative efforts, "I remember one police commanding officer told me. "…, you drive a Mark II …; we know where you stay, your friends and where you drink from, your wife and where she works. We know everything about you. But I am telling you this confidently: be careful because you are being trailed; people follow you everywhere you go." (Journalist A2 (1), 2019).

These representations all demonstrate the fragile nature of the operating environment for Zambian journalists and the difficulties and dangers of journalism practice. However, this precarity reveals how journalists negotiate, navigate, and answer to the challenges "to their professional selves as well as personal selves" (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020, pp.1844-1847). While these authors highlight the challenges to professional journalism in Nigeria, in Zambian, these challenges extend further to getting good stories using unorthodox means yet permissible and, to an extent, justifiable under challenging circumstances.

Social-political ideological reorientation: *The Post* newspaper

The fourth key finding is using journalism as a platform to advocate for specific social-political ideology. The case of *The Post* offers valuable insights in this regard. Bar the post-colonial state media in the region such as Ghana and Tanzania (discussed in Chapters Two and Three), modern journalism has not been known to propagate an ideology in the forceful way that *The Post* did, especially in the latter half of its publishing life. Some former *Post* journalists indicated they were ideologically

predisposed to view their work as part of their contribution to the owner's belief in socialism and beyond journalism. This observation adds new knowledge and a fresh dimension which builds on work such as Chama's (2014) and the existing understanding of *The Post.*

Drawing upon Pedelty's work, Fordred (1999, p.vi) suggests that "the ideology of objectivity encourages an approach to people and events that a journalist eliminate any feelings of personal commitment to the people and events she or he writes about." The journalists, however, note that the owners did not "force you to be a socialist, but you were expected to embrace socialism and its values." (Journalist A2 (2), 2019). Evidence showed that The Post's ownership structures influenced the journalists, which aligned their output towards a socialist political ideology.

> Ownership has a role to play. However, what matters is the extent to which that role influences decisions. *The Post* where I worked last has an inbuilt belief; you, in a way, must know what the owner stands for. That person's personality creeps into you as a journalist. This makes you conscious of the direction, agenda, and editorial policy that the owners want. This makes you, on your own, start building your line because you want to see your by-lines in the newspaper. (Journalist A2 (2), 2019)

The paper partly actualised its mission of promoting socialist-oriented politics when it helped usher in the Patriotic-Front government in 2011 through sustained positive coverage and promotion of the party's political agenda, as noted by Chama (2014) and discussed in Chapter Four. Journalist (A2 (2), 2019) continues to explain.

> *The Post* took an editorial position to say we would support the then opposition political party, the PF under Michael Sata, against the MMD. The PF constitution has clauses, aspects of fighting class oppression and so on, and socialism to an extent. That is what drove *The Post* in that direction that the Zambian masses must decide their political fate.

The Post described its role in the democratic life of Zambia thus; "Democracy: to question the policies and actions of authorities who wield or aspire to wield power over

the lives of ordinary people and protect democracy and fundamental rights through campaigning, investigations, reporting, and analysis." (Chama, 2014, pp.63-64)

The overarching characterisation of *The Post* by the journalists I interviewed was that it was more than a mere newspaper but viewed itself as an integral part of the social-political mosaic of Zambia. The respondent explains:

> "People should understand that *The Post* came as a political organization. It came because of the wind of change that occurred [during the early 1990s]. *The Post* could not remove itself from the politics that put it in existence. That was the decision that was made, and it was in line with the mission statement of *The Post,* which said it was going to contribute to democracy that was emerging in Zambia." (Journalist A2(2), 2019).

These remarks confirm scholarly observations that the newspaper saw itself as a political organisation. However, the nature and implications of that political identity shed new light on this aspect of Zambian journalism culture. For instance, one respondent recollects that when they were hired, they

> "… underwent a six-month orientation process to make me understand the newspaper's ideology and operations. *The Post* had its ideology. I became a trainee despite being a seasoned journalist. In the six months, I tried to understand the newspaper and the managing editor, Fred M'membe's personality and genesis. As a *Post* journalist, you had to understand that it had a soft spot for socialism since the managing editor [was] a socialist. Therefore, socialism was part of the overall agenda of the establishment. They did not force you to be a socialist, but you were expected to embrace socialism and its values." notes respondent (Journalist/ Chief reporter A2(1), 2019).

However, another respondent had a different perspective on what this political identity and ideological approach meant for the newspaper. A veteran journalist and trainer who had a long association with the newspaper from 1992 to 2014 in various formal and informal roles, Edem Djokotoe, insisting that he be quoted on the record, stated:

> "I have always known that Fred (M'membe, part owner and former Managing Editor of *The Post*) has had these socialist pretensions, which I did not buy. You cannot live like a capitalist and profess to be a socialist. Ideologically you must be true to yourself. *The Post* started sending news editors and senior reporters to Cuba and Venezuela. There was a lot of emphasis on Castro and Hugo Chavez.

> Fred himself went on holiday to Cuba. But there was never at the time an inclination to align with the socialist ideals for the newspaper itself." (Journalist and Trainer C (4), 2019)

He further noted that he only lasted as lead trainer for journalist recruits because, according to him, "That is why I could not stay. I took the challenge to train graduates, but there were systematic challenges. Fred's socialist bull*** is just that, Bovine excreta. I do not believe even he believes it. There was no socialism from me. I only heard of Fred's stuff and saw some of the outcomes" (Journalist and Trainer C (4), 2019). He said socialist ideologisation only emerged after 2005 when he left. He adds, describing a disagreement about the relevance of the in-house training of journalist recruits and their place in the news organisation.

> "The students said we do not know whether we are doing the right or wrong because those weekends when we go into the newsroom to work, we are told that the things that Edem and Collin are teaching you cannot work here because *The Post* is a political paper. So, I had to call Amos, the news editor, to come in and address this issue. I told him that we cannot have a situation where we are training with the best intentions, and behind our backs, you are saying that the things we are teaching are irrelevant because things here work differently. After all, *The Post* is a political paper. So, the discussion got quite heated as we could not agree. I asked him to leave. As he was leaving, he said, "In any case, I am the one who decides what goes and what does not pass in the newspaper. Let me be clear that *The Post* is a political paper." (Journalist and Trainer C (4), 2019)

These excerpts corroborate what the other interviewees from *The Post* stated. The newspaper had its in-house training, although from the recollections of the lead trainer – Edem Djokotoe, this covered basic news writing, feature writing and other professional training and had nothing to do with any specific political ideology.

> "I was contracted for two years as the training editor, from 2003 to 2005. This was at the time. *The Post* did not think much of the quality of graduates coming out of college. Whenever they recruited, they felt the students were not cut out for the newspaper business. The paper decided they were going to teach them on the job. They would intellectualise them at least, which involved getting university graduates from different fields to train as reporters. The focus was on news idea identification, feature writing, news writing and reporting." (Journalist and Trainer C (4), 2019)

Interview responses on the political identity of *The Post* - or lack of it, as some respondents have attested to here – show diverse views. Some believed its overt political stance propelled it to prominence within the media sector but also caused its fall. As one of the respondents noted, "*The Post* took an editorial position to support the then opposition political party, the PF under Michael Sata, against the MMD. The working-class people believed in the messages of the PF after they were frustrated with the MMD. Actions had to be taken that led to *The Post's* closure. It was it was political" (Journalist A2(2), 2019). In becoming so overly political, the *Post* also made itself vulnerable to the ebb and flow of party-political success. Yet interview responses show that the story of *The Post* newspaper is complex, with no homogenous view of its journalistic culture, even from former staff.

Although *The Post's* ideological disposition and appropriation was a contested area among respondents, those that viewed this as embedded within the newspaper saw themselves as agents for ideological education, awareness, and transformation within the political arena. The basis for this trajectory or cultural orientation was twofold, according to anecdotal evidence from former journalists; the first is that the newspaper was to be part of a grand political effort once Fred M'membe had taken over the majority shareholder position between 1993 and 1994. As if to emphasise this fact, the newspaper had the only international bureau and foreign-based reporter stationed in Havana, in socialist Cuba, for much of its life until it was closed in June 2016, while another one was opened in Zimbabwe which was an effort to prop up his credentials as a socialist (Journalist and Trainer C (4), 2021). Further evidence that suggests the paper's overt ideological appropriation tactic was part of a broader strategy to transform the political system is captured by another respondent (Journalist A2(2), 2019) who notes, "in the PF constitution, there are clauses, aspects of fighting class oppression and socialism to an extent. That is what drove *The Post* in that direction," i.e., to back Sata and the PF during the 2011 elections. There is a widely held view that Sata's Patriotic Front allied with *The Post's* leadership after having had a frosty relationship previously. Many believe this helped propel the opposition PF to power in 2011, as I demonstrated earlier. Journalist A2(2), 2019, recounts, "*The Post* took an editorial

position to support the then opposition political party, the PF under Michael Sata, against the MMD."

My analysis of articles from *The Post* in Chapter Seven illuminates the presence of this socialist agenda, which seeks to replace capitalist values of individualism with collectivism and a utopian socialist approach aimed at expanding individual freedoms, as Mosco (2009) argues *(*see Chapter Two). *The Post* is seen to present political processes in Zambia through a socialist lens of class struggle. Although Mano argues that "social-political re-orientation becomes a thoroughly ideological repositioning of recruits in the norms of the profession according to media proprietors' policies and politics" (Mano, 2005, p.56), the process of this re-orientation, as described in *The Post* for its recruits went beyond familiarization of the norms of the profession to include a specific social-political ideology.

The discussion about *The Post's* ideological position adds a new perspective to how scholars view journalism models and practices within Zambia. This is a new dimension to research, especially within the Zambian context and in the region, which responds to Shaw's call (2009, p.507) "for more research taking into consideration various local conditions and experiences informed by African journalism models" which I discuss extensively in Chapter Three. According to one interviewee, the original concept of recruiting, re-educating, and intellectualisation was initially born out of an identified gap in which new college journalism graduates lacked the skills to integrate into the organisation quickly. However, the owners, especially the managing editor, Fred M'membe, incorporated socialist ideology into the curriculum for political reasons. Fordred (1999, p.15) contends that "the professional ideology of journalism remains founded on the goals of objectivity and neutrality while cultural politics are elusive, implicit and difficult to articulate." Therefore, the peculiar pursuit of this ideological agenda by M'membe was strange but provided insight into the newspaper's intentions. Interestingly, M'membe went on to contest the 2021 Zambian election on the Socialist Party ticket, which confirms earlier submissions by former employees that the newspaper and the managing editor used the newspaper as a vehicle to deliver this

political agenda. Hamusokwe (2015, p.85) notes that “besides the profit motive, private newspaper owners usually serve personal interests and ideological viewpoint”.

Nevertheless, The Post's ideologization of staff, content and trajectory was an exception in the industry rather than the rule. Other outlets, from the private and public sectors, reluctantly ventured into ideological views from the empirical evidence other than superficially reflecting similar stances with the newspaper on pertinent causes that resonated with prevailing public sentiment at the time. The *Post*’s culture was not homogenously reflected across the industry; it did, however, act as an exemplar that influenced the industry, and its political discourses, more broadly. It set the benchmark, in many respects, of what news was and was not, even for the public-owned and traditionally ruling outlets such as *Times of Zambia*, *Zambia Daily Mail* and *ZNBC*. In many cases, *The Post* set the agenda of topical issues, and the public media would build stories to react to the paper. Much coverage and stories about the newspaper's works often found their way into the state-owned media. For instance, headlines and stories such as “IPI report on *The Post* disappoints government” (*Times of Zambia*, 30 July 2016) were carried. This was a headline in the state-owned *Times of Zambia,* whose main thrust was to dismiss the International Press Institute’s report on the circumstances surrounding the closure of *The Post* newspaper on tax-related charges.

Ownership’s influence on journalists’ practice

A key element that this thesis has examined is the influence that ownership has on the news outlet’s editorial policy and practice. Journalists interviewed refer to terms such as ‘system’ or ‘unknown’ fears about parameters implicitly or explicitly drawn by the owners, whether the outlet is privately or publicly owned. Interviewees spoke of the directives or known agendas of the owners having considerable influence on their practice, to the point of micromanaging the entire news production process. One journalist shared a view common among those interviewed:

> I have worked for both private and public media in the country. Ownership has a role to play in editorial policymaking and implementation. Also, the editorial policy in any media organisation is crafted by the owners of that media organisation. However, there is an inbuilt belief that where a media house has an owner, you, in

> a way, must know what the owner stands for. That person's personality creeps into you as a journalist, making you more cautious about how you work without any direct instructions. Sometimes you do a story, and your story does not come out. You realise that when you author a story in a certain way, it does not come out, but when you change the angle, your story emerges. This makes you conscious of the direction, agenda, and editorial policy that the owners want. Equally, when working for a government media, where the government owns it, it is well known that the Permanent Secretary or state house personnel would go to *ZNBC* and check on the news items to be aired on a particular day. If they are found to be against the state, there are repercussions. Even those in public media know inside themselves the dos and don'ts. This influence may not be direct, but self-awareness of the unwritten rules of how things should be done. (Journalist A2(2), 2019)

This illustrates how, because of the owners' stated views and editorial agenda, journalists within the media outlets forming part of this study conducted themselves professionally concerning the 'unwritten rules' of their employers and the treatment they gave to a selected number of subjects relevant to this thesis' objectives. Selected examples of this shared by interviewees, which I will now discuss, show how owners 'unwritten rules' shaped output across the industry. I discuss the two private media outlets of *MUVI TV* and *The Post* because of their differences in ownership, ethos, and editorial agendas, followed by two public outlets, *ZNBC* and *Times of Zambia,* in one section since they are under state ownership with similar ethos and editorial agendas as Chirambo, (2011) and Gondwe (2014) argue.

1.1 *The Post*'s and others' good governance and anti-corruption crusade

The Post newspaper touted itself as a good governance and anti-corruption advocate. Its journalists had constant exposure to various players in politics and other sectors through the famed *Press Freedom Committee of The Post (PFCP),* which convened newsmakers' forums nationwide to discuss topical issues. This monthly event offered a platform for various interest groups to share their views on topics of national interest to promote press freedom and freedom of expression under the newspaper's PFCP initiative. This initiative promoted active engagement between citizens and duty bearers such as public officials, cabinet ministers, civil society executives, and diplomats, among others, on governance-related issues. Besides, the general coverage of news by

the newspaper had an evident slant towards democratic debate, promoting democratic values while urging its entrenchment within the political culture of the country. This was topped with several editorial comments and columns that shared thoughts and analyses on governance issues.

As earlier noted, Respondents saw *The Post* as committed to being 'political'; however, this included varying ideas of what that implied. One respondent observed, "*The Post* could not remove itself from the politics that put it in existence. That was the decision that was made, and it was in line with the mission statement of *The Post,* which stated that it was going to contribute to democracy that was emerging in Zambia" (Journalist A2(2), 2019). This corroborates with one respondent's Journalist/Trainer (C (4), 2021)'s statement, although he ultimately dismisses politicisation as a concept which was adopted but never successfully executed by the newspaper:

> "He (Fred M'membe, *Post* Managing Editor) did not understand that politics is not about supporting political parties. No, it is about how power is diffused. Having worked in Zambia as a correspondent, my understanding of power is how it is structured and how power is diffused to be able to interpret certain decisions when they happen. If *The Post* said they were a political paper and did not understand this, then they do not understand politics. Then they do not get it." (Journalist/Trainer (C (4), 2021)

The newspaper sought to promote press freedom which they viewed as central to pursuing a democratic project. The PFCP was vital in this undertaking. One former *Post* employee noted that "press freedom is very critical in any democracy because if journalists are not restricted on what information they can bring out and publish, it strengthens democracy" (Journalist A2(3), 2019). This shows that while the newspaper pursued different fronts, such as anti-corruption, democracy, and accountability, they realised they needed press freedom to achieve these objectives with minimum impediments. As elaborated above, this brought the newspaper into conflict with authorities, leading to what respondents viewed as political manoeuvres that saw its closure. The paper suffered several legal suits and what many characterised as political attacks over the more significant part of its lifespan. One interviewee said, "*The Post* was a very investigative news organisation. There was nowhere it could not reach. That

is why we reached that level of political animism and political influence in investigating issues." There was consensus among respondents on this aspect that "*The Post* was alert in fighting corruption. Once you get into corruption, you become an enemy of *The Post*" (Journalist A2(2), 2019).

Another unique organisation that was impactful on the ground was *MUVI TV*, which had become the leading private, independent television station. It also carved out its brand of journalism culture, which respondents characterise in the responses below.

1.2 *MUVI TV*'s vox populi culture

As discussed in Chapter Four, since its establishment in 2002, *MUVI TV* provided a platform for alternative opinions and views on national matters. Many voices, including opposition political organisations that could never be accommodated on the state broadcaster, pivoted to this platform to be heard. The background to establishing *MUVI TV* (see Chapter Four) perhaps defines much of its journalistic culture in its early days, traits still present in this research period. Respondents who worked at the TV station until 2016 touted it as the "voice of the voiceless, "in terms of angling, [where] we allowed more ordinary voices to be heard." (Journalist A1(3), 2019). Consensus on this is evident among both private media and public media journalists. One respondent observed that the "media [must be] a voice of the voiceless…to work towards helping people find their voice" (Journalist A2(2), 2019). Although it has been a constant feature within the media sector, its newfound impetus is perhaps because of lessons learnt from experience. One respondent narrates that they "learnt a lot of lessons, to listen to the voice of the people, bringing out the news content as people desire, to give the views of the people as much as we can." (Journalist A2(4), 2019). The respondent further notes that the idea was "to inform the voter when covering elections, to equip them with that information so [that they] make informed decisions even as they go to vote," a role of journalism that I discuss extensively in Chapter Three.

These are views shared across the media outlets within the private sector, showing that they lean towards a more people-centred culture within the media, which promotes participation in democracies. One respondent noted that this improvement in their reportage was partly because of continuous reviews to be better as a media and embrace cultures that promote democracy through citizens' participation. The "lessons from the previous election[s] were that the voices of ordinary persons were not being heard. Therefore, in terms of angling, we [*The Post*] allowed more ordinary voices to be heard. So, we brought in more ordinary voices talking. This transformation was initiated as part of the 2011 coverage review" (Journalist A2(4), 2019). Coming from a former *Post* employee*,* these reflective views are significant in understanding the rationale behind the outlet's actions and editorial decisions that take deliberate steps/editorial policy decisions on their news reporting process, including diverse sources. Five years later, pivoting from one extreme of partisanship to one that embraced a diversity of sources had to have an explanation, and this explanation came closest. I also surmise that the newspaper's transition to being more inclusive was partly a response to growing discontentment towards its positioning and the role the newspaper played back in 2011, which helped usher the PF into power. Many associated *The Post'*s role with the economic and mal governance challenges that emerged under the PF's later years in power (2016-2021).

1.3 Opposition platform, policy, and practice, *MUVI TV*

Another key characteristic of the private media, notably *MUVI TV,* was that they felt morally obliged to serve as a platform for opposition and alternative critical voices to 'balance up and level the playing field.' This was within a politically challenging period where respondents observed that the media environment was severely constrained under Republican President Edgar Lungu. One of them sums it up thus, "…there was no free political platform. It favoured the ruling party. Lungu was very vicious at the time, making sure he used state machinery to deny the opposition an opportunity and space to market themselves to the electorates. There was no free space for the opposition" (Journalist A2(4), 2019). This portrays a political environment that was intolerant to opposition parties to the extent that those media houses that attempted to offer such a

platform suffered from suppression of media freedoms by the ruling party using the state apparatus. Within this context, media houses such as *The Post* were convicted and eventually closed in efforts by the ruling party to deny the opposition a platform to reach the public. Thus, the few private media organisations courageous enough, such as *The Post* and *MUVI TV,* put up with oppressive measures to offer limited platforms for opposition and alternative voices.

There was, however, no consensus in support of this among journalists, as some felt there was a "…habit of not making checks and balances on the opposition. When they form the government, that is when we realise that it is too late…" (Journalist A1(2), 2019). They felt creating a dichotomous mediascape did not serve the public well since it skewed political choices. Some respondents instead encouraged a more objective approach regardless of what the state-owned media did. Journalist (A (1(2), 2019) observed: "I do not know where we have gotten this perception that those that are in the opposition should never be queried on certain issues, such as intra-party issues when they are found wanting." Others, however, expressed a deep conviction of the need to counter state media influence in politics to balance coverage.

Consequently, many chose "…never [to] make stories that made two opposition parties fight because that is weakening a critical voice in the country" (Journalist A1(3), 2019). They say, "The opposition and critical media speak almost the same language." Remarkably, this view was also shared by journalists in state media who felt they were professionally obliged to cover the opposition just as much as they covered the ruling elite, except, as one conceded:

> "The biggest problem is that the system is made so that it favours the ruling party more than the opposition. Ruling party officials can freely walk in and issue statements. However, when opposition parties bring statements, they are scrutinised for malice. A straightforward story is spiked because of something ill said about a minister or the president." (Journalist B1(1), 2019).

However, the ‘fear of being labelled’ as opposition sympathisers dissuaded most journalists, especially in the public media, from professionalism and objectivity. They often said it came down to choosing between their job or journalistic ethics. One respondent relates, “There is fear of the unknown in the public media. People fear losing jobs. This fear, however, is difficult to point a finger where it comes from. It is the work culture and environment in the public media. This culture dates from way back, and changing organisational culture is difficult. (Journalist B2(6), 2019)

Despite these diverse views on the practice and experiences within private media, there was consensus on the motivation for the pro-opposition bias within the private media. Perhaps Journalist (A1(2), 2019) captures this best; “I know they were trying to do their best to level the playing field of what has been created by the state media… Sometimes, editors would work to try to balance out the playing field.” This illustrates a protagonist-antagonist relationship between the two media sectors. This is an addition to other times and areas where they unite, collaborate, and support each other in contingent circumstances.

1.4 The government and party first; *TOZ*, *ZDM*, and *ZNBC*

As I embarked on this study, one of the widely held perceptions was that journalists within state media institutions were perhaps under intense pressure to favour the government of the day and, by extension, the party in power. However, data on the three public media outlets, *Times of Zambia, Zambia Daily Mail and ZNBC,* is the most interesting discovery and a critical contribution to understanding media and political discourse in emerging democracies. Most respondents indicated an entrenched attitude and disposition toward conformism and favouritism towards the ruling party. For them, there were no clear lines to be drawn between the government or state apparatus and the political party and its functionaries primarily because of the apparent patronage that many journalists feel is extended to them. The evident feeling of indebtedness by public media journalists results in this attitude. Additionally, the small size of the media sector

and poor conditions in the private media sector means public media jobs are highly regarded and guarded by journalists privileged to work there.

Most respondents regarded the ruling party and the government as one entity or treated the two interchangeably, most of the time differently and to the exclusion of the opposition. They would, for example, indicate that if “we have two stories, one from the opposition leader, and one from the president, it becomes tough to pick and lead with a story from the opposition leader unless it is extraordinarily good” (News editor B2(2), 2019) or admit that “it is challenging when it is the Republican President on the one hand and the presidents of [opposition] political parties, we cannot cover them in the same way” (News editor B2(4), 2019). At this level, this attitude towards professionalism and sources has created a culture of bias towards the government and ruling party over the opposition, which confirms the presence of the facilitative and collaborative media model. Perhaps the response from one of the top executives in the public media best sums up this unwritten policy:

> We also must deal with the perception members of the public have…They perceive public media institutions to be pro-government, while they perceive private media to be anti-government. However, this [sic] perception, to a certain extent, is based on a lack of appreciation of the role of the public media. When you break these roles, you realise that we inform the public about human development, economic development, and many other things. Therefore, we find ourselves inclined towards reporting more about government issues, our responsibility. That government is run by a party which is in power. Therefore, we find ourselves reporting on issues about government and the ruling party.” (News editor B2(7), 2019)

This view and many others show a high degree of consensus with few exceptions on how journalists view their role in public media. What makes this even more significant is that these are views shared at the top management level with newsroom reporters. This culture is deeply seated, challenging objective coverage, especially during election campaigns. Most public media journalists neglected to distinguish between party functionaries and government ones, mainly where political party officials served in government as ministers, board chairpersons, etc. Often, when these officials spoke, their roles were conflated regardless of the event, a tradition that has its origins in the one-party state era where the UNIP government embraced the Party and Its

Government (P.I. G) model (Siachisa 2021, p.286), effectively blurring any lines of separation between the state and the ruling party. This, in turn, put journalists in a professionally precarious position as they were forced to spread propaganda on behalf of the ruling party and officials, who doubled as public officials in political contests against opposition political parties. These forced biases challenge public media journalists' professional, balanced, and fair coverage.

However, some within public media, such as the *Zambia Daily Mail,* described themselves as a moderate media outlet. One respondent narrated that this position had a historical background to it, as the paper's creation was to provide a platform for freedom fighters and nationalist voices opposing colonialists:

> They founded this paper because there was only one newspaper, the Northern News, the Current *Times of Zambia*. The *Times of Zambia* was propagating the minority interests of colonialists. There was no alternative voice; hence, as the call for independence grew louder, Alexander Scott and friends thought of a way to provide a voice for the nationalists. That is how the *Daily Mail* was born, to be a platform for independent voices; from that time, which was then called the *African Mail*, *Central African Mail*, *Zambian Mail*, and eventually the *Zambia Daily Mail*. When we became a daily paper in 1970, we continued with the legacy. Therefore, we remained moderate if you checked in the past when other public media would be hard-hitting. This is a tradition we are constantly striving to maintain. (News Editor (News editor B2(7), 2019).

Because of this tendency to treat the government and ruling party more favourably than the opposition, there was discomfort among some public media journalists who felt they needed to be objective and professional towards all sources. They spoke of a culture of fear of the unknown, "an invisible hand within the system," that they will be "labelled as opposition sympathisers.," (Journalist B2(6), 2019). Despite encouragement from both management and public pronouncements to that effect from the Ministry of Information that journalists must be professional and objective and report freely and fairly, the "initial orientation was deep-seated, making adjusting to a more professional disposition quite alien and challenging. This was likely because journalists knew from experience what the editors want, what is publishable and aligned their stories to suit the publication"

(Journalist B2(7), 2019). This has been partly attributed to historical factors and may also be due to deep-seated political polarization in Zambia. As one of the journalists observed, one can easily distinguish “the media for the government or the ruling party and the media for the opposition.” As a result, journalists from the public media covered mostly pro-government and pro-ruling party events because the norm was that if they came up with a story that discredited the ruling party, “it was considered to be a bad and weak story,” observes another respondent, (News editor B1(4), 2019).

Although there has been widespread perception that journalists act this way under duress or pressure, evidence has shown that many are reconciled to this collaborative role. Views by most public media editors and journalists show that this is a culture widespread with or without external political pressure or management within media institutions. However, others hold different views and attitudes towards the same. “I have been in *ZNBC* long enough. To some extent, it is not about politicians walking into the newsroom to tell the author a story this way. Sometimes, it is down to the individuals,” recounted one of the editors (News Editor B1(4), 2019). Such views, coming from someone senior within the institution, are quite revealing about attitudes among some journalists. Another respondent adds, “…you will not see officials coming into the newsroom. Journalists get to know, as they settle down, the dos and don’ts. It becomes part of their DNA” (Chief reporter B2(5), 2019). Despite no overt instruction, politically or otherwise, internally or externally, it seems that experience makes journalists intuitively lean more towards self-censorship than autonomy, usually only extending their independence carefully and not lucidly and by avoiding controversial or sensitive subjects or topics altogether. This is perhaps managed through the government Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, which oversees operations at all three public media outlets. In all this, one notices the divergence of perspective, ethical and professional attitudes between these two sets of journalists in the private and public media, practising within the same geographical context. However, this is not as straightforward segmentation since these traits often cut across this divide. As others argue in their responses, “If the public media was doing the wrong thing, that should not be a basis for other journalists to do the wrong. The news should be left to

be as objective and as fair as possible." (Journalist A1(4), 2019). This demonstrates that journalists can be as fair and objective as possible in an ideal operating environment within the news process. However, this is not the case within Zambia, as I have illustrated, due to several factors that range from ownership factors, job security concerns, and external or internal interference in their professional routines.

1.5 Engagement with citizens

Within the context of this research, private media entities were discussed as being driven and motivated by factors broader than merely political, economic or corporatist consent building. The privately owned media analysed here put to engage citizens more broadly to encourage participation in the democratic process during the campaign period of 2016. Respondents expressed a desire to guide voters in their electoral choices. For instance, one respondent, Journalist A2(3), 2019, submitted, "There were also the stories of corruption, the rigging matrix and even Lungu's past. We run quite several stories about Lungu's past to allow voters to know the man who they would later vote for as their president." Another response (Journalist A2(4), 2019) observed, "I aim to inform the voter when covering elections, bring out information that the voter does not know, to equip them with that information to make informed decisions as they vote." To some respondents, being a journalist translated into actively participating in the political processes. This demonstrated a role conception that was much more than normative while in practice, far more complex than simply picking roles and fulfilling them, which shows the limitation of pre-set Western analytical models such as Bourgault's (1995) insistence on keeping the professional distance by journalists, among others, as I extensively discuss in Chapter Three. Interview data, especially of journalists in private practice, shows that they negotiate with internal stakeholders such as editors and external powers, usually political groups but also market forces.

What is noticeable is the presence of resilient journalists Ugwa (2019), committed to a culture of professionalism in a more contingent fashion despite the rampant censorship and hostile conditions challenging the status quo with mixed results of successes and

losses, loss of employment and in the worst cases death threats or death itself. However, journalists in Zambia have continued to carve out a culture of resilience, grit, and investigative journalism, even after the demise of *The Post*. For example, the emergence of the *News Diggers!* Newspaper and its sister newspaper, the *Mast*, both set up by former *Post* newspaper employees, have meant the tradition of critical and independent journalism has a new lease of life and may continue to thrive within Zambia. The style and approach to journalism of the two offshoots of *The Post* is reminiscent of it, and *The Mast,* part-owned by the former of the newspaper, Fred M'membe, has exhibited links to him even as he has branched into full-time politics, heading the Socialist Party of Zambia. Overtly, political journalism, even after *The Post*'s closure, continues.

Thus, these journalists will be already armed with salient issues that were likely to emerge from such meetings and, therefore, able to author analytical stories and ask sources researched questions. They must have nurtured a complex web of reliable and trustworthy sources from inside ruling parties, opposition camps, and other source categories to do this. By the time the scheduled events took place, journalists would most likely have the significant talking heads of the story and sought only clarity and reconciliation of facts from the speakers or their cultivated sources immediately after such events to confirm or adjust the story accordingly.

Divided newsrooms, cracks that weaken the media

The sixth key finding within this chapter is the evidence of divided newsrooms emerging from these tensions and conflicts of interest among journalists within media houses and between different outlets. In the presence of these dynamics, there is expected fallout and jostling for position among the journalists in their efforts to survive the chaos and fearful operating environment.

There is a strain on relationships in many newsrooms within public media and across the media, for there are heterogenous approaches to ethics and professionalism across media houses. Some journalists are troubled by such unwritten or written policies and practices but stay on the job. Further, the lure of rewards and favours for loyalty to politicians among journalists has created a culture of outdoing each other in expressing and demonstrating loyalty to politicians, especially from the ruling party. As earlier alluded to, journalists, especially from the public media, were unanimous that “the system has been abused in Zambia to a point where when this party wins, you go with them, and you are given a job in government.” (Journalist B1 (1), 2019), This was pointing to the practice that whenever a party won an election it removed all journalists perceived to have been working against the party from their jobs. Remaining neutral in this case, as demonstrated, did not help, as that was translated to mean such a journalist was against the party in power. One journalist (Journalist B2 (2), 2019) from one of the public media organisations recalls:

> However, if you are being objective, you have taken a stance against one another. Neutrality is not an option. I recall an instance when the CEO was chairing an editorial conference. In passing, he stated that 'our' candidate is winning. I was quiet while others nodded and applauded in agreement with the CEO. He addressed me, ‘except for B2(2), who does not seem to agree with us.’ I said, ‘Sir, I am non-partisan’. That exchange and my neutral position did not sit well with my employers and seniors.

This characterised much of the 2016 elections in ways journalists covered and reported news, a trend which has gained prominence in the last decade or so and is why the following chapter focuses on stories from the period of this campaign.

The background to this, according to some respondents, is what happened after the 2011 elections when almost the “entire newsroom of *The Post* was employed by the government” (Journalist B2 (2), 2019)). Therefore, some reporters looked at the 2016 election as an opportunity for something similar. Additionally, most respondents seem to agree on the effect that money has across the media landscape. One respondent from

the public media corroborates this, “sometimes people sacrifice their morals to survive. Look at our colleagues from *The Post* migrating to work in the foreign service, etc., after Sata won in 2011” (Journalist B1(1), 2019). Given the tightness of the 2016 election contest, newsrooms were divided, containing one camp for the opposition and a group loyal to the ruling party. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Seven.

The radical journalistic culture is growing into a democratic culture.

Even with the antitheses happening within Zambian journalism during 2016, there are positive signs of contributions to growing and entrenching the democratic culture within Zambian. There is consensus among the interviewees that good journalism promotes democratic values and good governance, which includes anti-corruption efforts. In this regard, *MUVI TV* and *The Post* embraced and nurtured this culture through news information and as platforms for ordinary voices. Further, as the literature shows, *MUVI TV* station focused its coverage on the issues that affected people’s lives directly, such as public officers' supply of services and goods. Wasserman and Mbatha (2012, pp.14-15) argue that “its news is tabloid TV genre as it gives preference to human-interest stories, with its purportedly "hard" news presented in a more lurid, personalised, and sensationalised manner,” a point I raise in Chapter Four. This corroborates with the views expressed by many of the respondents above, a similar sentiment they say concerning the work of *The Post* over its 25 years in existence.

This style and approach by *MUVI TV* (since *The Post* had been shut by the state in June, two months before the August 2016 election) continued into the 2016 election period and beyond, intensifying their efforts to promote citizens’ participation. This seemed to undermine the political establishment, especially when they exposed alleged electoral malpractice during the elections of 11 August 2016. As a result, the state, using the “Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), suspended the broadcasting licenses for *MUVI TV*, *Komboni Radio* and *Itezhi Tezhi Radio,* respectively, on 22nd August 2016 for what it termed as ‘unprofessional conduct posing a risk to national peace and stability” (Ndawana and MISA, 2016, pp.5-8). Respondents note that *the*

state targeted MUVI TV and individual journalists working with it to expose poor governance and failures in upholding democratic values. The media, however, pushed back with some sporadic successes although, overall, the state's actions worsened the operating environment for much of journalism, as the consequent closure of Prime Television in early 2020 illustrates (I discuss this in more detail in Chapter One). As respondents narrate, journalists play an important role "as critics or watchdog to hold the government to account" (Christians et al., 2010, p.30).

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed empirical evidence collected in interviews about the roles of Zambian journalists, the professional precarities present in their work, and how they navigate the increasingly repressive operating environment. Measured against other contexts within Africa and beyond, such as those in Chapter Three (Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa), this chapter shows a journalism culture with some features present elsewhere. In contrast, others are unique to Zambian journalism. Thus, I argue that national analyses and even organisational analyses of journalism models and practice allow for micro-level scrutiny that brings to the fore features that are not easily discernible when generalisations are made. For instance, while core journalism attributes such as the promotion of good governance and democracy and anti-corruption are replicated within Zambia as elsewhere, this study has revealed unique features within the African context and Zambia in particular, such as the odd collaborations between journalists and other stakeholders, including potentially 'rival journalists,' as well as the presence of activist-journalism as well as non-normative motivation for journalists' work. This shows the dynamic nature of culture broadly and the journalistic culture in response to the unpredictable operating environment.

The findings help explain some of the forms of coverage observed during the 2016 election period. The chapter also demonstrates how ownership influences journalists' roles and role perception. The major journalism cultural aspects of the findings include fear of the 'unknown,' a divided news media, split newsrooms, conformism, and coerced

loyalty. These are all elements that previous journalism research has not brought to the fore and thus add to the continuing expansion of knowledge in this area. The journalistic cultures of contingency-based decision-making and ideologisation were also significant in that, for the first time, we can explain why media houses and journalists sometimes practice in unconventional or un-routinised ways as they strive to navigate the ever-morphing and often treacherous environment. An increasingly polarised media and political environment exacerbates these conditions. Data analysis has identified challenges and opportunities in Zambian journalism while drawing attention to how they compare with practices and trends in the region, as evident in the three countries analysed in Chapter Four (Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria). Further, comparisons within the two forms of ownership, state versus private, show differences in journalistic cultures within each sector. With this approach, the data analyses highlighted the significance and implications of the differences and similarities in journalism patterns locally and at the regional level.

Overall, I argue, similar to Chama (2014)'s argument, that ownership plays a fundamental role in the operations of media organisations and ultimately is crucial to the formation of journalistic cultures as they often bring about journalists' practices or conduct in their work (Hanitzsch et al., 2011). Equally, Baker (2006, p.2) quotes remarks by press critic Liebling who observes that "Freedom of the press belongs to those who own one," illustrating the depth of influence that owners hold over media outlets and journalists. A new layer that this thesis brings is the four distinct journalistic cultural traits within private media. Key among these is the ideologisation phenomena as experienced at *The Post* newspaper, a feature that had never been explored before this research. The implication was that news was no longer produced to report about events but had a slant towards pushing an ideological agenda to affect the country's politics and journalism. Others include the continuing promotion of good governance and democracy, providing opposition platforms and anticorruption fight. In the state/public media on the other hand, the following are evident; ruling party first coverage, divided newsrooms. However, these journalism cultures are not exclusively

present within identified media sectors but rather only more pronounced in those identified sections of the media than the others.

As Chama (2019, p.22) argues that “In Zambia [journalism] is a serious risk that often and regularly results not only in arrests and imprisonment but in the closure of [media outlets],” this thesis has shown new evidence of how this impacts on the journalism profession. To evade or absorb these risks, I have shown how many journalists always seek alternative, better-paying jobs or safer jobs outside the domain. This has seen some of the most talented journalists transitioning to jobs often offered by politicians, such as Press Secretaries at diplomatic missions or Public Relations Officers in various state departments and private institutions. This has further been compounded by politicians using these precarities journalists find themselves manipulating their news production processes and soliciting favourable coverage. Journalists are promised better jobs as inducement for fair coverage by the politicians who seek these favours if they gain political power. These risks have also formed contingency-based decision-making cultures predicated on possible dangers. Further, new evidence shows that many journalists considered keeping their job and maintaining the source of their livelihoods more critical when choosing between professionalism or compromise when facing ethical or professional dilemmas. As a result, there is less premium value put on upholding professional ethics and values.

To bolster the above, I present in the following chapter a selection of newspaper stories drawn from the 2016 election campaign period between May and August 2016.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVIDENCE OF PRECARIOUS PROFESSIONALISM IN THE JOURNALISTIC TEXTS

Introduction

While the previous Chapter (Six) addresses mostly journalists' experiences working in a precarious environment with several impediments to their work, this chapter examines textual content in detail. It attempts to bridge those journalists' experiences and emergent journalistic cultures with empirical text within selected media outlets discussed in Chapter Six. Using the analytical framework of African journalism models, I critically analyse selected media texts from *The Post* and *Times of Zambia* to expressively signal how these cultures and lived precarities among journalists translate into the news processes and news texts as the output. The texts analysed are drawn over three months (mid-May to mid-August 2016), as Chapter Five states. I also examine the centrality of selected editorial and opinion pieces produced by the news organisations that define their positionality as it relates to the political news coverage and how it relates to media ownership and polarization. *Table 3* below summarises the number of stories sampled for this analysis.

Newspaper	***The Post Newspaper*** **(Privately owned)**	***Times of Zambia*** **(Public owned)**	**Total**
Period covered	May10-August 9 2016	May 10 -August 9 2016	
no. of copies	80	90	170
no. of copies coded	71	69	140
no. of all stories coded	639	552	1391
no. of lead stories coded	56	51	107
Av. no. of stories/edition	9	8	17
no. of headlines	639	552	1391
no. of lead headlines coded	56	51	107
no. of Editorials coded	33	28	61

Table 2: Number of stories coded for analysis by media house/ownership.

The findings in this chapter corroborate, to a great extent, with the results from the interview data and analysis in Chapter Six and the literature and background investigations of the Zambian media landscape, as explained in Chapter One and Chapter Four. Significant among these findings include the following.

i. Polarised pluralism as the overarching treatment and coverage style is equally evident through the different perspectives and positionality the two newspapers took on several campaign-related issues.
ii. Corruption is the overarching theme that is present in nearly all published stories. This manifests in many forms, as the analysis following shows.
iii. Censorship due to fear and intimidation of journalists is also evident in the analysed stories, especially in the public-owned *Times of Zambia.*
iv. Each media house's issue choice and story treatment differ, which demonstrates inherent biases and points to the role of ownership in media content production.
v. The ownership influence extends to the authorities or people quoted in the news and those not mentioned when they are inferred or are the subject of the story, which results in the inclusion, exclusion and omission of information in published stories.
vi. These ownership influences were evident in the texts demonstrating journalists' precariousness in the news processing discussed earlier in Chapter Six.
vii. The significance of religion within the Zambian political space is highlighted, and stories and editorials show how politicians are careful or ought to be cautious in handling the subject.
viii. Ethnic commentary, accusations, and counteraccusations of tribalism among the political contenders were rife, and media stories picked up on this.

Results from key media texts and analysis

Thematic analysis

Additionally, the chapter is organised through the utilisation of themes that aid in the data analysis to achieve coherence and easiness of the organisation of the research results. Scholars such as Scheufele (1999) and Reese (2010) explore functional theme development and analysis models. Meanwhile, some scholars posit that issue-specific

themes have a higher level of “issue-sensitivity”, such as De Vreese (2001, p.108), who observes that “Issue-specific [themes] pertain to specific topics or news events, whereas generic [themes] are broadly applicable to a range of different news topics, some even over time and, potentially, in different cultural contexts.” Meanwhile Xu, (2020, p.247) uses such terms as ‘messages’, ‘texts’, and ‘communicative acts’ interchangeably” to portray the flexibility attached in describing media text in different formats and forms in the construction of themes as well as their deconstruction during identification and analysis. Meanwhile, De Vreese (2001, p.108) suggests that “generic [themes] have a higher level of analytical generalisability because they ‘allow comparisons.”

To this end, the first dominant theme deals with *conflict and peace* as two mutually interlinked issues. Stories under this theme detail the violence, attacks, and mudslinging amongst political rivals which characterised the campaign's rhetoric. The conflict and peace *theme* includes confrontations, harassment, and physical violence towards political opponents and journalists. The second broad theme of *morality* discusses major political competitors' moral standing and persuasions, especially at the presidential candidacy level. Significant under this theme is the sub-theme of corruption and how the incumbent, Edgar Lungu, performed on the same within a broader governance, as well as his crucial rival Hakainde Hichilema. Their respective records were scrutinised and extensively covered, as highlighted in the stories analysed. It is worth noting that news coverage of corruption has remained a topical issue in Zambia since the early 1990s, as attested in previous chapters, especially Chapters One and Four. As argued earlier, *The Post* newspaper led from the front on this subject and several others as an agenda setter among media outlets. The third theme relates to the *economy*. Typically, stories under this theme dealt with various economic sectors, as reflected in the news.

Contingent journalistic practices covered earlier in Chapter Six, such as incorporating specific news sources while excluding others, are equally noticeable through a critical analysis of the selected stories and editorials as part of an emerging journalistic culture among Zambian media organisations and journalists. Although the extrapolation of

these results is limited by the amount of the sampled media organisations, it is plausible to suggest that these trends seen within the two media organizations' stories and style of news presentation are characteristic of the broader media in Zambia. This can be linked with the trends noted in Chapter Six from interview data and earlier ownership analysis, suggesting that similar patterns would be found more broadly across the industry. Based on the ownership structures, for example, most, if not all, the public-owned organisations or at least those that are part of this study had similar ways of news presentation, choice of sources, angling, and treatment of subject matters, especially political news content.

The exposition relies on theoretical frameworks portrayed in recent developments such as Harcup and O'Neill's (2017, p.1472) "news values". In their study of the British press, they argue that "news selection is subject to the influence of journalistic routines such as access and meeting deadlines, competition for exclusives, the influence of proprietors and advertisers." For example, ownership, as shown earlier, is fundamental to this selection process, having shown how journalists' news processing activities were influenced by it. Such decisions as who journalists included or excluded as a news source, the treatment of the subject, the angling of the story, the self-censorship alluded to by journalists in interviews (Chapter Six), and is evident in the stories, were greatly influenced by the ownership structure of the given media organisation. As I discuss in Chapter Three, this leans more towards a sociological conception of news. Amadeo (2007, p.67) suggests that the sociological concept of news "considers the social meaning of an event to be defined by the [portrayal] process", as opposed to the "psychological [conception], centred on the cognitive processes individuals apply when they face a piece of news." Thus, my analysis here offers insights into the possible social meaning of these stories based on their identified prominent themes.

The following analysis identifies critical thematic areas on which the two newspapers, The Post and Times of Zambia, focused.

Thematic analysis of *The Post* newspaper

The thematic analysis brings to the fore how journalists process the news. Although many journalists interviewed, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, argue that they were under pressure from owners to "slant the news", it is not clear how this affected their ability during coverage of news to exclude or include sources in final published stories, i.e. it can't be directly referenced – none of the interviewees mentions particular wording changes etc. – but their testimony about day to day working practices substantiates the idea that textual content was directly shaped in that way. This thesis argues that due to polarisation, journalists are inclined to select sources based on the probability of their story being published and not spiked by the editorial team, a fear many journalists conceded in interviews, as reflected in Chapter Six. Scholars (Reese, 2001; Tankard, 2001) argue that sometimes journalists consciously and actively engage in the selection of themes through self-censorship to deceive audiences or at least tell their "perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993 p.52). A third aspect worth noting here is the role or agency of the sources in the news-making process. For example, Valera-Ordaz, (2017, p.127) observed "the interactions of political parties and aligned news media in sponsoring partisan [discourse]" in a study about frames during the 2015 Spanish election. Koenig (2004, p.2) describes "frames as consciously pitched powerful discursive cues" that highlight salient issues within a specific textual discourse. Professionals have employed This trend in many instances using such devices and avenues as press releases and press conferences to control the narrative about a particular event.

Conflict and peace theme (*The Post*)

The Post newspaper and others characterised the 2016 election as the most violent since 1991 when Zambia returned to multipartyism. The newspaper treated stories about violence and mudslinging and laid out villains and victims among the political competitors. By relying more on a discursive strategy based on "factual narrative forms in their political news reporting practices," Lee and Lin (2006, p.334), the newspaper

censored its news to include opposition political actors while excluding the ruling party political actors as they saw fit in line with their overall editorial policy. Thus, the newspaper was seeking out and quoting more sources from the UPND and other opposition political parties to drive the narrative of violence while downplaying views from the ruling PF sources. Stories were reported about the increased violence during elections, campaign periods and the 2016 general election; out of 527 stories coded, 98 stories focused on the theme of conflict and peace. I highlight some of them in detail below.

For instance, stories such as *"HRC condemns armed campaigns" The Post,* June 9, 2016; *"Reject violent political parties – Zambia Medical Association" The Post,* May 10, 2016, indicates an aversion to the violence witnessed during the election campaigns. However, it is also worth noting that most of these significant stories discussed how the incumbent party was at fault. This was primarily a result of the owners' editorial policy agenda to criticise the PF because they had abused democracy and the country, as journalists revealed during interviews, as explained in Chapter Six. It shows the owners' influence on the stories and sources included or excluded in the newspaper editions. As Onyebadi (2016, p.112) argues, "several factors influence journalists, including the political ideology of media owners, the influence of political actors and the political environment in which reporters operate", among others. In this case, the journalists and others associated or with knowledge of the inside workings of the newspaper owners attest to this influence, which some described to be direct and 'first-hand' as the owners would directly interfere with the news editing process to rephrase headlines and story content in line with their editorial objectives. As I illustrate in Chapter Six, three former journalists and one former editor from the newspaper confirm this. For example, one of the former editors (A1(2), 2019) recounted during interviews, "The influence of the editor-in-chief was huge. This is because what he decided would happen is what happened. Everything was done in his name. That is the kind of influence of ownership. Editors would differ over opinions; however, we agreed to tow one line." In other instances, however, this is the product of each newspaper's prevailing tone and expectations.

I highlight a selection of the following stories describing incidents during the peak campaign period and on the basis that they involved the two leading contenders in the election. These stories demonstrate this factor and further expose the newspaper's treatment of the theme and how they reported it, including source choices.

a) *"Simuusa challenges Lungu to be clear on PF violence," The Post,* 8 June 2016.
b) *"Cops save Hichilema; PF cadres attempt to bring down a UPND campaign helicopter in Shiwangandu", The Post,* 14 June 2016.
c) "*Violence symbolic of a failed government*" *The Post,* 15 June 2016.
d) *"It is my time* – Hichilema nga akakana ukusumina ama results akamona efyo nkamuchita *(if Hichilema refuses to accept the results, I will deal with him)," The Post,* 20 June 2016. "Voters will shun polls if violence persists – YWCA" *The Post* 27 June 2016.
e) *"Cadre kills cop at Lungu's rally", The Post,* 25 July 2016.

For context and detailed analysis, I picked on one story from *The Post* newspaper edition of 2 July 2016, under the headline "*Police break into UPND campaign centre, destroy materials and arrest seven."* An excerpt from the story reads,

> "Police in the early hours of today (yesterday) around 04:00 hours came to the UPND mobilisation centre with a search warrant to search for offensive weapons, but they picked the seven party members who work there. They did not find any offensive weapon, and all they found were the materials we use for campaigns, a map, a diary, and party cards," said Mwimbu. The officers, however, damaged the doors, furniture, computers, and campaign materials found on the premises. (*The Post* newspaper July 2, 2016)

This story signifies the overall treatment of subjects relating to the PF as a party and the broader political landscape. It also reinforces the notion projected by the newspaper (which is mainly true) that the incumbent party is using state agencies such as the police to perpetrate violence against opposition political parties, which is an abuse of authority as well as undermining democratic values that encourage free political participation By utilising sources that spoke against the violence, and language characterising the violence as a detraction from democratic tenets, the newspaper used

lexical devices that implored views in line with its editorial policy to promote democracy by discouraging elements that undermine its realisation.

The treatment given to stories under this theme links back to Chapter Six by showing the bias and polarisation of private newspapers, the practice of self-censorship by journalists, a selective bias of sources and offering opposition platforms and attempting to push forward an agenda on promoting good governance. The newspaper demonstrated these characteristics to varying degrees, as the evidence shows in how they treated the subjects in the news. This also extends to the choices and inclusion and inclusion of sources for the news reports.

Further, other stories portrayed the subjects in groups of villains and victims. For instance, stories such as *"Defend yourselves if attacked-GBM," "UPND has learnt to fight back-Musumali,"* and *"2016 campaigns most violent – Masebo" The Post,* 2 July 2016, characterises the ruling party and its officials negatively by showing them as the aggressors, while the opposition parties were seen as victims of this violence. An excerpt from the story goes further to label Lungu 'a fraudulent leader,' which further emphasises the characterisation as the villain.

> *And Masebo says President Edgar Lungu is a fraudulent leader. Masebo described this year's [2016] campaigns as the worst, full of political violence and without any issues. The whole country [is] now fighting each other; we have unprecedented tribalism. Masebo said. And Masebo said even those who supported President Lungu in the 2015 January presidential already regretting election were their decision. (The Post newspaper of July 2, 2016)*

Using words such as 'defend yourselves' and 'fight back' demonstrate the paper's stance that those under siege have a right to defend themselves. Using a word such as 'fraudulent' furthers this objective of the newspaper as it effectively labels the subject as someone who does not promote good governance and is using fraud in the form of violence to further his political objectives. Further, it is noticeable from the headlines that the newspaper often adopted individual or organisational statements quoted as authorities in the stories. This style of news construction using quotes attributed to an

individual or body gave the 'voice' of the headline over to external actors, not the journalist/paper, effectively in attempts to play the role of a conveyer of competing voices and not necessarily giving the position of the individual journalists nor that of the newspaper. However, as I discussed above, this choice, inclusion and exclusion of certain voices was a subtle process that involved the editorial team and was not merely coincidental. In most stories that covered violent acts, this pattern of segregating subjects into villains and victims was consistent primarily along ruling and opposition groups, respectively, revealing the leaning of the individual newspaper.

Figure 5 below illustrates the polarisation that characterised the newspaper's coverage and treatment of subjects.

4 • HOME NEWS SUNDAY POST, June 12, 2016

PF feeding Zambians on lies - HH

By Mukosha Funga

UPND president Hakainde Hichilema says the PF is feeding Zambians on lies for breakfast, lunch and supper.

And the UPND says ZAF has become a partisan government wing that is trying to frustrate opposition campaigns.

Speaking at a rally in Kaputa on Thursday, Hichilema said the PF had become efficient with lies.

"*Ba PF babufi sana. Balelanda ati* Hakainde *nga mwamupela bu president aka amasukulu. Ifipatala fya* PF government *tamwaba imiti. Mwachula pafula abena* Kaputa (They say HH is a satanist. How can I be a satanist? I worship God and I belong to the SDA Church where I am an elder. So all of you on August 11, wake up very early and vote for UPND. I know that you don't have clean drinking water here, you are suffering. The UPND government will bring certificate holders should vote for the PF.

"*Ba* Lungu *bali saina* Constitution *bacinja ati kulafwaika* grade 12 but *nga insala yaisa ipusha ati niwebo* grade 12? *Lesa kumulu pakwingila akepusha ati* grade 12? *Kanshi bane mukaba panishe ba* Lungu. *Ba* grade 12 *beka ebakavotela ba* Lungu. *Imwe bonse mukavotele* HH. *Batilanda akale ati nga baisa bakafifumya fyonse ifya* grade heaven, will God be asking if you are a grade 12? So you should punish Mr Lungu. You should all vote for HH because he already said he would reverse this. They do not teach someone to be a good leader at grade 12)," said Sampa.

And in a statement issued yesterday, signed by Hichilema, the opposition leader lamented that it was unfair for the Zambia Air Force to ask charter companies to authorisation, as they do for use of helicopters. Until yesterday, politicians who used fixed wing planes did so regularly and the charter companies did not have to obtain special permissions," Hichilema stated.

He stated that ZAF had become partisan under the guise of "security concerns".

"We have repeatedly raised concerns regarding ZAF's approval process in our frustrate our campaigns. Even just a few days ago, an authorisation was delayed for use of a chopper because 'their emails were not working'," stated Hichilema.

"In any normal democratic dispensation, the armed forces remain non-partisan. This is essential for the protection of the people. Without such, the conditions for free and fair election are woefully lacking."

Figure 5*; The Post,* 12 June 2016; a story headline describing the ruling Patriotic Front party.

1.1 Editorial discourse analysis

Having coded 33 editorials from *The Post,* a manual reading allowed me to choose the one which was most fitted to highlight the newspaper's position on the prominent themes earlier identified. The newspaper also authored a fit-for-purpose editorial on 10 May 2016, attacking the ruling PF on its abuse of the Police service by setting them against opposition political groupings. An excerpt from the editorial titled *"Cops on the Run"* captures salient issues relating to the violence:

> *THE violence and destruction we saw in Matero on Sunday is the product of what happens when those in power abuse the police. We had warned the Patriotic Front and its government to stop abusing the police by unleashing them on peaceful opposition meetings or gatherings. Instead of controlling violent ruling*

> *party cadres, the police have always been unleashed on peaceful opposition cadres. There is no way the opposition can be expected to respect the authority of police officers who are not politically impartial in exercising their duties. A process was unleashed that destroyed the power of the police, which meant destroying one of the pillars of maintaining law and order in the country. (The Post, May 10, 2016)*

From the analysis of this editorial, the newspaper ostensibly lays out its position given the political events surrounding violence. Lee and Lin (2006, p.335) argue that "editorials are supposed to be persuasive and are less tied by the norm of objectivity." Further, Le (2003, pp.698-700) argues that editorials "represent the news organizations' active participation in public debate,".

This editorial holds the ruling PF responsible for the violence that characterised the election campaign period in consistency with the owners' editorial policy to influence narratives against the particular elements within the political sphere, as reported in the previous chapter. This also acted as a cue to influence journalists' choice of sources and treatment of these sources in the news. By pointing out the violent nature of police intervention which caused more destruction and worsened the violence, the newspaper is effectively indicating that instead of the police being law enforcement agents, the ruling party abused them as a form of a partisan militia and, therefore, an accessory to breaking the law and promoting a hostile political environment for the opposition political parties in the country. This here, too, managers to achieve a twofold role of acting as both platform that projects opposition political narratives and promoting good governance through holding power to account, aims which are espoused by the Private-Owned media, as I show in Chapter Six.

The opposition political parties are described as 'peaceful', which is not exactly true since they also did not only defend themselves but attacked ruling party positions, buildings, and officials. The same event reported in other media outlets, such as the *Times of Zambia,* acknowledges this fact. Thus, *The Post* engaged in what Lee and Lin

(2006, pp.349-350) call “bias of objectivity”, emphasising specific values and aspects of the story that were factually correct while ignoring or downplaying other facts. However, by emphasising that ‘*There is no way the opposition can be expected to respect the authority’,* the newspaper ignored that two wrongs do not make a right, and the democratic process suffers. Instead of urging both sides to de-escalate, the newspaper took sides and encouraged one side to respond violently and justifiably so in the name of self-defence.

1.2 Conflict thematic Analysis *(The Post)*

A visual representation of the content within the conflict and peace theme reveals that *The Post newspaper* labelled conflict as a partisan rather than a societal issue. This can be surmised from the “regular occurrence and coverage of th[is] subject” Brookes (1995, p.465) by the newspaper and the use of language that portrayed opposition political groupings as victims of the incumbent PF party. For instance, in one news story referring to violent clashes between the PF and opposition UPND cadres of 10 May 2016, *“peaceful opposition cadres”* is used as a device portraying the opposition cadres as victims who are peaceful yet provoked and therefore entitled to self-defence. The newspaper uses this device to represent the ruling PF party as a violent party. All or most of these assumptions are premised on the view of an orderly and functioning state governed by the rule of law (Omilusi, 2017, pp.34 - 37), which would therefore be expected to promote law and order even during an election period. This further demonstrates a bias in issue choice by the newspaper as it emphasises violence and other negative descriptors about the PF while downplaying negative coverage of the opposition’s political parties, a practice which journalists repeatedly emphasise in Chapter Six was a construct of ownership and in-house editorial policy. As I explain in Chapter Four, the differences that led to the fall-out with the Lungu-led PF party likely added motivation for the newspaper’s increased scrutiny of the ruling party’s conduct during campaigns. Hence this projection of violence with emphasis on the PF as the aggressor and villain was meant to undercut its political prospects at the polls.

Table 3 below demonstrates how the stories and editorial pieces surrounding the conflict and peace theme were constructed. The product is the inclusion or exclusion of sources to build a desired narrative by the paper. These thematic constructs show, as Carragee and Roefs (2004, p.215) argue, a pattern demonstrating "how journalists employ frames in the construction of news stories, and how these stories articulate [themes]" (see also William and Andre, 1989; Reese, 2001). The editorial style and choice of story construction demonstrate the newspaper's negative disposition towards the PF party under Lungu.

Conflict is not suitable for elections.	Violence promotes apathy among voters.
	Chaos is not suitable for national development.
	Do not take Zambia's renowned peace for granted.
	PF portrayed major culprits in promoting conflict.
	Many sources condemn the violence.
	Conflict is more than physical but language too.
	Society widely condemns violence.
	Most sources are non-PF-ruling party/biased.

Table 3: Sample of the key to the analysis of a theme (conflict) concerning the election (*The Post*)

Such phrases as "violence symbolic of failed government" (*The Post*, 2016) or "fraudulent leader" (*The Post*, 2016) were often deployed in stories in a way that would paint political opponents in a bad light. This closely fits Reese's (2001, p.103) argument on "how our social understanding is structured" through the narratives constructed by news media as they determine and decide on stories and subjects to include. Within the Zambian context, legislation and public perception are instructive in understanding how society despises perceived attacks on authority. I would argue that this is significant in shaping the content of stories. According to the controversial *Defamation of President, Sec.69 of the Penal Code,* for instance, amended under Act, No. 6 of 1965, reads in part, "Any person who, with intent to bring the President into hatred, ridicule or contempt, publishes any defamatory or insulting matter, whether by writing print, word of mouth or in any other manner, is guilty of an offence and is liable on conviction to

imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years," (Zambia Legal Institute, n.d). My use of 'controversial' in describing the legislation indicates that it is widely held by society that although this law has remained on the statute books, it does not augur well within a democratic setup. This was hypocritical since ruling party officials, including the president, use similar language against their opponents with minimal fear of legal sanctions since they are in power which is typical of the "'big man' syndrome in Africa's politics" (Omilusi, 2017, p.36). In the instance of the Zambian political landscape, social-political history has recorded a pattern of political rhetoric along these lines of foregrounding conflict, villains, victims, winners, and losers, in efforts to woo voters to view the sponsors of such messages in a better light than their opponents.

While covering the violence that characterised the campaigns, *The Post often* identified the PF as the main culprit, mainly quoting sources from the opposition political parties and Civil Society Organisations, among others. This is a form of self-censorship that Lee and Lin (2006, p.333) argue ranges from "change of emphasis, to choice of rhetorical devices by journalists." The frequency of the incidences of violence was alarming from *The Post* newspaper's perspective. This is consistent with what journalists claimed to be practised within media houses, whereby bias against the ruling party was overwhelmingly coming from private-owned media, as I demonstrate in Chapter Six. The EU Elections Observer Mission noted the occurrence of violence, among other infringements of the election process that "Civil society organisations noted concerns about electoral violence, a lack of impartiality from police, the inability of candidates to freely and fairly campaign, with the potential to undermine the integrity of the elections" among other concerns (EOM, 2016, p.21). Further, the Southern Africa Development Community, SADC Election Observer Mission (SEOM) noted the prevalence of violence in the election period in its post-election report.

These representations were not altogether surprising considering the high polarisation that characterised the politics as well as the media coverage; it is, therefore, plausible that the polarized pluralism between *The Post* and the *Times of Zambia*, as I show in Chapter Six, for example, covered similar news events but came away with completely different story narratives, including quoting diverse authorities as I elaborate earlier in

the chapter and treating the subject of the news in myriad ways. This partly echoes Hopmann, De Vreese and Albaek (2011, p.265), that “media cover politicians who are most powerful concerning substantive (policy) issues, [and] focus on incumbent politicians,” This was the case with the public media and tallies with election observer reports such as the European Observer Mission (EU EOM) which recorded that

> The campaign period was marred by systematic bias in state media, which failed to provide fair and equitable coverage of the campaigns of all parties, limiting the possibility for voters to make an informed choice. News coverage of the state broadcaster was biased in favour of the PF and largely excluded other parties or only reported other parties negatively. (EOM, 2016, p.6)

Due to this coverage, the state heavily criticised the newspaper and eventually ‘liquidated’ in June 2016 (detailed in Chapter One and Chapter Four). This tension between politics and the media closely aligns with Lee and Lin's (2006, p.331)’s argument that “in transitional societies, political pressure on the press [leads] to the politics of self-censorship [and] is likely to involve a strategic contest between the media and political actors.” Although *The Post* newspaper tried to be resilient in the face of continued political pressure, it is evident from the analysis that self-censorship was present in individual and organisational journalists. From the stories analysed, polarised pluralism was apparent, as certain aspects of the events were missing from the news stories. Journalists from *The Post* and those from the other three media outlets analysed in this study generally agreed that editorialising is an established ‘norm’ within their respective organisations. This was in the form of “editorial actions ranging from omission, dilution, distortion, change of emphasis, to the choice of rhetorical devices by journalists, or their organizations, in anticipation of currying reward and avoiding punishment from the power structure' (Lee, 1998, p.321). From the emphasis on the ruling PF’s aggressions against opposition parties, *The Post* downplayed the opposition political parties' role in fermenting political violence, which was characterised as self-defence.

Morality theme *(The Post)*

The thematic analysis of *Morality* hinges on discussions about the character of candidates and their record on political and governance issues in the broader context but, more significantly, the topical issue of corruption. This issue pervades every social-political sphere in Zambia per several reports by organisations such as Transparency International Zambian, the Anti-Corruption Commission of Zambia, etc., which Chama (2019) extensively discusses and analyses in his recent book on anti-corruption tabloid journalism. To this end, *The Post* covered extensively the leading presidential candidates, opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema and the incumbent Edgar Lungu. Lungu's record in charge since 2015, when he took office, was especially scrutinised, and many corruption allegations against him and his government were discussed. As mentioned earlier, the polarised nature of the treatment of this subject by the newspaper was equally evident in this case. To illustrate, I consider selected stories and lexically analyse how they treat the issues related to morality and especially corruption. Consider the following accounts: *"Its pretence to question Lungu's lust for power, money, leaving out HH - Musumali," "If HH starts stealing, I will be the first to report him-Masebo" The Post,* June 9, 2016*.* In another edition, the following headlines appeared, denigrating PF and Lungu's record, *"PF has shown it has no interest in running a transparent, accountable government – Jalila"*, with the lead story on the front page headlined *"We won't boycott and leave Zambia in the hands of this drunkard – Hichilema", The Post, May 8, 2016; "President Lungu is the most inept president in Zambia's history-Nawakwi", "Government must allow the media to investigate corruption"– The Post, May 10, 2016.*

On aggregate, these stories represent a polarised view of the political contenders for the top job of president, reflecting a firmly held belief among journalists and media outfits investigated for this study. As explained in Chapter Six, a dominant view, especially among private media journalists, is that they speak and lean more towards opposition political parties in their political news coverage. Public media journalists and their relationship with incumbent political parties is the opposite. The overall emphasis of *The Post*'s coverage, therefore, of the top two competing political parties and their

candidates was to a) characterise the PF and Edgar Lungu as untrustworthy, reckless, and unsuitable to continue with the political power of presiding over the affairs of the country, b) that although they did not fully endorse the UPND and its candidate Hakainde Hichilema, their lack of consistent and critical coverage of his candidature or party implied the newspaper was submissive to such a scenario emerging after the elections. This seems to correspond with Onyebadi (2016, p.113)'s idea that "in news presentation, the use of a specific [theme] depends on the emphasis intended in the story." Therefore, the themes of corruption and lack of moral stamina among the PF regular members suggest this emphasis was designed to achieve this overall message. These issues, as Fang (2001, p.587) argues, are within the purview of "the social, cultural and political dimensions of news media, including orientation of journalists or newspapers" within the Zambian social-political landscape, valuable features in thematic analysis to help explain phenomena.

The selection of voices or authorities, placement of the headline stories in the newspaper editions and salience of issues were designed to enlist public debate and possibly influence how voters would elect their leaders in the 2016 election. To emphasise this point, *The Post* published three critical stories just a few days before the election. One read "*It will be tense- Lungu must learn to control his desperation-Musumali", "Corrupt politicians have infiltrated the PF – Rev. Ndlovu", The Post,* 8 June 2016 *"HH pledges to reduce presidential powers", The Post,* 8 June 2016 on the front page in a juxtaposed style just as Lee and Lin (2006, p.334) argue, that "newspapers have used the method of juxtaposition frequently." If anything was in doubt until this point, it became clear to notice The Post's contrasting views of the two leading contenders in the 2016 election. Putting two stories about Lungu and Hakainde in this style showed a contrast between the newspaper treatment of the two, exposing a biased coverage of the election in favour of opposition voices, a point I highlight in Chapter Six. Together with the above stories, stories that presented the issue of corruption were always present and mostly referred to Lungu's time as president. Illustrative stories include one that read; *"PF's greed, corruption has increased poverty",* and the lead story which read; *"LUNGU GETS RICH, President's wealth increases from*

K10.9 million to over K23 Million in a year; HH says this explains why Edgar wants to stay and make more money" – (*The Post,* 8 June 2016*)*

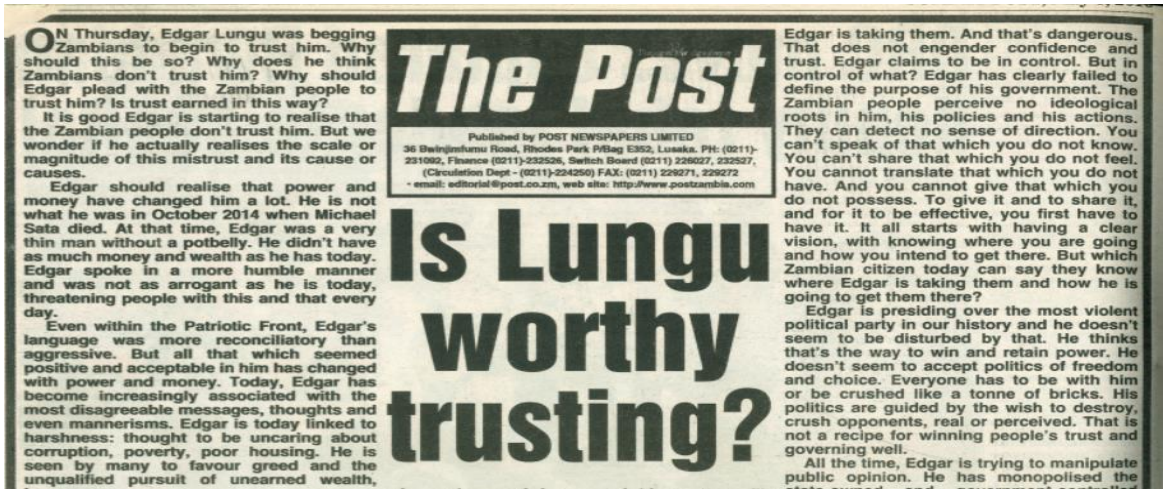
1.1 Editorial discourse analysis

In the same edition, *The Post* published an editorial titled *"Is Lungu worth trusting?"* they went to great lengths to expose his true character, asking the voters whether they could trust him as president.

> *On Thursday, Edgar Lungu was begging Zambians to begin to trust him. Why should this be so? Why does he think Zambians do not trust him? Why should Edgar plead with the Zambian people to trust him? Is trust earned in this way? Edgar is starting to realise that the Zambian people do not trust him. But we wonder if he realises the scale or magnitude of this mistrust and its cause or causes.*
>
> *Edgar should realise that power and money have changed him a lot. He is not what he was in October 2014 when Michael Sata died. At that time, Edgar was very thin without a potbelly. He did not have as much money and wealth as he has today. Edgar spoke humbly and was not as arrogant as today, threatening people daily. The other problem is Edgar's confessed lack of vision. It is clear that Edgar has no idea about this country; he is just in power to enjoy and enrich himself and his friends. He tries extremely hard to look confident and strong. But he carries too many weaknesses inside him and on his shoulders. And the Zambian people can see all this. (The Post, May 10, 2016)*

This ties in well with Onyebadi's argument that newspapers interpret the news for their readers to make sure that the newspaper's opinions and positions on specific issues are unambiguous. He writes, "To interpret the news to its readership, a newspaper has to [design] its argument in line with its corporate or institutional vision and philosophy" (Onyebadi, 2016, p.111). Similarly, Lee and Lin (200, pp.335) argue that "Editorials are supposed to be persuasive and are less tied by the norm of objectivity. They represent the news organizations' active participation in public debate." Further, Le (2003, p.688) has argued that "Editorials present the official position of a newspaper on a topic considered to be of particular societal importance at the time of publication, and, as such, are supposed to carry a significant persuasive value."

At the time this editorial was published, the nation was preparing for elections to be held in three months. The governance record of Lungu at the time had become apparent, and the newspaper decided to highlight the issues of importance within context. Referencing Lungu to be “begging Zambians to begin to trust him” was deployed lexically to show that he had nothing to offer the voters that should earn their trust. Therefore, he had to resort to begging as a desperate measure. The next set of questions in the opening paragraph serves a rhetorical purpose to draw the critical takeaway message that the newspaper hoped its readers would pay attention to. Further, the editorial's title, in the form of a rhetorical question, not a genuine one, was used to sow doubt in the readership’s estimation of Lungu’s credentials. The rest of the editorial, as shown in the illustration Figure 7 below, serves this purpose significantly, which also consistently points to the role and influence of ownership over the newspaper’s editorial policy.



ON Thursday, Edgar Lungu was begging Zambians to begin to trust him. Why should this be so? Why does he think Zambians don't trust him? Why should Edgar plead with the Zambian people to trust him? Is trust earned in this way?

It is good Edgar is starting to realise that the Zambian people don't trust him. But we wonder if he actually realises the scale or magnitude of this mistrust and its cause or causes.

Edgar should realise that power and money have changed him a lot. He is not what he was in October 2014 when Michael Sata died. At that time, Edgar was a very thin man without a potbelly. He didn't have as much money and wealth as he has today. Edgar spoke in a more humble manner and was not as arrogant as he is today, threatening people with this and that every day.

Even within the Patriotic Front, Edgar's language was more reconciliatory than aggressive. But all that which seemed positive and acceptable in him has changed with power and money. Today, Edgar has become increasingly associated with the most disagreeable messages, thoughts and even mannerisms. Edgar is today linked to harshness: thought to be uncaring about corruption, poverty, poor housing. He is seen by many to favour greed and the unqualified pursuit of unearned wealth,

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Is Lungu worthy trusting?

Edgar is taking them. And that's dangerous. That does not engender confidence and trust. Edgar claims to be in control. But in control of what? Edgar has clearly failed to define the purpose of his government. The Zambian people perceive no ideological roots in him, his policies and his actions. They can detect no sense of direction. You can't speak of that which you do not know. You can't share that which you do not feel. You cannot translate that which you do not have. And you cannot give that which you do not possess. To give it and to share it, and for it to be effective, you first have to have it. It all starts with having a clear vision, with knowing where you are going and how you intend to get there. But which Zambian citizen today can say they know where Edgar is taking them and how he is going to get them there?

Edgar is presiding over the most violent political party in our history and he doesn't seem to be disturbed by that. He thinks that's the way to win and retain power. He doesn't seem to accept politics of freedom and choice. Everyone has to be with him or be crushed like a tonne of bricks. His politics are guided by the wish to destroy, crush opponents, real or perceived. That is not a recipe for winning people's trust and governing well.

All the time, Edgar is trying to manipulate public opinion. He has monopolised the

Figure 6; The Post, 10 May 2016; an example of an editorial comment by the newspaper on Edgar Lungu

1.2 Morality thematic Analysis (*The Post*)

A key point to observe is that while news stories select “aspects of perceived reality and make it more salient” (Entman, 1993 p.52), I argue that this process in itself makes objectivity hard to attain, as I discuss in Chapter Three since the subjective view in professional journalists and media owners means there is every possibility to omit or relegate information to suit these diverse positionalities actively. In a polarised

environment such as Zambia, this became all too clear in the news narratives, but even more so when editorial pieces were considered. Although this is complex to deconstruct, the entry point to such analysis is comparing what various media organisations report on a given issue or incident. Thus, in portraying Lungu, for example, *The Post* newspaper deploys the concept of 'trust' and how it reflects on Lungu, thus persuading voters' perspectives (Le, 2003; Lee and Lin, 2006) and decision-making during the election campaign. By asking Zambians, "Is Lungu worthy of trust?" the newspaper sows doubt in the audience's minds since "trust" is a valuable commodity in politics. As some scholars have observed, in a democracy, "political elites [must] enjoy sufficient trust to be able to govern" Cheeseman, Whitfield and Death (2017, p.206) govern legitimately. This resonates with what Omilusi (2017, p.37) observes, that "there have been common political and economic constraints on developing democratic societies throughout Africa [that include] inefficient bureaucracies wherein people [have] little trust in government."

In the editorial analysed earlier, *The Post* employs the metaphor of money and power, writing in it that "Edgar should realise that power and money have changed him a lot" and alleged that he was a weak leader who was pretending to be strong; further writing that "he tries very hard to look confident and strong but carries too many weaknesses inside him and on his shoulders" *The Post*, 10 May 2016. Although this is partly attributed to Lungu's confession that he had no vision when campaigning to succeed Sata, this theme of morality is most likely informed by the history of Lungu's practice as a private lawyer. Records have shown that at one point, he had illegally benefitted from money meant for his clients after getting a court ruling. Media reports indicate that.

> *Edgar Lungu stole his client's money as a lawyer and had his practising license withdrawn by the Law Association of Zambia. He only got his licence back when he was a minister. How was this possible? But how did this dishonest and disgraced lawyer who was not fit to practice law become the leader of the Patriotic Front and, after that, the President of the Republic of Zambia?* (*The Mast*, 2018)

This excerpt shows how Lungu has been treated as a subject in the news over the years. Although this fact had become public knowledge, it formed part of the central theme of how the media viewed and reported on Lungu once it was apparent in 2015

that he would be a presidential candidate. Other media entities, such as the *Zambian Watchdog* (Zambian Watchdog 2015)[7], an online news site, also reported extensively on such matters. This sharply contrasts how the public media treated the same subject. These variations within the same media landscape illustrate how factors outside the news processing, including sociological, political and others, combine to emerge in themes when analysed. As Reese (2001, p.103) argues that "although research has not emphasized explicit value judgments in the analysis of press coverage, … [journalists adopt the single story, image, or concept" in their reporting. Thus emerged the theme of a corrupt person, untrustworthy, and therefore incapable of presiding over Zambian affairs or state resources, as reported by *The Post* newspaper about Lungu.

In contrast, the newspaper covered the opposition leader Hakainde Hichilema more objectively, highlighting his strengths and weaknesses. For instance, in one story that contrasted the two, headlined "*It is a pretence to question Lungu's lust for power, money, leaving out HH" The Post,* 16 June 2016, the paper deployed the old catchphrase noting in the story lead, "*The get-rich-fast mentality is in all exploitative capitalist politicians"* to portray politicians as persons who lack the moral stamina to avoid abuse of public resources. This resonates with Sishuwa (2020, p.607)'s observation that "MPs who were expected to distribute patronage benefits to their constituents typically ended up pocketing the public funds set aside for state projects." This belief is widely held against politicians and has a universal appeal to it. This signalling of the salient issues in political discourse, as Pan and Kosicki (1993, p.56) suggest, is used by the newspaper to "advocate [for] certain ideas and provide devices to encourage certain kinds of audience processing of the texts." In this case, the newspaper sought to curry favour of the subject with the audience, which are the voting citizens/ constituents Sishuwa refers to above. This contrasting coverage is in keeping with the view held by most journalists I interviewed, as reflected in Chapter Six, where they suggest they consider themselves as a critical voice in national debates, like

[7] The Zambian Watchdog became an influential online news site in the early years once the PF had formed government in 2011. Many believed it was aligned to the opposition UPND and affiliated journalists although this has never been proven with evidence) With the increasing significance and influence of online news in the Zambian politics in the early 2010s, the news site's influence and voice in political debates became indispensable.

opposition political parties and would therefore not expose 'fellow opposition' voices to criticism unnecessarily. This shows how morality is used to evoke scepticism towards all politicians – but allows for Lungu's specific history to be raised in ways that use objective journalistic concerns/values and incorporate polarising views.

Economic theme *(The Post)*

Like the other themes discussed above, the theme dealing with the economic news was presented obliquely from the perspective of the privately owned *Post* newspaper. The sources and subjects' treatment were similarly along party lines. PF and its officials showed scepticism in the stories carried by the tabloid newspaper, while opposition groups were treated better. Major stories that localised the polarisation in this instance discussed how the ruling party at the time, the "PF have failed to run the economy - Sichinga" – *The Post, May 18, 2016; "Musumali questions timing of IMF, PF government dealings", The Post, May 19, 2016.* When taken collectively, these stories have a common denominator that casts doubt on the ruling party's ability to manage the country's economic affairs. Ultimately, evidence from the analysis shows that stories are treated in ways that show scepticism towards Lungu's government to control the country's financial affairs, which works to direct the projected audiences to assess opposition parties' capabilities in that regard. Thus the economic failures under the incumbent are used against them. At the same time, the newspaper stops short of recommending a specific opposition political party as the preferred choice to reign in on the economy.

Consistent with the owners' agenda policy, journalists quoted voices or authorities with pessimistic views in stories and couched the language to show that the party in power had "failed to run the economy." Deploying such lexical devices as 'failed' and 'questions' as captured in headline stories above "influence [society] while using its social and political weight to put pressure on the elite. It endorses socio-cultural values that neither society nor the elite can oppose." Le (2003, p.709). Effectively, this means that because the newspaper had grown in stature and influence over the political field in

Zambia over the years, its voice or opinion on matters set the agenda not only for the national discourse but even among other news media organisations. This is in keeping with statements that journalists made in the interviews section, as reflected in Chapter Six, that the newspaper was a political project from inception, a view that Chama (2014, p.178) has corroborated about the newspaper's influence on democracy within Zambia.

Additionally, the issue of corruption as the overarching theme was equally featured in the coverage of stories related to the economy. Some of the media text that highlights the presence of this strand of the theme include *"Under UPND government ACC [Anti-Corruption Commission] will be free to probe us all- HH" The Post, May 25, 2016; "Empty treasury awaits next government – Habazoka" The Post,* 3 June 2016*; "Development projects will speak for PF on August 11- Kalaba" - The Post*, 5 June 2016; From the stories captured, it became more evident that the issue was pervasive in *The Post* newspaper.

1.1. Editorial discourse analysis

Perhaps the highlight of this theme was one editorial comment of *The Post*, May 15, 2016, titled *"Is Lungu blaming God for our power shortage and economic problems?"* In it, the paper laid a scathing attack on Lungu:

> *Edgar Lungu says the challenges and problems the country faces today are not his creation. They are a product of factors beyond his control…When will our leaders start taking responsibility for what is happening in our country? Today, Edgar is trying to blame everything that is not going well in the country, our economy, drought, and nature. Who is responsible for the happenings in nature? Is it God? Is Edgar blaming God? (The Post,* 15 May 2016)

The entire editorial deconstructed this narrative by showing how Lungu's government had not adequately prepared to avert the effects of economic and environmental challenges, declaring in conclusion that *"If we take our destiny in our hands, follow a correct political model to face our problems honestly instead of evading…we must persevere… Trying to blame everything on nature or others is not a solution. And this is*

not leadership on the part of Edgar; it is evasion." In a significantly religious nation that Zambia is and a Christian nation by declaration, "the Christian nation (hereafter, the Declaration) discourse was used as an ideological state tool" often for political coalescing of waning influence or favour among the voters (Kaunda, 2018, p.216). As such, when the newspaper upended the normative understanding of religion within such a society, the intent was to enlist a negative view of it, Lungu, by inferring blasphemy on his part and perhaps his political fortunes. To question and doubt God is a sure way to lose political influence in Zambia. Kaunda (2018, p.220) argues that "…political candidates in Zambia openly side with the Christian faith by demonstrating how [it] has become a conservative religious instrument through which public discussions are oriented among the majority of Zambia people." As such many politicians are Christianised to stay relevant. Therefore, by appealing to such a lexical device that holds significance among Zambians, the editorial was deployed by the newspaper to enlist a negative view of Lungu as a candidate.

This showed the embedded polarisation I referred to previously in Chapter Six. The editorial accuses the party of deferring to God their responsibility. *"Edgar is trying to blame everything that is not going well on nature."* They ask, *"Who is responsible for the happenings in nature? Is it God? Is Edgar blaming God?"* (*The Post* 2015) The paper employs these questions and phrases to portray Lungu and the PF as irresponsible, and by appealing to the religious mantra of blaming it on God, it shows how the newspaper is aware of the place of God and religion within the Zambian political landscape. As scholars have noted, religion in politics is a contested issue that usually evokes feelings of reverence. Most often, an appeal or reference to a deity such as God causes the vilest of politicians to reflect, at least in the public sphere, as society expects. Any sign of dismissiveness of religion is frowned upon, and such people are viewed negatively. Ellis and Haar (2007, p.390) posit that "religion in Africa is grounded in acquiring knowledge that reflects and shapes how people have viewed the world. If only for this reason, religion has an important bearing on politics. Indeed politics in Africa cannot be fully understood without taking its religious dimension into account." Therefore, it is reasonably expected that politicians will court religion in their

mobilization efforts and interactions with members of society. This is why Abbink (2014, p.84) also argues that "few people would contest the continued importance that religion holds in African life, in terms of not only numbers of adherents but also the vast scope of religious experiences and the links between religion and politics and public life."

1.2 Economic Thematic Analysis *(The Post)*

The Post's coverage of Lungu showed how, by his admission, the economy was failing due to conditions out of his control. He was abdicating responsibility as the leader. The newspaper wrote, "This is not leadership by Edgar (Lungu), its evasion." *The Post*, 3 June 2016. As a result of this, the newspaper painted a gloomy picture of the future economic prospects of Zambia using headlines such *as "Empty Treasury awaits next government - Habazoka"*[8] *and "Tourists cancel bookings to Zambia"*[9] However, the newspaper also lamented the amount and level of economic debate within the campaigns to be extremely low, noting that the *"Level of debate on economic policy is extremely shallow."* This became clear to me while I was coding the stories. Of the newspaper copies I coded, less than a dozen (nine stories) had an economic story during the campaign period. And even fewer stories had detailed discussions concerning the economic activities that the political parties or officials discussed during their campaigns.

The challenge with journalists capturing economic content in a clear form lies with how most African political parties campaign and couch their messaging around the economy. Cheeseman and Hinfelaar (2010, p.53) argue, "The continual repositioning of party platforms on major issues of economic policy matter, but they can only be understood within the context of the wider party system and how they interact over time." Therefore, it may be that journalists could not easily glean newsworthy economic content from isolated campaign rallies to create coherent messages beyond the easily discernible political rhetoric. I suggest that Zambian media and journalists heavily invest their time in politics and political news as content, as it always resonates with public expectations

[8] *The Post*, 3 June, 2016
[9] *The Post*,18 May 2016

and appetite for such content. Any other information outside the remit of politics or apolitical seems not to strike a similar reverberation. This means journalists are not motivated to dig deeper into such subjects outside politics, a discussion I highlight in Chapter Three of my discussion on the Zambian media landscape by Kasoma and Chama, among others. During election campaign periods, this trend is in hyper mode. Thus, one sees a quick shift even among the broadsheets that should traditionally be dedicated to the analysis and measured debate pivot towards tabloidism, carrying sensational headlines dramatizing ongoing political events, a point which Kasoma (1986) alludes to and later echoed in studies by Banda (2009b) and Chirambo (2011) as I explain in Chapter Three.

Thematic analysis of the *Times of Zambia*

Conflict and Peace theme *(Times of Zambia)*

While much of the content in *The Post* newspaper shows a demonstrable bias against the ruling PF, as alluded to in Chapter Six, much of the news content in the *Times of Zambia* newspaper shows an overwhelming bias against opposition political parties led by the most prominent opposition at the time, the UPND, in keeping with the sentiments journalists expressed during interviews as reflected in Chapter Six. The next subthemes illustrate this point further.

On 2 July 2016, the newspaper carried the following headlines on the front page "*UPND future bleak… as GBM, Banda fight for running mate slot"*, *"DRC King happy with President Lungu"*, *"Headmen cry foul over UPND adoptions"* Additionally, the paper had the following headlines, *"HH unable to fix UPND – Lungu"*, *"PF manifesto guiding light to Zambia's bright future"*. These stories are placed on the front page in juxtaposed style to contrast the two leading contenders before the readership to show Edgar Lungu as more favourable while painting Hakainde Hichilema as a novice in politics, incapable of organising his party and therefore incapable of running the affairs of the nation. As Harrison (2019, p.76) has argued, even though "the culture of balance is conducive to the rapprochement between the news media and political power since it plays to the

concept of fairness, however, 'fairness' is reduced to the application of a ritualistic formula where different points of view are merely juxtaposed." In this instance, bias and polarisation are evident in the consistent compartmentalisation of sources and subjects and how they are treated in the news. Using lexical terms such as 'bleak' and 'cry foul,' the newspaper deploys devices that transmit a negative message about the subject of discussion. Further, the choice of news sources quoted in the stories demonstrates a lack of diversity, as Ghafour (2015, p.15) suggests.

As illustrated in Chapter Six, the above presumptions explaining this pattern could most likely be found in journalists' responses about the work culture. When journalists highlight the existing fear of the 'invisible hand' and the system, when journalists reveal that they engage in self-censorship as a self-preservation modality in the face of precarious working conditions, these texts illustrate how these factors influence their practice (Matthews and Onyemaobi, 2020). At the centre of this equation is the demonstration of how ownership affects journalism practice and subsequent emerging journalistic cultures. As (Baker, 2006, p.5) argues, "authoritarian regimes regularly try to censor or control the mass media's provision of information." As shown in Chapter One and Chapter Four and elsewhere in this thesis, Zambia's credentials as a democracy became more questionable during the period this research covers. With closures and suspensions of media outlets such as *The Post newspaper* and *Prime Television,* among others, signs showed a budding authoritarian regime, and the evidence of self-censorship within the media forming part of my study supports this.

1.1. Editorial discourse analysis

The editorial comments, such as that in the *Times of Zambia* of May 9, 2016*,* were in keeping with the polarised pluralism in the news stories. About the opposition, one editorial piece carried by the newspaper was significant in ongoing political discourse. The editorial was titled "*HH rides on tribal tag" Times of Zambia, 17 May 2016".* The editorial noted.

> *It is highly misleading to say Zambians voted for President Edgar Lungu out of emotions following the death of President Sata. However, it is true to say United Party for National Development (UPND) members voted for Hakainde Hichilema after Anderson Mazoka for the simple reason that HH was Tonga. There [were] tribal considerations that have gone into the annals of tribal politics in this country. Mr Hichilema's tribe puts him in better stead against other contenders like Patrick Chisanga, a Bemba and Sakwiba Sikota, a Lozi. (Times of Zambia, 17 May 2021)*

The cut-out in *Figure 8* below carries the entire editorial for illustration purposes.

2 TIMES OF ZAMBIA, Tuesday, May 17, 2016

HOME NEWS

HH rides on tribal tag!

OPINION

IT is highly misleading to say Zambians voted for President Edgar Lungu out of emotions following the death of President Micheal Sata during the previous elections.

However, it is true to say United Party for National Development (UPND) members voted for Hakainde Hichilema after Anderson Mazoka, the founder of the party for the simple reason that HH was Tonga.

There was no emotionalism for the late Mazoka but mere tribal considerations that have gone into the annals of tribal politics in this country.

Mr Hichilema's tribe puts him in a better stead against other contenders like Patrick Chisanga, a Bemba and Sakwiba Sikota, a Lozi.

So, we totally agree with Party deputy spokesperson Frank Bwalya who has rightly said President Lungu would again win the forth-coming elections because he is his own man.

We further agree with Mr Bwalya when he observes that ruling Patriotic Front (PF) will again win these elections because the party has done its best to deliver development which has endeared it to the people of Zambia.

Mr Hichilema appeared on a live interview programme on Muvi Television on Sunday evening charging that President Lungu won the January elections because Zambians voted for him out of emotions.

The UPND leader has, however, promised Zambians that once elected, he would unveil a master plan to fast-track national development to uplift the welfare of Zambians.

He said the opposition UPND had solutions to some of the challenges facing the country and appealed to Zambians to vote for him.

We will remind Mr Hichilema that any opposition party including the Poor People's Party of Alex Muliokela can promise to unveil a master plan to fast track development to uplift the welfare of the people of Zambia.

We say this knowing that actions speak louder than words or promises which anyone can make.

There is an apt philosophical ci-Bemba political slogan that is currently being mouthed by PF cadres. It is called *sonta apo wabomba*-meaning show us what you have done.

The equivalent in ci-Tonga would be *tondege mulimo yako*, which means show us your work.

All opposition leaders who are promising Zambians heaven on earth are merely shadow boxing since, unlike the PF which is in power and walking the talk, they can say anything about turning the economy around.

Going by what the PF has done since it came into power under its founder, late Michael Sata and his successor Edgar Lungu, we can be assured as citizens that it is a serious party that can take the nation to the political and economic Canaan that has eluded this country for many years.

When Mr Sata died, he had already invested his trust in President Lungu to row the boat forward choosing him from an array of other party members.

The incumbent was sworn in as President of Zambia on January 25, 2015 at the National Heroes Stadium characterised by carnival-like excitement in Lusaka and immediately set down to work.

His early successes include forcing the head of the country's central bank out of office and promising lower interest rates, which he did the following month after being sworn into power.

Later he scored another first by appointing Inonge Wina as Zambia's first female Vice-President surprising even gender advocates.

As a human rights champion, Lungu commuted the death sentences of 332 prisoners to life in prison on July 16, 2015 and condemned the massive overcrowding at the Mukobeko prison, calling it "an affront to basic human dignity".

In October 2015, Lungu ordered a national day of prayer which saw religious and political officials who came together in mass prayer for divine intervention to compliment what he was doing to better the lives of Zambians.

President Lungu is on record unveiling his blueprint in alleviating hunger and poverty anchoring it with a broad-based approach that has a bias towards women and youths.

The multi-faceted blueprint focuses on the restoration of dignity to humanity, which is often undermined by poverty and hunger.

Among his other successes is investing massively in infrastructure, steadying the Kwacha, addressing the load shedding crisis and making Zambia a regional breadbasket.

As a person he has a cheerful disposition that has endeared him to Zambians who have warmed up to him to entrust him with another term on August 11.

Are all these achievements to do with emotionalism for Michael Sata's death?

Figure 7. Times of Zambia, 17 May 2016; an example of editorial comment by the newspaper on Hakainde Hichilema

This editorial essentially carried sentiments within the political discourse that had gained traction in the years and months leading up to the 2016 poll. Ethnic commentary, accusations, and counteraccusations of tribalism among the political contenders were rife. For example, Bwalya and Sichone (2018, pp.10,23) posit that "the return to multiparty democracy in the 1990s has created space for ethnic sentiments and expression," further adding that "… the ethnic tag remained the Achilles' heel of the UPND, which political opponents recurrently reminded the electorate about even as they also implemented their ethnic mobilisation strategies." Using semantics and linguistic devices such as "tribal tag," the editorial portrayed a politician using tribal identity as their political platform. Nyamnjoh (2009, p.7) accuses African media of amplifying this tribal perspective, arguing that "the media have assumed a partisan, highly politicised role in Africa. by dividing citizens into the righteous and the wicked,

depending on their party-political leanings, ideologies, regional, cultural, or *ethnic belonging*" (emphasis mine).

The newspaper also carried editorials that condemned the violence, with one simply titled "Violence must be condemned" *Times of Zambia, May 15, 2016.* It reads in part.

> THIS violence must be condemned. The Police will not sit idle like that; we will hit back. Just assure them that the Police are ready, and we will react accordingly." Those are the sentiments of Inspector General of Police Kakoma Kanganja, and if they are put into action, law and order are guaranteed in the country. If political violence erupts during campaigns, the electorate will be gripped with fear, negatively affecting the voter turnout on polling day.
>
> To avoid violence during campaigns once verbally attacked, we believe that the position the Patriotic Front Lusaka youth chairperson Kennedy Kamba has taken of ignoring opponents ranting is welcome and should be embraced by all peace-loving Zambians*. (Times of Zambia,* 15 May 2016.)

In contrast to a similar editorial by *The Post* which justified violence in the form of self-defence, the *Times of Zambia* offered the view that law and order must be respected and those attacked must "ignore the opponents" as "peace-loving Zambians." This contrast in approach to addressing a similar issue by the two newspapers again reflects the elements of ownership influence, self-censorship, and polarisation that the thesis has consistently highlighted throughout. Lee and Lin's (2006, p.331) analysis of two Hong Kong local papers shows "two local newspapers, facing important yet sensitive political issues, constructed two different overall storylines and used two different sets of discursive strategies in their editorials to handle political pressure, mark credibility, and journalistic integrity" the situation in the Zambian context resembles this. Thus, the two newspapers, *The Post* and the *Times of Zambia,* staked out their credibility to their readership as they navigated a precarious environment for journalism to tackle similar issues by employing different discursive strategies. While *The Post* went about it by being more forthright with little censorship, it discursively avoided or omitted news elements that put opposition groups in a bad light—the *Times of Zambia* engaged in

self-censorship to enlist favour from the state as the owners while also attacking opposition political parties.

1.2 Conflict and peace thematic Analysis *(Times of Zambia)*

In contrast with the privately owned *Post,* the *Times of Zambia has* had a distinct set of facts and narratives in its portrayal of the political events unfolding during the campaigns. For instance, it seldom covered the occurrences of violence despite media reports in other outlets such as *The Post, MUVI TV,* or *ZNBC.* In one of their editorials on violence, for example, the *Times of Zambia* took a position aligned with the ownership and editorial policy, as I elaborated above. Media reports had suggested - especially in *The Post,* as I have highlighted in the preceding subsection- that where the ruling PF cadres engaged in perpetrating violence, the police either ignored the situation or aided in meting it out, as journalists revealed in interviews as reflected in Chapter Six. Therefore, this suggests a bias against opposition parties by the Times of Zambia as it encouraged the state, through the police, to 'hit back.' This was counterproductive to the intended objective as it furthered the narrative that Lungu's government was willing and using state institutions to achieve political goals, to the extent of perpetrating violence against opposition political parties. Thus, this was seen as an immoral and fraudulent strategy, as I highlighted in the preceding subsection discussing *The Post* newspaper.

Literature examining the Sub-Saharan region shows a pattern of media culpability in stoking conflicts in cases such as Rwanda (Schabas, 2000; Sarkin and Fowler, 2010), where the media played an active role in inciting ethnic tensions in the lead-up to the 1998 Rwandan genocide, or in Kenya's post-2007-election conflict. Awobamise, Jarrar and Owade (2020, p.185) have argued that "…the media played a role in instigating and inciting violence in the country as [it] did not report on issues in an ethical manner which in turn might have mitigated the violence" during the 2007, 2013 and 2017 post-election flare-ups. They, however, argue that "it is media's independence and objectivity that gives it credibility, in terms of informing people and influencing them to make changes towards the peaceful resolution of conflicts." Literature on Zimbabwe shows

how “journalists took “positioned” reporting styles and propagated hate speech, name-calling and propaganda” (Tsarwe and Mare, 2019, p.18). These positions can likewise be identified in the *Times of Zambia*’s reportage during the 2016 election campaign. However, analysing the trends of this reportage shows a gradual build-up. For example, the pivoting to a more extreme media reportage in Rwanda grew over a decade from 1987 until the genocide of 1994. According to Schabas (2000, p.145), “In 1987, a more provocative and iconoclastic journalism emerged in the form of *Kanguka* ("Awake") *Kanguka's* success led more extremist elements to create a new publication.” In the case of Zimbabwe, Tsarwe and Mare (2019, p.19) report that “journalists (from both private and public media) co-opted themselves into factional political camps, occasioned by the intense contestation of political power beginning in the early 2000s” These historical insights illuminate the operations of the media in Zambia during, and before, 2016.

However, the call for peace by the *Times of Zambia* is one device that relied on the peace journalism model that I discuss in Chapter Three. That was a mark of positive advocacy, given the prevailing volatile political conditions during political campaigns towards the election. Proposed initially by Galtung in 1986, Awobamise, Jarrar and Owade (2020, p.185) argue that “Galtung categorized news reporting during conflicts into two broad categories – Peace Journalism (PJ) and War Journalism (WJ) and based this classification on four orientations, namely, 1. Peace or War, 2. Truth or propaganda, 3. People or elites, and 4. Solutions or victory.” Further, Lynch & McGoldrick (2005, p.254) have suggested that peace journalism should be viewed as the “broader, fairer and more accurate way of [reporting] stories.” Given the representation that has characterised the public media, as exemplified by the *Times of Zambia* here, these aspects show a more desirable approach to news reporting, especially during tense situations that may easily spiral into conflicts such as election campaign periods. However, in the case of *The Times of Zambia*, the newspaper claimed this moral high ground of balanced reporting, while still actually supporting partisan views in the inclusion of ‘hitting back’ as upholding standards.

Morality theme (*Times of Zambia*)

Just as *The Post* covered the opposition positively, the *Times of Zambia* newspaper conversely carried most stories and editorials that had an optimistic tone about the PF and its officials. Thus, headlines such as *"Tayali endorses PF's development projects," "Stop ECZ falsehoods, Lungu demands proof that he is meeting ballot paper bidders" - Times of Zambia, May 17, 2016.* Another set of stories and editorials featured prominently as those focussing on ethnicity, such as *"Refrain from tribalism, Christians implored"* in the *Times of Zambia* on May 15, 2016. The story reads in part.

> *A KITWE-BASED clergyman has urged Christians to avoid tribal remarks that can cause divisions in the country, particularly during election campaigns. [He said] hate speech and tribal remarks should not be entertained as it was a recipe for confusion. Pastor Mumba noted there is a reason our former president Kenneth Kaunda liked to sing the song 'Tiyende Pamodzi ndi Mutima Umo' (Let us move together in one accord) which should be used to reflect on and unite the country," he said.*

However, it is plausible to detect disingenuity in using these appeals to unity as they can also be used for less benevolent purposes to silence dissent and opposition. From the tone of the newspaper, such as encouraging the political establishment to 'hit back', this is not a farfetched proposition.

The sub-theme of corruption did not feature as strongly in the *Times of Zambia*. However, they covered several stories on the electoral process, including one headlined "ACC warns against electoral malpractice" in its edition of July 4, 2016.

> *THE Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has warned aspiring political candidates participating in the August 11 general elections against engaging in electoral malpractices. "In this regard, the Commission has partnered with Transparency International Zambia (TIZ) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to conduct sensitisation to the public about electoral corruption,". (Times of* Zambia, 4 July 2016*)*

The story was accompanied by an editorial titled *"Heed ACC warning,"* with part of the editorial reading.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) warning is timely because it will promote and encourage free and fair elections.

We want to encourage members of the public to report suspected cases of electoral corruption and urge law enforcement agencies to sternly deal with any person found wanting, regardless of their political affiliation. (Times of Zambia of July 4, 2016)

Demonstrable in the preceding is the choice of quoted voices for most of the stories analysed, with the majority coming from the ruling party or its surrogates or those who are apolitical such as church officials. The treatment of both the sources and the subjects was according to political affiliation, with those from the ruling party receiving more favourable coverage. In contrast, the opposition parties received minimal coverage, with those few mainly in the negative. This was deduced from manual reading of earlier stories coded using the NVivo software.

1.1. Morality thematic analysis (*Times of Zambia*)

The *Times of Zambia* authored several editorials focussing on divisive ethnicity as a significant issue of concern in the political discourse of Zambia and attacking the opposition political parties. This reflects Whitten-Woodring's point (2009, p.605) about state-controlled or owned media organisations; “when the media are government-controlled, it follows that they will have little or no impact on government’s respect for physical integrity and rights because censorship constrains the news media to a lapdog role.” Thus, most negative stories would portray those in opposition as perpetrators of tribalist politics when evidence pointed to ruling party officials demonstrating a deep-seated polarised culture predicated on fear and self-censorship among state-owned media journalists; a factor interviewed journalists consistently alluded to in Chapter Six. This trend was supported by the *Times of Zambia’*s reporting. It projected the two leading presidential candidates in contrasting styles, with Lungu as the benevolent, humble candidate while Hichilema was presented as arrogant and ill-prepared to lead the country.

However, the appeal against hate speech is a valuable linguistic device to promote peaceful elections. On its own merits, the call by the individuals works to calm the

tensions that were palpable during the campaign period. However, although arguments against 'hate speech' evoke supposedly shared values such as high moral ground or morality, nation-building, and unity, the newspaper possibly still dwelt on divisive content, as I refer to Kasoma's (1996) Afriethics proposition in Chapter Three.

Economic theme (*Times of Zambia*)

The economic theme, as discussed in Chapter Six as reported in *The Post,* was primarily concerned with news stories that contained monetary policy or development. From the evidence, the PF was lauded as a successful party, and its presidential candidate had performed well enough to deserve another term of office by winning the August 11, 2016, election.

A common perception that has been rife during polls in Zambia is the use of development projects as part of the 'vote-buying' strategy by the incumbent party. In this instance, Lungu was quoted in the *Times of Zambia* edition of August 4, 2019, under the story titled *"Development projects must go on despite polls*", where he was quoted as:

> *President Edgar Lungu has said delivering of development projects must go on despite the election period that the country is going through. President Lungu said the Government had a duty to develop the nation and that the elections would not restrain its mandate.*
>
> *Mr Lungu said during a public rally in Kitwe that the Government's agenda was to develop every part of the country and that it would continue doing so even after the elections. He said the Government had committed itself to improving schools, roads, and health facilities, which were critical to the country's development. "We will continue to touch and develop every part of the country. We are not going to be limited in terms of delivering development projects because of the elections. Development projects will continue even after the elections," President Lungu said. (Times of Zambia, August 4, 2016)*

Other similarly themed stories were recorded, such as *"Support Lungu's Development Agenda, youths urged",* which read in part:

Patriotic Front (PF) Kabushi Constituency aspiring member of Parliament (MP) Bowman Lusambo has called on youths to continue supporting President Edgar Lungu's national development agenda.

Mr Lusambo said President Lungu had shown commitment to economically improving the living standards of youths in the country, citing many valuable projects that the Government was implementing centred on youth empowerment. (Times of Zambia, May 20, 2016)

The youth have long been seen to be the swing voting bloc in any election, and whoever of the politicians wins their attention is almost certainly winning the election. Therefore, selling these aspirations of economic empowerment to the youths was a political strategy by the incumbent PF to secure this all-important voting block and must therefore be viewed from this perspective.

Other stories within this theme include *"I'll deliver more ...as Lungu challenges UNZA to lead in research studies" (Times of Zambia, May 20, 2016); UPND has nothing to offer Zambians – Tayali (Times of Zambia,* July 2016*); Kampyongo, Daka urge Zambians to support Lungu (Times of Zambia,* 2 June 2016*).* "*HH unable to fix UPND, Lungu" (Times of Zambia, June 2, 2016*). All these that the *Times of Zambia* newspaper and the wider public media favoured the ruling PF while giving negative coverage to significant opposition political parties, thus reflecting and amplifying a polarised political environment.

1.1. Economic thematic Analysis *(Times of Zambia)*

On the economic theme, the TOZ news promoted a narrative of successful financial performance by the incumbent Lungu. In one central story that captured the essence of this theme, titled "Development projects must go on despite polls", the newspaper led the story with the sentence "President Edgar Lungu said delivering of development projects must go on despite election…" This characterisation depicts him to be someone committed and hardworking as the leader of the nation, which would appeal to voters.

The second paragraph is even more interesting in casting Lungu as victorious before the election. Using the device places him within this category as the winner by quoting the President, saying that the "Government's agenda was to develop every part of the country and that it would continue to do so even after the elections." While portraying Lungu as hardworking, it also assumed that he would win the election as president to continue developing "all parts of the country." This is using an acclaim device that, according to Benoit, are "statements that stress a candidate's advantages or benefits such as self-praise, candidate's character or promise addresses policy." (2007, p.36). This device is embedded within the story to give him national appeal as he asks for voter support. Bwalya (2017, p.1555) observes that "although the Zambian Electoral Code of Conduct requires media to uphold fair and balanced reporting, there is a general schism in media alignment to political parties" It shows that each of the two newspapers (*The Post* and *Times of Zambia*) reported positively on the party they were perceived to support while negatively portraying those they were not perceived to support. In all instances, the state-run media reported little of the opposition campaigns. Election Observer Missions such as the EOM agreed with this assessment, noting that the 2016 "campaign period was marred by systematic bias in state media, which failed to provide fair and equitable coverage of the campaigns of all parties" (EOM, 2016, p.6)

Discussion and implications

William and Andre (1989, p.2) argue that a foundational step in "[thematic] analysis is the identification of [organising] devices, which are specific linguistic structures such as metaphors, visual icons, and catchphrases that communicate" as well as identifying "specific keywords that constitute the concepts underlying the [themes]" (Reese, 2010, p.20). This allows for evaluating the media text and identifying problematic features in the text as deployed by the journalist (Entman, 1993). Considering the choice, inclusion or exclusion of potential sources and voices on a given subject and the angles a story may take in the discourse is also critical. In this case, the stories about how the 2016 Zambian election was covered showed that sources from the opposition parties were mostly quoted in the private media, while those from the incumbent party and their associates featured more in the public or state-owned media. This brings to the fore the

issue of the agency of journalists in the news production process as well as counter publics (Scheufele and Scheufele, 2010, p.111; Valera-Ordaz, 2017, p.128), In this case, the evidence suggests that journalists attempt to gain favour with various political players. Or conversely, journalists avoid the repercussions of losing favour for fear of reprisals that I have extensively discussed in Chapter Six. Usually, they achieve this by positively covering one group while excluding or negatively covering the rival political group.

As I stated earlier, these are devices journalists use to package the news for consumption by their audience (Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999). From the evidence in the stories of the two newspapers, *The Post* and *Times of Zambia*, I have identified major themes with a significant presence in the media text, implying they featured highly among journalists and the sources as agents. Some scholars have used models of extraction of functional issue-specific themes and messages. One such is Xu (2020, p.247), who explains that she uses a "model of data condensation and abstraction to explicate issue specific as well as generic [themes] in messages to capture the communicative structure."

Conclusion

Having set out to analyse themes in journalistic content, I have explored the major themes and how these relate to journalists' experiences, as explained in Chapter Six. Evident are schema and contradictions in public and private media, which is expected in a pluralistic media space. Many of the stories reflected polarisation, ownership, and editorial biases. The chapter adds a new layer to the knowledge by showing how most operational decisions contingent on the prevailing environmental factors action was taken that presented the least risk in their work. This further provides evidence of the types of themes present in the media. For instance, the two leading presidential candidates, Edgar Lungu and Hichilema Hakainde, were treated in contrasting styles. Lungu received overwhelmingly negative publicity, while Hichilema received a fair share of positive coverage. Within this context, corruption was analysed as an overarching theme throughout the range of the election concerning the contenders. It is also worth

noting that The Post newspaper was accused of sensationalism as a tabloid, and not everything it wrote about subjects was factual. Chama (2020, p.143) shows this. She cautions that “many tabloid newspapers tend to be highly sensational and sometimes careless when it comes to reporting, and elements of bias and fabrication of facts continue to exist.”

Political pluralism promotes a diversity of perspectives and voices on several national issues. However, in the case of this research, evidence suggests the Zambian media act differently by clustering political parties into the ruling party versus opposition political parties without focussing on the ideological differences, which blunts polarised pluralism, as previous research has shown. Worse, journalists’ fears and precarities, as explained in Chapter Four and this Chapter, meant that this polarization was exacerbated through heavy self-censorship. In political communication, this is a disservice to the population interested in salient issues that individual political parties offer, a unique feature of this study. The treatment of these political groupings seems to be largely dependent on media ownership, with Private-Owned media expected to back opposition voices while State-owned media lean towards incumbents. Although Valera-Ordaz concludes that “results confirm that political parties and the news media operate as described by Hallin and Mancini’s (2004) model of polarised pluralism” (2017, p.127), however, my thesis shows several departures from previously observed trends based on the disparate experiences by journalists amidst unique environmental challenges and opportunities.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

I have argued throughout the thesis that journalism plays a significant role in the political life of democratic states. In the case of Zambia, I have consistently made the case that while this holds, the current media system undermines this role due to several impeding factors. Broadly, six areas pose these challenges as follows;

a) The first and overarching factor is the polarised pluralism that pits sections of the media against the other in terms of their political allegiances;
b) The second factor, which links to the first one, is the crucial role that ownership plays in influencing the practice of journalists in their work;
c) Thirdly, the prevalence of contingency-based journalism culture that does not support predictability and established patterns and cultures of practice among journalists, the factor itself premised on the precarious conditions existing within the Zambian setup.
d) Fourth, the back-channel collaboration efforts, both horizontally between journalists and vertically with other key stakeholders such as political players and state security personnel. (This echoes the idea of back-channel / unofficial/secret communications generally and mirrors 'back-channel diplomacy' where unofficial conversations take place between the relevant parties or political actors)
e) The fifth factor is the decolonisation agenda that *The Post* trialled*, a* potent force with significant implications on journalism and social politics. Although this was an outlier within the Zambian context, attempts by this newspaper show that journalism outfits can operate in different extremes, from a significantly neutral, ideology-free plane to ones where ideology or other positionalities determine and influence the editorial agenda and character of such an outfit. The latter was more common across African journalism traditions, as I illustrate in Chapter Three.
f) The sixth factor, which links to the first and second factors, are the tensions and conflicts of interest between journalists and owners. Further, as an auxiliary element not fully developed, this thesis identifies divided newsrooms and, to some extent,

divided media organisations, exacerbating the precariousness of the journalism profession.

Despite these disparate factors, Zambian journalism still demonstrates the ability and desire to entrench democracy alongside making strides towards professionalism, press freedom and autonomy of journalism and journalists.

The thesis has explored both the practice of journalism and emerging journalistic cultures within the field of political news and political communication. Taking the approach of a case study of journalists' experience and analysis of selected media texts during the 2016 general election in Zambia, I argue that journalists' understanding of precarious conditions within the field makes their work challenging based on the first set of factors above. Among the most pronounced treacherous conditions, journalists have to work in fear of loss of employment due to owners' overreach and control of the news production process (mainly as journalists recount in Chapter Six in sections 1.3 and 1.4), usually manifesting through censorship and direct threats to supposed 'errant' journalists as a compliance mechanism. Additionally, journalists worry about the risk of physical harm from mostly political party cadres, who feel their superiors are getting bad press. Analysis of selected media texts reflects how these fears shape the news and the tensions within the media sphere. The discursive strategies journalists employ speak to the concern that preoccupies most journalists, as revealed during interviews. These include censorship, omission or emphasis and downplaying of certain aspects of political news in the production process.

This thesis argues, particularly in the literature review and background chapters, (Chapters One, Two, and Three), that there is a lack of comparative studies of how different media organisations cover elections within the Zambian context, hence this study. Although there has been media and elections-related research done covering Zambia's elections since its return to democracy in 1991, including those of 2016 (Ndawana, 2011; Goldring and Wahman, 2016; Willems, 2016; Bwalya, 2017; Kaunda, 2018), the absence of comparative research of media entities shows that this has not

been ventured into more thoroughly. This research fulfils this identified need and broadens understanding of the precarities journalists across significant portions of media landscapes face during heightened political activity. Research on the nation's journalism has been dominated by case studies of individual media organisations' performance, such as *The Post's* performance during the 2011 elections (Chama, 2014), the *Times of Zambia,* discussing the newspaper's historical positioning in the wake of Zambia's reinstitution of democracy (Chirambo, 2011). This thesis expands on this scholarly work to assess other aspects of journalism, such as journalistic culture, polarised pluralism, the role and influence of ownership in media practice, and the impact of precarious conditions on it.

This undertaking, therefore, was fundamentally designed to address this identified gap for two significant reasons, among others. The first is that, since most African countries attained independence, a large part of their media systems remain in the hands of the government, which skews the political landscape in favour of the ruling parties (Chama, 2014; EOM, 2016). This is also a diagnosis that Shaw (2009), Nyamnjoh (2005a) Nyamnjoh (2005b), and other scholars make in arguments about African journalism models, as discussed in Chapter Three. This is the case for Zambia, where the state commands more than half of the media market by national reach or coverage (EOM 2016, SPFEOM 2016). For example, the EOM (2016, p.22) observed that "…state-owned media lack[ed] impartiality and are perceived by the public as a mouthpiece for the government and incumbent president, contrary to international principles on independence and editorial freedom of the media." This, in turn, limits the plurality of media, an essential principle in promoting a healthier media outlook.

Secondly, since the democratisation wave that swept across the sub-region in early 1990, with Zambia among the first countries (Lynch and Crawford, 2011, pp.279-282), research indicates a lack of progress in entrenching fundamental democratic values such as press freedom and rights and freedoms of assembly, association, and expression amongst political parties (Cheeseman and Larmer, 2015; Conroy-Krutz,

2016; EOM, 2016). Scholars argue that this means the political playing field is not level, rendering most electoral politics uncompetitive at best and a sham since political narratives are dominated by ruling parties using their overt and covert influence over the media (Cheeseman, Lynch and Willis, 2014). This thesis also demonstrates that although state media has continued dominance, a) private media is also highly partisan, and b) despite polarisation and constraints on press freedoms, there is still evidence of commitment to internationally recognised professional standards among research subjects. This is demonstrated consistently throughout, especially in Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

Among the main underlying contributing factors to the polarisation and skewed political news reporting identified are ownership influence and editorial interference as key. This is intensified since most news processes were predicated on the dispositions and attitudes of media owners. As illustrated in Chapter Six, journalists identified organisational editorial policies and practices as significant determinants of news events and how they were covered. For instance, signs of a pervasive culture and disposition still embrace media premised on old autocratic political systems, with state control continuing over large press sections. Hallin and Mancini (2012, p.174) argue that some countries' experiences of totalitarian legacies have informed and guided the development of media systems after democratic reinstitution to guard against a repeat of historical shortfalls. Inversely, however, in the Zambian case, this thesis argues that media systems have not fully transitioned to a more democratic character as there is still an entrenched state interest at both ownership and regulatory levels. Signs of autocratic regression in recent years, such as the closure of *The Post* newspaper in 2016, the closure of Prime Television in 2020, and the suspension of several media operating licenses (see Chapter Four and Chapter Six), bolsters this argument. Further, the state's reluctance to relinquish ownership of media organisations three decades after democratic reinstitution makes this argument more compelling. Secondly, formal media regulatory efforts that coincided with the emergence of private media target private media more than State-Owned organisations, indicating a stalling of steps towards a freer media landscape (Ndawana, Knowles and Vaughan, 2021, p.12).

Further, this thesis argues that journalists, especially from the private media but also from the state-owned media, respond to repressive measures using discursive strategies such as journalism cultures that blunt these manoeuvres, including covert collaborative efforts with other journalists and stakeholders such as political operatives and state-security agents. Graves and Konieczna (2015, p.para 1) illustrate how this culture of “news sharing of investigative news and professional fact-checking groups” works in the USA. In the case of Zambia, interview data have established the prevalence of back-channel collaborations that is similar to Graves and Konieczna's conception of s=news sharing. Other scholars highlight identical efforts elsewhere, sometimes formalising institutional-level cooperation (Moyo, Mare and Matsilele, 2019; Høiby, 2020; Ryfe, 2021). Although this culture has evolved and practised in other contexts, it is a novel practice within the Zambian journalism landscape. Journalists averted several risks through these practices, including physical harassment, workplace retribution, job losses, in-the-moment threats such as attack and injury, and more long-term, mundane but still significant risks such as loss of employment. The preceding examination of journalistic culture extends scholarly inquiry and understanding of journalism cultures in contextually different media and political systems. Instead, this research has established that sometimes media, primarily private, are motivated by a complex combination of factors, broader than political, economic or corporatist models, to survive. As demonstrated, ideological commitments such as The Post's were also motivating factors.

Thus, I suggest that the Zambian media continues to be loosely “situated between Hallin and Mancini’s Polarized Pluralist and Democratic Corporatist models.”(Hallin and Mancini, 2012, p.29) in the sense that while they do not entirely embrace a corporatist model in their outlook, the media is significantly shaped by polarization along ownership lines, where state-run media mostly favours the party in power while most private media favour opposition parties. This is similar to how Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.11) describe the models: “Democratic Corporatist Model by a historical co-existence of commercial media and media tied to organized social and political groups, and by a relatively active but legally limited role of the state; the Polarized Pluralist Model by integration of the

media into party politics, the weaker historical development of commercial media, and a strong role of the state." The contradictions within the Zambian media system indicate this fluidity and continual evolution of media culture in response to the ever-changing political landscape, which impacts the operational, legal, and regulatory environments within which the media must function. This also demonstrates that Zambia does not easily fit any of these models but borrows features from several of them.

Implications for Zambian Journalism

The overarching effect of the findings of this research should be the reevaluation of the social-cultural context within which journalists operate. This is imperative when the cultural dynamics within Zambia do certain progressive journalistic practices, such as holding power to account and questioning authorities and elders, often misconstrued as a cover by these elements trying to escape scrutiny. Reevaluating this culture here means interrogating the limitations that these unwritten rules within society impose on most journalists' potential to fully exploit their professional skills to help shine a light on the governance structures and systems. Laws and regulations formulated to govern journalists are often predicated on these social, cultural, and moral values. Still, the danger is that they are used to check what political leaders term journalistic excesses. Reevaluation here would mean adapting some of the proper African social-cultural values while decanting those that do not fit within the democratic governance discourse, as I mentioned earlier. If this is achieved over time, the wider society will begin to appreciate the roles and role conceptions of journalists, to which the journalism sector will contribute in shaping and benefit from the changes.

The research has shown how media, mainly journalistic culture is an integral factor in any social-political discourse about the dynamic functioning of a democracy. The study establishes that due to several factors, such as "state and legal restrictions on the news" (Harrison, 2019, p.vii), the media landscape is deeply polarised along partisan lines, influencing how the media carries out their *civil function.* Analysis of the media landscape shows that with commercial and political pressures present, the media still

make efforts that transcend these to sustain social-political discourses. Scholars such as Hanitzsch et al. (2011, pp.275-276) note that sometimes, “journalists pursue missions and promote certain values, socially committed, assertive and motivated” and are willing to be partisan to an extent to achieve these objectives. From the preceding, it is clear that Zambian public and private media journalists perceive their roles differently. While private media journalists show that their “professional roles impact [the] political and democratic life” of society (Mellado, Hellmueller and Donsbach, 2016, p.1), public media journalists are disillusioned with their loyalty, coerced or not, to interests of media owners, which is the State. However, crossovers by these professional journalists during their careers between the two sectors (state and private) have meant these characterisations are more fluid than definitive. Harrison (2019, p.viii) aptly captures this conflicted view of journalism, arguing that “good and bad news journalism still coexists, as do good and bad regulatory regimes, just as good and bad news organisations do.”

Further, the fact that these facets of journalism exist within the same geographical and social-political context presents itself as an antithesis, where the same profession has distinct cultures based on dependent variables. As evidence shows, the stories by two media sectors, the private vs the public, profoundly contrast the style and portrayal of political organisations. While the private media sector primarily presented one divide of the political spectrum (the opposition) to be credible and therefore deserving to be elected, the state-owned media presented the same group (the opposition) politicians to be despicable, corrupt, inept, and therefore not worthy of holding political office, and vice versa. Far from presenting objective facts, the media tell subjective facts often premised on ideology or serve an editorial agenda. Essentially, these media texts work to both deploy these agendas or conceal such plans. I suggest, therefore, that it is difficult to tell the truth apart in such an environment except by careful textual analysis and what is obtained within the social-political space —usually through large-scale public polls, audience/public surveys and other records that validate or nullify news narratives. The stance by the private media, however, seems to validate a common thesis that journalists attempt to achieve “balance and objectivity…[despite] of political

pressures" (Griffin 2010: 35). This shows that despite the pressures present within the Zambian context, "good journalism [does not] follow a specific view of political and commercial outcomes; far from it, good journalism spans the political and economic divide." (Harrison, 2019, p.ix).

Additionally, this study establishes that public media journalists were primarily loyal to the owners and willingly embraced the propaganda role for the state like the "polarized pluralist model" present in European Mediterranean countries, with highly politicized media and low journalistic professionalism" (Herrero et al., 2017, p.4798), as well as Nigeria where "press in Nigeria is still divided along political affiliations"(Akpojivi, 2018, p.14). However, I also show that some journalists within the sector pressed for more autonomy, a position which others such as Hamusokwe (2016, pp.43-44) also argue has been the guiding principle for most Zambian media editorial policies. I, therefore, suggest that the coercion experienced by journalists is evidence that journalists do not willingly accept the dominant culture of ownership and control. This conflicted manifestation of the journalism profession within the public media sector, which was equally visible on a broader, national scale between the two industries, speaks to what Hallin and Mancini (2004, p.21) term as "political parallelism; [where] a media system reflects the major political divisions in society." Other scholars point to the lack of autonomy in funding (Akpojivi, 2018, p.18), indirect or direct owners' interference in journalists' operations (Nyamnjoh, 2015, pp.2-3) or state interference in regulators' independence (Hargrave and Shaw, 2009), factors which are present within the Zambian context.

While many factors underpin the dynamics within Zambia, the media's political and economic considerations significantly feature in the scheme of things. Scholars such as Chama (2014) and Gondwe (2014) highlight financial and other material benefits as the motivation for the polarised journalistic culture, citing the examples of *The Post* and *Times of Zambia*. The lack of autonomy regarding organisational structures and funding means media entities are left to trade their independence for these finances tied to

government ministries and departments. This is similar to Nigeria, where Akpojivi (2018, p.18) argues that “the lack of autonomy regarding funding indirectly interferes with the operation of the Nigerian Press Commission (NPC)” and in media operations (Nyamnjoh 2003, 2004). Further, Akpojivi (2018, pp.18-19) argues that the NPC “as the regulatory body fails to exercise its authority [because of the] manner in which the government appoints its members,” much like the case in Zambia where regulatory agencies are criticised for lack of independence.

I argue throughout the thesis that journalistic practices, the operating environment, and the media text are intricately interlinked at both the macro and micro levels, resulting in complex relationships that impact how journalism and politics interact. Equally significant in the analysis is how ownership structures influence journalism practice (Islam, Djankov and McLeish, 2002; Ogenga, 2010). This thesis has consistently shown, in Chapter One, Chapter Four, and Chapter Six, that media ownership has a direct bearing on journalists’ professional work and ethical considerations during news processing. Wood and Elliott (1977) argue that media owned or dependent on dominant political institutions or the state for their bottom line gravitate towards their benign owners. Similarly, the concept of political economy, as discussed in Chapter Two, suggests a dependent relationship between media and the owners or dominant institutions (Mosco, 2009; Wasserman, 2010). Thus, although Bennett et al. (2005, p.13) argue that this determines how the “control of their [media] economics are translated, controls over the message are complex and often problematic,” this study deconstructs this complex web by illuminating the relationship between news media and owners which strongly suggests a direct link between ownership control and message form and content.

Summary of key findings and recommendations

Table 4. Summary of key findings and recommendations

Group	Key finding	Recommendation
Ownership **Public media**	Culture of wilful abrogation of professionalism among public media journalists to pursue propaganda	The state's role in both ownership and regulation must gradually diminish to ensure a more level media environment that plays a watchdog role in democracy. The state and media owners must do more to promote and ensure protection of journalists from physical attacks.
	Fear of the 'unknown' or the system among public media journalists due to interference.	
Private media	Journalists having to choose between ethics versus livelihood sources (jobs)	
	The private media viewed as an anti-establishment.	
	Exponential quantitative media growth with regressing press freedom/ work environment	
Media positionality	Media polarisation along political lines an all-time high in 2016. A presidential commission of inquiry on voting patterns report corroborates this finding.	Much of reportage is concentrated on political content to detriment of other human endeavours such as developmental and human-interest news. Need for media to diversify significantly away from political content. Diversity of news will reduce polarisation. A more professional and ethical culture to promote news values of objectivity, balance, and fairness to deescalate polarisation.
	Media polarisation emerged about the same time of the re-advent of the private media in Zambia.	
	Polarisation resulted in divided newsrooms with media outlets with journalists taking partisan sides.	
	Promoted culture of appeasement and punishing journalists prevalent across media.	

Operating environment	Fearful private media sector due to constant threats of closure, suspensions or extra-judicial actions from the government and its allies.	Journalism culture of fear points to lack robust unions and journalists' associations to defend the journalists work from both the media owners overbearing and overreach as well as the intrusive and abusive state's heavy hand. Recommend the need for a more united front union and associations. Recommend that the media industry produce economic and labour reflective remuneration standards commensurate with journalists' experience and qualifications to remove the financial vulnerability which leaves most journalists susceptible to compromise. Media must tap into social media, and citizen journalism for balance of news and safety of as evidenced by number of newspapers with online editions.(Akoh and Ahiabenu, 2012, pp.349-351)
	Money and commercial interests affected media in Zambia across board, influencing operations, denting news ethics.	
	Poor remunerations of journalists have further compounded the situation making especially political news more susceptible to manipulation.	
	Violence against journalists has increased from the early 2000s involving political party cadres and state security resulting in more fear among journalists.	
	A culture of collaboration between journalists from public and private media to cover politically odd events and swap notes.	
	Tribalism and ethnic stereotypical messaging were present in the media during the research.	

Regulatory regime	Failure to regulate media evenly because state uncomfortable applying same standards to private media and public media.	The media in Zambia must divest sectional interests by introducing a co-regulatory system that includes media owners and members of the public to guard against excesses by media organisations or owners as well as blunt any state's interference. (Duncan, 2014, pp.1-4) State must promote a more transparent and friendly operating environment for media through repeal/amendment of certain laws. State must enact long pending legislation such as the ATI to promote press freedom. IBA must promote a culture of correction and dialogue than its current punitive approach.
	State do not want to lose control of public media used for political propaganda.	
	Current SSR efforts stalled in view of IBA record of lack of independence from state.	
	No legal safeguards to protect journalists against harassment.	

With the closure of *The Post* newspaper as the backdrop to the challenges that Zambian journalism faces, this study has examined the nature of journalism's representation of politics using the 2016 election. The closure of the newspaper and subsequent suspensions of several other media outlets in the wake of the 2016 election epitomised the perils of political news reporting that this study examined. This helped explore opportunities and challenges that journalism faces in jurisdictions emerging/transitioning democracies such as Zambia.

The journalists' recollections and recounting of the precarious nature of their work shed light on their experiences and point to a need for continued reforms and improvements within the Zambian context. Among critical and urgent areas that need research that becomes clear as a consequence of the results of this thesis include legislation and regulations that significantly improve the operating environment.

a). The need for significant amendments or repeal and replacement of the *ZNBC* and IBA Acts, focusing on revising board appointment provisions to increase independence and accountability. Parliament should be mandated to directly appoint and demand accountability to enhance the autonomy of the institutions' boards.

b). The IBA's regulatory powers in the broadcast sector should be reduced to prevent the subversion of press freedom, and it should only have guidelines and complaints mechanisms. Affected parties should be able to demand accountability from erring broadcast institutions or file formal complaints with the IBA and seek legal redress if necessary.

c). To improve the journalistic culture in Zambia, focusing on the urgent need for better working conditions and remuneration for journalists is crucial. Journalist remuneration is a critical factor that affects their cultural values, as seen from interview data that reveals a prioritization of financial concerns over ethics and values, especially in the private sector. This issue also applies to state-owned media journalists who prioritize job security for a stable source of income.

Theoretical significance/implications of the research

The theoretical significance of this research is that it challenges the assumption of the universality of journalistic values and practices and highlights the importance of understanding the unique social and cultural contexts in which journalism operates. This recognition of significant differences between Western and African journalism models provides a platform for further investigation into the diversity and uniqueness of African journalism models, which can enrich the knowledge emerging from these undertakings and create more appropriate approaches that fit different settings and environments.

The implications of this research are many, but significant among them is that researchers should avoid the temptation to force models into odd situations and instead allow for the discovery of new journalism models without resorting to preset ones to fulfil the demands of the so-called universal values. This will enable the development of more relevant and practical approaches that fit the unique needs and contexts of different countries and regions. By doing so, researchers can avoid glossing over differences and instead allow for discovering new journalistic models that can better serve the diverse needs of different communities. It further highlights the need to recognize the uniqueness of the African context and the significant role that social-cultural values play in shaping the practice of journalism in the region. This recognition calls for a shift in journalism education and practices towards a more flexible and adaptable approach that integrates local values and practices with the fundamental values of journalism.

Moreover, this research paves the way for further investigations into the uniqueness of African journalism models, which can enrich the knowledge emerging from such studies and contribute to developing more appropriate approaches that fit different settings and environments. By avoiding the imposition of homogenizing models, researchers can discover new journalism models that reflect the diversity and complexity of African journalism cultures.

This research demonstrates the need for a more nuanced and context-specific approach to journalism research and practice. This can lead to more effective and relevant journalism studies and research in Africa and inform future research and policy decisions.

Although this study is limited to Zambia, extrapolations may be drawn elsewhere in countries with similar social-political systems and histories. This thesis also illustrated, with evidence, a deepening polarisation of media across the ownership divide and increasing state control or overreach. While scholars such as Chama have researched political news and journalism within the Zambian context, focusing on tabloids, this thesis builds on that by broadening the scope in the form of a comparative study that includes private broadcast media, *MUVI TV*, and the private tabloid newspaper, *The Post* newspaper*,* a state-owned broadsheet, *Times of Zambia,* and state-owned broadcast media, *ZNBC.*

Future research interests and direction

During this research, several issues have emerged which will require further examination for continuing academic debate on journalism in Zambia and more broadly. It is important to continue researching the intersection between journalism and democracy in Zambia and other countries. Longitudinal studies can be particularly valuable in identifying trends and patterns over time, which can help us understand how journalism has evolved concerning democratic processes and structures. Furthermore, there is a need to examine the challenges journalists face in Zambia, such as low wages, job insecurity, and limited opportunities for career advancement. Such factors may contribute to the brain drain phenomenon, where talented journalists leave the profession or, in some cases, the country in search of better working conditions and opportunities elsewhere. By understanding these challenges and their underlying causes, policymakers and media practitioners can work towards developing strategies to address them and promote a more sustainable and vibrant journalism industry in Zambia. This has left a view

suggesting journalism is a transient profession among many journalism professionals.

Additionally, it would be worthwhile to investigate the various social, cultural, economic, and political factors that enable or hinder the practice of professional and ethical journalism in Zambia. This could involve exploring the impact of media ownership structures and the role of media policies and regulations in shaping the country's journalism landscape.

This comparative research within the region could help to provide a broader context for understanding the dynamics of journalism in Zambia. Such analysis could identify commonalities and differences between the media landscapes of different countries in the region and explore the underlying factors that contribute to these similarities and differences. By doing so, we can better understand how African journalism models manifest in different contexts, and the challenges and opportunities journalists face across the region.

Furthermore, examining the journalistic culture across the Zambian media landscape would be a valuable contribution to the scholarship on journalism in the nation. This could involve exploring the values, norms, and practices that shape the work of journalists in Zambia and how these are influenced by factors such as ownership structures, media policies and regulations, and cultural and social aspects. Such research can help understand journalists' challenges in upholding professional and ethical standards and the opportunities to strengthen journalism's quality and relevance in the country.

Finally, as demonstrated in Chapter Four, it would also be helpful to investigate the role of international bodies concerned with journalism and media freedom in Zambia. Such bodies can play an essential role in promoting media freedom, advocating for the protection of journalists, and supporting the development of a sustainable and

independent journalism industry. By examining the impact of these bodies on the Zambian media landscape, we can better understand the role that external actors can play in shaping the media environment in the country.

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Appendices

Appendix i – Semi-structured questionnaire

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Interview Guide

Interview Questions for media personnel (journalists and editors)
The key aim of this area of inquiry is to glean an understanding of the journalistic experiences in a democracy by journalists and editors during the 2016 general elections and beyond. Further, it is an attempt at learning first hand, the constraints experienced by journalists in Zambia covering politics and elections.

Introductions;
- Could you introduce yourself and tell me about your current role.
- For how long have you been a journalist?
- What attracted you to becoming a journalist?
- How many elections have you covered in your career as a journalist?
- Where have you published your works?
- Share with me your experiences in covering elections, especially the 2016 general elections.

A. How would you describe the main challenges of reporting on politics, especially elections in Zambia?
- What type of stories do you publish during elections?
- How did you portray the various political stakeholders during the 2016 general elections?
- What factors influenced such coverage of the different political players?
- Give specific examples to illustrate your answers above.
- How do you characterize your organisation's reporting of news during the 2016 general elections?
- Do you think your reporting was within fair professional journalism standards?
- What are your personal views on your organisation's editorial policy concerning political news?
- How do you describe political news reporting during the 2016 elections across the media?
- How have your views over the same evolved since/after 2016 to date?

B. How does the policy, regulatory and legislative environment affect journalistic cultures?
- Does the legislation related to media in Zambia encourage or discourage free expression?
- Can you cite of any policies or regulations that promote freedom of the media and freedom of expression of opinion among sources of political news?
- What laws or regulations affect your work as a journalist?
- How would you describe Zambia's democratic status?
- Do you think the legislative, regulatory and policy environment for the media meets democratic best practice elsewhere.
- In your view, what would be the ideal operating environment for media in Zambia?

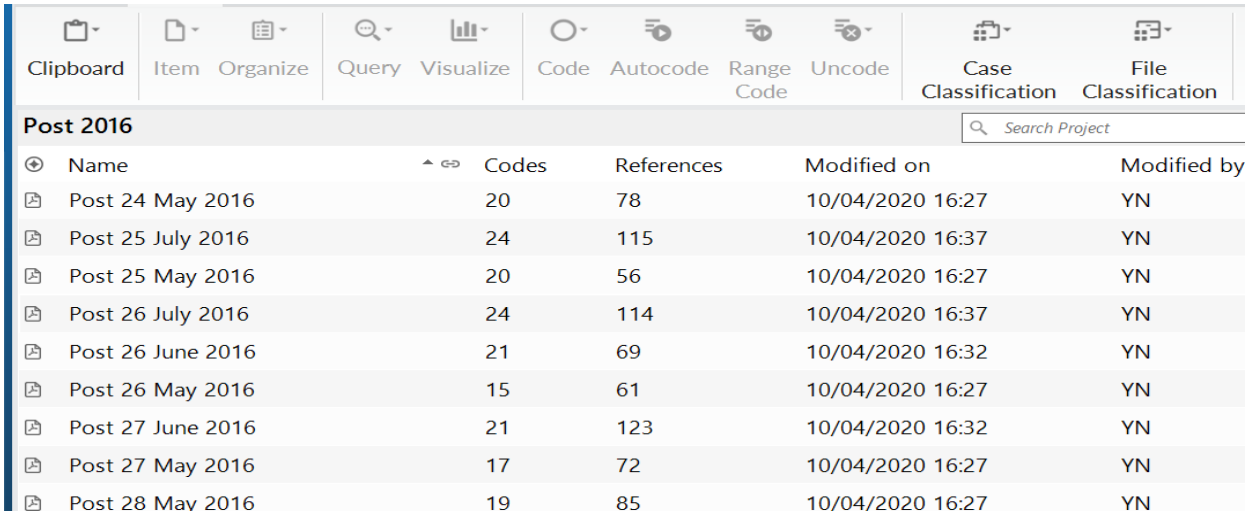
C. How do media ownership structures affect journalistic culture?
- Does the owner(s) of your organisation allow editorial decisions to be taken professionally and/or independently?
- What is your attitude towards hierarchical control of the news process?
- How do you handle editorial interference that may substantially affect the tone or angle of a story? Are there factors, internally or externally that you or your team consider before running any political stories?
- Is political attacks something you think about in your work when covering political events?

D. How does the current newsroom journalistic culture reflect in the news content?
- Is there a consultative practice in the newsroom among colleagues on editorial decisions?
- What considerations, personal or professional, did you have to make when deciding how and who to cover during the 2016 general elections?
- What personal or professional considerations do you make when deciding to cover political events?
- Are you free to make individual choices as a journalist on which political events to cover?
- Is there any policy on what political organisations or persons your media outlet can or cannot cover?

- Did this affect your coverage of the 2016 elections?

E. What is your attitude towards press freedom?
- What impact do you think social media have on political debates in mainstream media?
- Does the online media have any impact on political discourse in Zambia?
- In what ways do you think new media or online media impacts on the political discourse in Zambia?

F. What changes would improve the journalism culture and professionalism?
- What would you want to see change to improve the journalism profession?
- How would you like to see the political news coverage improve in Zambia?
- Do you have specific recommendations concerning how journalists should cover election campaigns?
- How do you think journalists can try to overcome editorial interference from owners?
- Is there anything else you would like to say or add to your responses above?



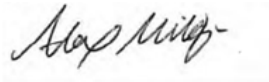
Name	Codes	References	Modified on	Modified by
Post 24 May 2016	20	78	10/04/2020 16:27	YN
Post 25 July 2016	24	115	10/04/2020 16:37	YN
Post 25 May 2016	20	56	10/04/2020 16:27	YN
Post 26 July 2016	24	114	10/04/2020 16:37	YN
Post 26 June 2016	21	69	10/04/2020 16:32	YN
Post 26 May 2016	15	61	10/04/2020 16:27	YN
Post 27 June 2016	21	123	10/04/2020 16:32	YN
Post 27 May 2016	17	72	10/04/2020 16:27	YN
Post 28 May 2016	19	85	10/04/2020 16:27	YN

Figure 2. Snapshot showing imported files for coding in the NVivo software.

Appendix ii – Risk Assessment Protocol

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Health and Safety Unit

Risk Assessment			
Building	John Foster Building	Date of Risk Assessment	14/05/2019
School/Service Department	HSS/ Media, Culture and Comm.	An assessment carried out by	Dr Alex Miles (HSS Director of School) Dr Joanne Knowles (DOS), Dr Christopher Vaughan (2nd Supervisor) Youngson Ndawana (PGR)
Location	G-29	Signed	 C. Vaughn 12.05.19  J. Knowles 20.05.19  A. Miles 20.05.19
Activity	Research trip to Zambia	Persons consulted during the Risk Assessment	Assistant Dean Research – University of Zambia, Dr Elijah Bwalya - elijah.bwalya@unza.zm, Head-Media and Communication Studies Department – University of Zambia – Dr Basil Hamusokwe - basil.hamusokwe@unza.zm +260 211 290035 Dr. Sara Parker – Reader, Development Studies, LJMU - S.L.Parker@ljmu.ac.uk
STEP 1 What are the Hazards? *Spot hazards by* • *Walking around the workplace*	Risks arising from travel: The research will be conducted in Lusaka, Zambia, and interviews will be undertaken in Lusaka. Air travel (from the UK to Zambia) and road transport (within Zambia) will be needed to undertake the		

• *Speaking to employees* • *Checking manufacturer's instructions*	research. Zambia is also a high-risk malarial zone. Risks arising from the research: This research will ask journalists searching questions about the relationship between the media and the state and the degree of democratic accountability within the media. These subjects have a degree of political sensitivity, and the political environment in Zambia is such that the risks of reprisals from the government for criticising the state cannot be excluded altogether.
STEP 2 Who might be harmed and how? *Identify groups of people. Staff and students are obvious, but please remember* • *Some staff/students have particular needs.* • *People who may not be present all the time* • *Members of the public* • *How your work affects others if you share a workplace*	Risks arising from travel: the potential for physical harm and illness to the researcher. Risks arising from the research: the potential to cause physical or material harm to the researcher and his interviewees. There is evidence that individual journalists have been harassed, imprisoned or sacked as a result of publishing anti-government articles in Zambia. There is a remote risk of such measures being undertaken against the researcher and participants.
STEP 3 (a) What are you already doing? *What is already in place to reduce the likelihood of harm or to make any harm less serious*	Risks arising from travel: All travel and accommodation will be booked through LJMU and covered by LJMU insurance. Taxis and car hire will be used in preference to fewer safe forms of public transportation. The researcher will take a course in anti-malarial medicine during his time in the field. Risks arising from the research: It should be emphasised that known cases of harassment/imprisonment/sacking have been the result of journalists publicly speaking out against the government in articles in prominent national media outlets where the author has been named. Undercover operations against journalists are not known to have occurred in Zambia. Academics are not subject to harassment or control by the state, and academic journals and publications do not draw the attention of the state due to their very much lower public profile than major media outlets. The current study also differs from scenarios where reprisals have occurred because it will protect the identities of all participants through anonymising data and the use of pseudonyms. All identifying data will be removed from transcripts. Furthermore, communication will be through

	encrypted channels (i.e., Telegram for communications) and data storage or transfer will be on password-encrypted hard drives. Therefore, the chances of direct or indirect identification of participants are remote. Field practice will be based on the existing best practice recognised in the published literature (*Andrew Clark 2006 -Anonymising Research Data – University of Leeds; Saunders, B., Kitzinger, J. and Kitzinger, C., 2015. Anonymising interview data: Challenges and compromise in practice. Qualitative Research, 15(5), pp.616-632.)* In terms of showing trusted participants, recruitment of participants will target individuals professionally known by the researcher through more than five years of research and working with media in the country. The researcher is a Zambian national who has no record of anti-government activities or publications and is well-regarded within professional and academic networks in the country. This has enabled the researcher to build a reliable and trusted professional network, which will be central to the field research effort. Known individuals may recommend further individuals for interviews through their trusted networks. As noted above, undercover operations against journalists are not known to occur in Zambia, and the researcher's extensive understanding of the media landscape and networks in Zambia will help to set up secure relationships with participants. During participation, the researcher will endeavour to conduct all interviews in safe and secure discreet locations. The researcher will meet participants in known secure locations that will be safe such as Media Advocacy organisations' premises like the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA), known to have safe spaces for such activities and the University of Zambia recording studios, where the researcher is employed (refer to A2, C4b in the Ethics application form). These spaces are regularly frequented by journalists in their professional activities, so they will not draw undue attention to the research activities.
STEP 3 (b) What further action is needed? *Compare what you are already doing with good practice. If there is a gap, please list what needs to be done.*	The steps detailed above are compliant with good practice in this kind of research.
STEP 4 How will you put	During the researcher's time in the field, he will keep his location always known to key people, including supervisors

the assessment into action? *Please remember to prioritise. Deal with the hazards that are high risk and have serious consequences first.*	in the UK and family and friends in Zambia. The researcher will check in and check out from scheduled interviews via email with LJMU staff (Dr Joanne Knowles and Dr Christopher Vaughan or their nominated contacts) and University of Zambia staff, the Head of Department (Dr Basil Hamusokwe and Dr Elijah Bwalya or their nominated contacts). These supervisors and colleagues will be provided with an emergency contact number which they will use in case the researcher has not fulfilled the agreed-upon protocols of checking in and checking out for scheduled interviews, and GPS tracking on the researcher's mobile telephone will allow the researcher's location to be always tracked if needed. If the researcher becomes uncomfortable with the direction of any interview or the character of the interviewee, he will withdraw from the interview at once.

Appendix iii – Information Sheet

LIVERPOOL JOHN MOORES UNIVERSITY

Participant Information Sheet for Journalists and editors

LJMU's Research Ethics Committee Approval Reference:

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: How media frames politics during elections: the case of 2016 Zambian elections
(To explore challenges that journalists experience in their reporting on elections in Zambia):

My name is **Youngson Ndawana**. I am a PhD student at Liverpool John Moores University, school of Humanities and Social Sciences.

You are being invited to take part in a study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the study us being done and what participation will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

1. Who will conduct the study?
Study Team
Principal Investigator: Youngson Ndawana PhD Student (y.ndawana@2017.ljmu.ac.uk)
Co-investigator: Dr. Joanne Knowles Main Supervisor (j.knowles@ljmu.ac.uk)
Second Supervisor: Dr Christopher Vaughan (C.M.Vaughan@ljmu.ac.uk)

School/Faculty within LJMU: Humanities and Social Sciences/ Faculty of Applied and Professional Studies

2. What is the purpose of the study?
This research aims to examine the nature of political news representation/framing within Zambian media. It will also draw insights on the whys and wherefores on the subject of research, why political communication happens the way it does and how this affects social, cultural and political perspectives. This study hopes to answer a number of specific questions (refer to Interview guide), which I will share with you upon committing to take part in the study. The six key themes of the questions are as follows;

- How would you describe the main challenges of reporting on politics, especially elections in Zambia?
- How does the policy, regulatory and legislative environment affect journalistic cultures?
- How do media ownership structures affect journalistic culture?
- How does the current newsroom journalistic culture reflect in the news content?
- What is your attitude towards press freedom?
- What changes would propose to improve the journalism culture and professionalism?

3. Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited because you have been identified as a journalist that cover or is actively interested in covering political news and elections. Further, you covered the 2016 general elections, as public records in form of news stories demonstrate.

The exclusion / inclusion criteria are as follows; Journalists who have covered politics and election campaigns, especially starting in or around 2015 will especially be targeted to draw insights on the conditions, challenges and generally the process of reporting on political news in Zambia. This is in view of the fact that the case study focuses on the coverage of the 2016 Zambian general elections and beyond. News editors will be selected based on their supervisory role of political news desk journalists or related desks and should have been in a similar position since at least 2016. You have been identified as part of this group and thirty journalists are targeted as part of this study.

4. Do I have to take part?

No. It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you do, you will be given a participant information sheet and asked to sign a consent form as well. You will be required to complete a demographic information sheet shortly before the interview. You must be a journalist working or who has worked on a political news desk at least since 2015. You will be interviewed on topics such as your knowledge of political news coverage, covering election campaigns, your professional ethics and values as well as and your views on these. You will also be asked about journalistic culture, press freedom, editorial independence in the newsroom and your knowledge on the legislative and regulatory provisions concerning the media. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. You may also choose not to answer questions you are not comfortable with, and we can continue to discuss sections where you feel more comfortable talking about. A decision to withdraw will not affect your legal rights.

5. What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be contacted by the researcher and an interview appointment will be arranged in a convenient and conducive environment. The interview will last approximately 120-240 minutes and will be recorded using an encrypted voice recorder. You will have the right to withdraw from the interview process or skip any questions you would not want to answer. There is potential that I might contact you again in the future for a follow-up interview should need arise. If that will be the case, a similar process as this one will be used to contact you and arrange for the interview.

6. Will I be recorded and how will the recorded media be used?

Yes, you will be recorded using an encrypted audio recorder and you should be comfortable with the recording process. The audio recording is important to the research process to achieve maximum accuracy possible, but you are free to decline to be audio recorded, in which case I will take hand-written notes. The audio recordings of your activities made during this study will be used for this study. No other use will be made of them without your written permission. Interviews will be audio recorded and immediately following the interview will be transferred to a secure password encrypted hard drive and deleted from the recording device. Subsequently the data will be held on the M: drive of the LJMU computer network. The data thus collected will be anonymised to protect your identity.

7. Are there any possible disadvantages or risks from taking part?

There are no perceived long-term adverse risk effects from participating. There are potential low-level risks in the medium term such as reprisals against journalists/editors working for the state

owned media houses, which in some cases may mean loss of employment or demotions for speaking out openly on the functioning of these institutions. However, the potential for the participants to be indirectly identifiable are extremely remote since the recruitment and interviewing will be discrete using encrypted communication such as private/personal emails or applications such as Telegram, and interviews will be conducted in safe spaces regularly used for similar purposes (MISA, University of Zambia). The interview and data from the processes will be treated as confidential, not published immediately, and will only be published in an anonymised fashion. Therefore, there is little chance of identification of the participants at any point.

8. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There are no perceived individual benefits from taking part in this study. The study's benefits are primarily general ones for society such as improved elections reporting and governance systems. Whilst there are no direct benefits to you for taking part in the study, it is hoped that this work will benefit journalists through highlighting the challenges they face in reporting and covering politics, leading to an improved and supportive working environment through advocacy. Since the study will highlight the challenges journalists face in the work generally, and political reporting in particular, I hope recommendations gathered as a result, when published will influence the policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks and improve working environment for journalists. Advocacy organisations will also be able to tap from this knowledge to better shape their interventions in their efforts to create a conducive operating environment. The results of the study will also spur further research in this area, resulting in further opportunities to keep the progress in check.

9. What will happen to the data provided and how will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

The information you provide as part of the study is the study data. Any study data from which you can be identified (e.g. from identifiers such as your name, date of birth, audio recording etc.), is known as personal data. This includes more sensitive categories of personal data (sensitive data) such as your race; ethnic origin; politics; religion; trade union membership; genetics; biometrics (where used for ID purposes); health; or sex life. When you agree to take part in a study, we will use your personal data in the ways needed to conduct and analyse the study and if necessary, to verify and defend, when required, the process and outcomes of the study. Personal data will be accessible to the study team only. Further, your data will remain anonymised at all times.

Your taking part will remain confidential, as you may choose not have to provide a name on participant information sheets. In the final work, all information you provide will therefore remain anonymous. The researcher will also use pseudonyms in the analysis and presentation of the data where necessary such as use of direct quotes to ensure that participants are not identifiable. You are requested to provide the researcher with a signed or initialled form to consent. Where this is not possible due to the potential risk it may pose, your recorded verbal consent at the beginning of the interview will suffice. If you choose to participate via a non-face-to-face interview, your responding to the questions and transmission back to the researcher will be taken as consent. You will also requested to give your consent for your data to be transferred to the United Kingdom. The researcher will keep this separately from any other information you provide.

If the means to meet and conduct a face-to-face interview is, for any reasons or potential risks highlighted above, we (you and me) can devise other modalities that will minimise the potential risks and to allow for greater privacy.

Interview audio recordings will be transcribed or interview written data transcripts, whichever will be the case; any identifying information will be removed. Pseudonyms will be used in transcripts and reports to help protect your identity. The audio recording or interview written data transcript will be transferred to a secure hard disk and deleted from the recording device or in case of the interview written data transcript, from the transmission medium as soon as possible. Any hard copies of demographic data and consent forms will be stored in filling cabinets on LJMU premises within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. Confidential waste policy will be used to destroy the data after completion of the thesis.

In addition, responsible members of Liverpool John Moores University may be given access to personal data for monitoring and/or audit of the study to ensure that the study is complying with applicable regulations.

When we do not need to use personal data, it will be deleted or identifiers will be removed. Personal data does not include data that cannot be identified to an individual (e.g. data collected anonymously or where identifiers have been removed). However, your consent form, contact details, audio recordings etc. will be retained for 5 years in line with LJMU policy.
We will not tell anyone that you have taken part in the interview, although there is of course a possibility that another member of the group might recognise you. We will also not name you in any of our reports or publications. In addition, all participants in the study will be asked to respect the confidentiality of their fellow participants.

You will not be identifiable in any ensuing reports or publications.

We will use pseudonyms in transcripts and reports to help protect the identity of individuals and organisations unless you tell us that you would like to be attributed to information/direct quotes etc.

With your consent, we would like to store your contact details so that we may contact you about future opportunities to participate in studies.

10. What will happen to the results of the study?
The researcher will analyse the results of the study to be used as part of the material in writing his doctoral thesis. Further, the researcher will use the results to author journal articles and present at conferences. In addition, he will be able to share the findings with the sponsors, the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom, and other interested parties such as the media, academia and governments.

11. Who is organising and funding the study?
This study is organised by Liverpool John Moores University and funded by the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission in the United Kingdom. The funder is interested in supporting innovators and leaders of the future from across the Commonwealth. The funder has no conflict of interest.

12. Who has reviewed this study?
This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (Reference number :.....).

13. What if something goes wrong?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, please contact the researcher, who will do their best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how they intend to deal with it. If you wish to make a complaint, please contact the chair of the Liverpool John Moores University Research Ethics Committee (researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk) and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

14. Data Protection Notice
Liverpool John Moores University is the sponsor for this study based in the United Kingdom. We will be using information from you in order to undertake this study and will act as the data controller for this study. This means that we are responsible for looking after your information and using it properly. Liverpool John Moores University will process your personal data for the purpose of research. Research is a task that we perform in the public interest. Liverpool John Moores University will keep identifiable information about you for five years after the study has finished/ until 2024.

Your rights to access, change or move your information are limited, as we need to manage your information in specific ways in order for the study to be reliable and accurate. If you withdraw from the study, we will keep the information about you that we have already obtained. To safeguard your rights, we will use the minimum personally-identifiable information possible.
You can find out more about how we use your information at https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/ and/or by contacting secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk.

If you are concerned about how your personal data is being processed, please contact LJMU in the first instance at secretariat@ljmu.ac.uk. If you remain unsatisfied, you may wish to contact the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). Contact details, and details of data subject rights, are available on the ICO website at: https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-reform/overview-of-the-gdpr/individuals-rights/

Caution will be taken, in consultation with the participant and my supervisors to avoid any incidences that might lead to any indirect identification of the participants. This will involve consulting the participants on any information within the data collected that might give away their identity. However, in the event that there could still be information that might indirectly identify them, further consultations with them will be required to avert any such occurrence. For example, instead of naming their employing organisation, I will opt to use generalities such as (Private media or public media) in reference to information from the participant. This will shield the participant from any chances of being identified indirectly or directly. Recruitment will be done using encrypted communication, while interviews and recordings will be undertaken at safe spaces (MISA, University of Zambia), regularly frequented by journalists in the course of their professional duties. This will minimise indirect identification significantly.

15. Contact for further information
If you have any concerns regarding your involvement in this research, please discuss these with the principal investigator in the first instance, Youngson Ndawana (y.ndawana@2017.ljmu.ac.uk) & Dr Joanne Knowles, Supervisor (j.knowles@ljmu.ac.uk). If you wish to make a complaint, please contact researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk and your communication will be re-directed to an independent person as appropriate.

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering taking part in this study.

Appendix iv – Participants' recruitment letter

EMAIL TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

Dear potential participant

This email is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctoral degree in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at the Liverpool John Moores University under the supervision of Dr. Joanne Knowles. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

You have been identified as a participant in this study due to your work in writing and reporting on elections in Zambia, which is in public domain. I managed to get your contacts from public records such as the Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS) and /or old relations/contact I established, having worked with you in my past research efforts over the years. I believe that because you are actively involved in news media practice and reporting on politics and elections your views will be valuable to this study.

Over the years, journalists and other media professionals in Zambia who work in their reporting of Zambian politics have faced constraints, particularly with regard to reporting of recent general elections in Zambia. One of the defining ideas underpinning my doctoral study is the significance of media ownership in shaping the reporting of Zambian politics. The intention is to interview journalists from a range of media institutions in Zambia on this topic. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore *how ownership and other constraints affect reporting on politics and elections in particular.*

My interest in media and politics goes back to my early career days when I read for my master's degree (2010-2012). My dissertation was titled *"an evaluation of how the media covered the 2011 general elections."* Further, have been conducted similar research with and on behalf of reputable organisations such as the BBC Media Action, Zambia (2011-2012), MISA Zambia (2012 to date), National Assembly of Zambia (2013-2015), and CIPESA, Uganda (2017). I have also participated in similar research activities and publishing as part of my duties as a lecturer at the University of Zambia, Department of Media and Communication Studies since 2012. As such, I am confident enough and can attest to my knowledge of Zambia's media environment. This partly influenced my decision to carry out my current research project.

Participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve an interview of up to 240 minutes (one or more interviews) in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio -recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained for the duration of my research and thesis writing. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you are interested in participating, please read the participant information sheet attached to this email and contact me if you require any further information or clarification. Please contact me **Youngson Ndawana**, at +260979311235 or +447767556868 or by e-mail at y.ndawana@2017.ljmu.ac.uk . You can also contact my supervisor, **Dr. Joanne Knowles** at **(+441512315061)** or e-mail j.knowles@ljmu.ac.uk or my second supervisor Dr. Christopher Vaughn at C.M.Vaughan@ljmu.ac.uk .

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to those organizations directly involved in the study, other voluntary recreation organizations not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Sincerely,

(Signature)
Youngson Ndawana
(PhD Student)

(Signature)
Dr. Joanne Knowles
(Supervisor)

Signature
Dr. Christopher Vaughn
(Second Supervisor)

Appendix v – Interviewee demographics

NO.	ORGANISATION	OWNERSHIP	CITY/TOWN	DATE/ LOCATION	DURATION
1.	*The Post*	A2(1)	LUSAKA	21.06.19 – Café	128 minutes
2.	*The Post*	A2(2)	LUSAKA	13.06.19 – Mall	84 minutes
3.	*The Post*	A2(3)	LUSAKA	26.06.19 – MISA Zambia	84 minutes
4.	*The Post*	A2(4)	LUSAKA	21.06.19 - Mall	80 minutes
5.	*MUVI TV*	A1(1)	LUSAKA	25.06.19 – MUVITV Offices	132 minutes
6.	*MUVI /Prime TV*	A1(2)	NDOLA	16.07.19 – Hotel Lobby	125 minutes
7.	*MUVI /Prime TV*	A1(3)	LUSAKA	06.07.19 – Prime TV offices	142 minutes
8.	*MUVI TV/ Dd TV*	A1(4)	LUSAKA	23.06.19 – Mall	78 minutes
9.	IND (Post)	C (4)	LUSAKA	WhatsApp Audio call	59 minutes
10.	*TOZ*	B2(1)	LUSAKA	22.06.19 – Café	105 minutes
11.	*TOZ*	B2(2)	LUSAKA	23.06.19 – Mall	77 minutes
12.	*ZDM*	B2(4)	LUSAKA	05.07.19 – ZDM Offices	60 minutes
13.	*ZDM*	B2(5)	LSK/ LSTONE	01.07.19 – Mall	101 minutes
14.	*ZDM*	B2(6)	KITWE	15.07.19 -- Home	60 minutes
15.	*ZDM*	B2(7)	LUSAKA	17.07.19 – ZDM Ofc	55 minutes
16.	*ZNBC*	B1(1)	KITWE	15.07.19 – ZNBC Prem	91 minutes
17.	*ZNBC*	B1(2)	KITWE	15.07.19 – ZNBC Prem	51 minutes
18.	*ZNBC*	B1(3)	LUSAKA	09.07.19 – ZNBC Ofc	80 minutes
19.	*ZNBC*	B1(4)	LUSAKA	09.07.19 – ZNBC Ofc	85 minutes
20.	*TOZ*	C (1)	LUSAKA	03.07.19 – Café	95 minutes
21.	*TOZ*	C (2)	NDOLA	14.07.19 – Home	85 minutes
22.	IBA	C (3)	LUSAKA	29.07.19 – IBA Ofc	110 minutes
		PRIVATE	LUSAKA	16	
		PUBLIC	LSTONE	1	
		OTHERS	KITWE	3	
		TOTAL	NDOLA	2	

Appendix vi – Ethics Clearance

Approved with Provisos - Ndawana (19/HSS/005)

WM Williams, Mandy
To **researchethics**; Ndawana, Youngson; Knowles, Joanne; Vaughan, Christopher

Reply | Reply All | Forward

Wed 29/05/2019 16:20

7. Ndawana resub.pdf
2 MB

Dear Youngson

With reference to your application for Ethical Approval

Youngson Ndawana, PGR - How media frames politics during elections: the case of 2016 Zambian elections (Joanne Knowles/Christopher Vaughan)

UREC reference: 19/HSS/005

The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) has considered the above application. I am pleased to inform you that ethical approval has been granted subject to the provisos listed below. Once the final version of the ethics application with the provisos addressed has been emailed to researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk, the study can commence.

(Please note, UREC will not check that the provisos have been applied in the final version of the ethics application and will not email any further approval notifications to the applicant once the final version of the ethics application has been forwarded to UREC. If the applicant does not want to apply the provisos as stated below, the applicant must notify UREC and resubmit the ethics application for further review)

Provisos:
Page 9, Highlight (Yellow):
Content: "The storage and transportation of data, as per LJMU IT staff advice is to transfer data from recording devices to encrypted hard drive storage after each recording."
Comment: Please use an encrypted recording device

Page 23, Highlight (Yellow):
Content: "In the absence of an encryption enabled voice recorder, "
Comment: Please use an encrypted recording device. Please include this information on the participant information sheet.

Page 24, Highlight (Yellow):
Content: "F1e. "
Comment: Please include this information on the participant information sheet.

Approval is given on the understanding that:

- any adverse reactions/events which take place during the course of the project are reported to the Committee immediately by emailing researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk;
- any unforeseen ethical issues arising during the course of the project will be reported to the Committee immediately emailing researchethics@ljmu.ac.uk;
- the LJMU logo is used for all documentation relating to participant recruitment and participation e.g. poster, information sheets, consent forms, questionnaires. The LJMU logo can be accessed at http://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/corporatecommunications/60486.htm;
- The study consent forms, data, information etc. will be accessible on request to a student's supervisory team and/or to responsible members of Liverpool John Moores University for monitoring, auditing and data authenticity purposes.

Where any substantive amendments are proposed to the protocol or study procedures further ethical approval must be sought (https://www2.ljmu.ac.uk/RGSO/93205.htm)

Applicants should note that where relevant appropriate gatekeeper / management permission must be obtained prior to the study commencing at the study site concerned.

Please note that ethical approval is given for a period of five years from the date granted (29/05/19) and therefore the expiry date for this project will be 5 years from the approval date. An application for extension of approval must be submitted if the project continues after this date.

Yours sincerely

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