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DISSERTATION TITLE: The rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation between the period of December 2017 and March 2018: A case study of ZBC news online.

By

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Science in Media and Society Studies Honours Degree at Midlands State University.

May 2018

Declaration

I, Tapiwa Ziwewe, declare that this dissertation is an original work and no material in this document has been previously submitted at this or any other University. References from other authors have been duly acknowledged.

Dedication

This research project is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs Ziwewe. I thank you for your financial help and your prayers. I also dedicate this project to my sisters, Mai Tawananyasha, Talent and Taonga. Your love and support is greatly appreciated.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my Supervisor, Mr. T. Mushangwe for the guidance he gave me as I wrote this dissertation. May the almighty God keep on giving you wisdom. I also salute Lecturers and my colleagues in the Department of Media and Society Studies for their support and encouragement.

Abstract

The research seeks to explore how ZBC news online is rebranding the new political dispensation. Thus the study looks at how ZBC framed of political news in the new dispensation especially the rebranding of the Zimbabwe African Nationalism Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). The scope of the study is December 2017 to March 2018. The study is qualitative in nature as it applies the use of archival collection and interviews, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and thematic analysis were applied and it was discovered that there was a positive framing of the new political dispensation and political economy of ZBC has got a bearing in content generation, distribution and consumption and this is the reason why ZBC was involved in the rebranding of ZANU PF after the ouster of Robert Mugabe.

Acronyms

ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation
RBC	Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
VMCZ	Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MMPZ	Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe
AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BSA	Broadcasting Services of Zimbabwe

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

State controlled media are ideological channels that can be used by the ruling parties to win hearts and minds of the people. The *Framing Theory* and *Political Economy Theory* are crucial in explaining how Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) as a state controlled media organization was used to rebrand Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) in the new political dispensation. The period under scrutiny is December 2017 and March 2018 when Zimbabwe's former President, Robert Gabriel Mugabe left office and was replaced by Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa. With the privilege of controlling the state media, the government has got influence on the content that is produced by the media.

The media are often referred to as the fourth estate as they are very powerful entity in any country. In many African countries, the media are in the hands of the government. Media owners be it public or private have used their newspapers or broadcast stations to promote their business interests and advance their political or business agenda. According to Okwudishu (1988: 127) if government controls the media, it is clear also that they control what the media say. This means that the interests of media owners determine media content and allow them to manipulate the media to achieve a certain agenda. The focus of this research being the rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation, it is also crucial to understand ownership patterns because this contributes largely to content production, distribution and consumption.

ZANU PF as a brand, needs constant relationship management with its supporters. The Operation Restore Legacy which took place in November 2017 and led to the ouster of ZANU PF's former leader and president of Zimbabwe, Mugabe to be replaced by Emmerson Mnangagwa contributed to some changes which happened to the internal structure of ZANU PF. To maintain good relations with the electorate, there was need for ZANU PF to rebrand and this can be noticed on the state controlled media like ZBC. Kim (1990) contends that a brand has no tangible properties, and it is a mental translation and an abstraction of that object or service. In political communication, a brand is about ideas and policies.

According to Bigi (2016) if we extend the definition of sellers from goods as what happens in commercial marketing to ideas and values which is associated in political communication, it is clear that political parties satisfy this definition, the electorate have symbols, names, and finally leaders to recall. Thus there were new policies which were conveyed by ZBC which differentiated the old ZANU PF with Mugabe and the new ZANU PF without him.

Political branding has got its advantages to the political parties they represent, that is why ZBC is in a process of rebranding ZANU PF through publicizing colourful policies associated with Emmerson Mnangagwa. If party policies are unique than the rival political parties, then that policy will be an influential element of the brand and will attract many electorates (Keller, 2002; O'Shaughnessy and Henneberg 2007). A closer look at the ZANU PF related issues on ZBC reveals that the stories were positive about Emmerson Mnangagwa with the agenda of branding him as a good committed party leader and a president with a mandate of settling the long-sited problems of Zimbabwe. A policy that attracts many people and that is trustworthy means that the voters will remain loyal to that political party which provides them with favourable policies.

There was fear that the electorate might lose trust in ZANU PF since its founding leader Robert Mugabe left office. To do away with this challenge, ZANU PF had to utilize its political power to manipulate ZBC content so that it suits the current situation and restore ZANU PF ideology. Kotler et al (2005) assert that a brand is essentially a politician's promise to deliver a specific set of features, benefits and services consistently to the electorate. The ZANU PF brand is now concentrating on business development issues with the international community (*Zimbabwe is Open for Business*), free and credible elections, unity and peace, and they are implanting the idea of having trust in Emmerson Mnangagwa in the minds of the electorate as he is now the new party leader and president as evidenced by the election motto '*#ED Has My Vote*'.

The rebranding of ZANU PF on ZBC news is therefore aimed at gaining the brand loyalty which they fear might have been lost or could be lost in the forthcoming elections after the ouster of Mugabe in the last quarter of 2017. Brands hence function as substantial communication functions and, in so doing, establish beliefs among electorate about the attributes and general image of political parties, leaders, various candidates within the party.

1.2 Background

ZBC is the state-controlled broadcaster in Zimbabwe. ZBC has always been a government mouthpiece with no editorial independence since the colonial period, it simply inherited the way Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) was operating during the colonial period. ZBC has often been run like a private institution, with the ruling party free to hire or fire key personnel at will. Coverage of government related stories serves their interests. A newsroom culture of self-censorship has always been the norm at ZBC (Fredrikse, 1982; Saunders, 1999) and this has contributed to the continued dominance of the elites and exploitation of the oppressed majority and opposition parties. Following independence, RBC became the ZBC.

Robert Mugabe, previously described only as a terrorist leader, during the colonial period in the state run media was now described as 'Comrade Prime Minister' after independence. These shows a great relationship between ZANU PF, the presidency and the ZBC. The three entities cannot be separated from each other.

The government during Mugabe's tenure continued its control of the electronic media. Laws like the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) restricted other new players to get licenses to start operating and this perpetuated ZBC's monopoly (MISA, 2007). In reviewing the results of the 2002 presidential election, the Media Monitoring Project in Zimbabwe concluded that about 90 percent of all election stories carried on ZBC were about Mugabe or ZANU PF, or they were pro-government. According to the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe Weekly Media Review (2011) ZBC and its television news broadcasts were leading a new state media war on ZANU PF's old political opponents in an effort to publicly discredit the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T). Efforts to end ZBC's monopoly hit a snag when attempts by the court order to end government's control of state controlled media were ignored.

Though there were some system changes in ZANU PF party and the government, there are not yet any feasible media reforms to free ZBC from political and market forces. ZBC has remained an instrument of government propaganda, dependent on government subsidies for their survival. It is unlikely that ZANU PF would agree to allow the state-owned broadcast media to break from state control.

Laws like the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) allows the government to license and accredit journalists. Those who violate its provisions, mainly in the private media or among foreign journalists, can be sued.

Some journalists from the privately owned media have been charged under the AIPPA, many charged with publishing false information. AIPPA actually contradicts with the constitution which advocates for freedom of expression. Muchena (2013: 73) state that on the 23rd of April 2002 Nyarota and Mudiwa were arrested after publishing a story that an opposition party supporter had been beheaded by ruling party supporters. However, the story was proved to be false the newspaper apologized and retracted the story but the two as editor and reporter were arrested and charged under AIPPA for having published falsehoods. Nyarota and Mudiwa then went to the Supreme Court challenging section 80 (1) of AIPPA stating that the ‘false news offence’ section breached the freedom of expression and protection of the law as given under Section 18 and 20 of the Constitution.

ZBC framed Emmerson Mnangagwa as a better leader than Mugabe. It’s only a few months before presidential elections since. In this case, it was very crucial to utilize the state broadcaster to its full potential in order to win the hearts and minds of the citizens so the ZANU PF would retain its position in the forthcoming elections. More positive news about Emmerson Mnangagwa and his ZANU PF party were conveyed to gain support from the commonalities. Thus the study focused on the ZBC news online and how its publications contributed in the rebranding of ZANU PF. The area of focus is December 2017 to March 2018.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

The research aims at exploring how ZBC has been used in the rebranding of ZANU PF since Emmerson Mnangagwa became the President of Zimbabwe. The research focuses on ZBC news online from the time of Mugabe’s ouster and their coverage of ZANU PF in the new dispensation. This study investigates the legitimacy of the assumption that media owners determine content of state owned media. The research is important in the sense that it digs deeper on the role of ZBC on how it is being used to keep on promoting the ideologies of ZANU PF with its new leadership.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study investigates the relevance of the *Framing Theory* in the construction of the government’s version of reality and how framing of news has contributed to the rebranding of

ZANU PF as well as the extent to which *Political Economy Theory* helps to understand how political forces impacted this process.

It is the researcher's expectation that findings from this research will help establish the extent to which political economy of ZBC is responsible for framing of news content in Zimbabwe with specific focus on the ZBC news in the new political dispensation. Previous related studies on the subject have been premised on a ZANU-PF party led by Robert Mugabe and now ZANU PF has a different leadership. The study, therefore, adds a new look to the existing body of literature on political economy and on how the media frame news and set agenda for the audience.

1.4.1 Objectives

The study:

1. Explores the framing of ZANU PF's new administration in the new political dispensation on ZBC news online.
2. Explores how the framing of ZBC news online promoted ZANU PF ideologies in the new dispensation.
3. Explores the forces behind the framing and rebranding of ZANU PF on ZBC news online.

1.4.3 Main Research Question

- How was ZBC news online active in rebranding ZANU PF in the new political dispensation era?

1.4.4 Research Questions

1. How did ZBC frame Emmerson Mnangagwa and his new administration?
2. Which discourse and ideology was conveyed to the audiences by this rebranding?
3. How are the political forces existing at ZBC contributing in rebranding ZANU PF?

1.5 Limitations

According to Simon (2011), limitations are possible weaknesses of a study and are out of the researcher's control. The research focused on the applicability of *Framing Theory* and *Political Economy Theory* in the rebranding of ZANU PF in the new dispensation. The study particularly looks at how ZBC news frames contributed to the rebranding of ZANU PF party

between the period of December 2017- March 2018. Simon (2011) defines delimitations as those features that limit the boundaries of your study.

1.6 Delimitations

This research is confined to ZBC and not any other local broadcaster or newspaper, so having one media house's perspective limited us from attaining the different angles which other media houses used in reporting on issues relating to the new political dispensation. ZBC being a mouthpiece of the government, it is already known that state media preserve the interest of those in power so this may limit our results since they will be from one perspective.

1.7 Assumptions

It is the researcher's assumption that ZBC is a very active participant in the rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation given that the government has control of the state media.

The study presumes ZANU PF as a ruling party has got control over ZBC hence this largely determines the editorial policy of ZBC. It is also the researcher's supposition that the three (the presidency, ZANU PF party and ZBC) cannot be separated from each other.

1.8 Conclusion

Chapter one introduced the research outlining research objectives, questions. The chapter also outlined a brief background of the media landscape in the colonial period up to the present and gave an assumption of the findings it wishes to arrive at. The next chapter is concerned with the literature review and theoretical framework that outlines available literature and theories relevant to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines existing literature on political economy of the media and media landscape in Zimbabwe paying particular attention to ZBC. Renowned scholars who have written about Zimbabwe's media landscape include: (Kumbula, 1997; Zaffiro, 2002; Moyo, 2004; Ranger, 2005; Masuku, 2011; Muchena, 2013). The chapter looks at how the *Framing Theory* and *Political Economy Theory* is applicable to explain the production of constructed reality in media industries. ZBC's editorial policy supports the ruling party ZANU PF and government of the day.

2.2.1 Implications of Media ownership on content

The representation or framing of Emmerson Mnangagwa's new administration was influenced by the political and market forces that surround ZBC. It is the government's control of the state media that contributed to positive framing of the new political dispensation.

Ownership has a great impact on what a media house will publish on daily basis because they (owners) capitalized a lot of money in the organization therefore they will dictate usually on what they define as news worthy and what is not and determine which angle or perspective (framing) to be adopted when writing a story. Moyo (2004) notes that the influence of media ownership on media content in Zimbabwe was borrowed from the Rhodesian era. Ownership influence how the media operate in that they will not perform their duties in a free and friendly environment since the government enforce some laws which are very draconian in the media industry and this is what is happening in Zimbabwe where freedom of the media is restricted due to government interference. Moyo (2004) notes that interests of those who own the media enforce laws which limit media freedom and as a result the media will fail to perform their watchdog role.

Ownership is one of the news filters which Herman and Chomsky (1988) pointed out in what they termed '*The Propaganda Model*' of media ownership. The propaganda model stipulates that the raw material of news passes through five filters that ultimately shape the news that

the audience will get and one of the filters is 'influence of ownership'. The fact that ZANU PF is a shareholder of ZBC means that they directly influence news production process. There exist a political relationship between ZANU PF and ZBC even since the colonial period.

Kumbula (1997) and Moyo (2004) agree that there is no big difference between ZBC and RBC in terms of how they report on government issues. After independence state appointed some politicians to take duties in the news room after firing some journalists who had become a threat to the existing government.

Ranger (2005) notes that the state can even appoint the editorial staff. ZBC has little space to fulfil its watchdog role and is forced to be partisan in their reporting of ZANU PF and government related issues. The appointment of Supa Mandiwanzira, Jonathan Moyo to the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services' implications were that these individuals are members of the ZANU PF party and they were going to influence the editorial policies of the state media. According to Muchena (2013: 71) Jonathan Moyo did what he could in order to promote the domination of ZANU PF because by this time, political pressure and economic hardships had destroyed the legacy of ZANU PF. There is no way they were going to allow criticism of the government due to fears that ZANU PF will lose power to the opposition parties. Chari et al (2003) further notes that the government appointed ZANU PF affiliated individuals to the ministry of information in preparation of the 2002 Presidential and parliamentary elections against the dominant opposition party, MDC. This clearly shows how influence of power impacts news production and gatekeeping in the media houses.

When Emmerson Mnangagwa came to power in November 2017, he made several changes of the cabinet ministers. Simon Khaya Moyo was appointed the acting Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services. Like the Robert Mugabe government, Moyo is also a ZANU PF member and an active politician who played a role in the Liberation struggle. His appointment as the acting Minister of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services indicates Emmerson Mnangagwa's intention to copy his predecessor's governance structure. Emmerson Mnangagwa is trying to have control of the state media so that they can use it in maintaining conveying their ideology.

2.2.2 Influence of Patriotic Journalism

ZBC has acted as ZANU PF's mouthpiece for a long time as a result reporters' perceptions of reality. When reporters look for news, they have power to filter out some and can even report according to their perception or in regard to how they want the audience to decode the message, thus *framing*. This has been noticed through positive frames which ZBC has been using regarding ZANU PF party and the government.

According to Gamson and Modigliani, (1989) a frame is a word, image, phrase that the media use when disseminating information to the audience about an event or issues. The personnel/journalists at ZBC are very partisan.

It is Zaffiro's contention (2002) that, the long term problems with ZBC are a result of the openly partisan journalists because those who were experienced were forced out and to maintain good relations with those who remained was very difficult. Ranger (2005) notes that in post-colonial independence, patriotic journalism in Zimbabwe dates back to the early 2000s during Jonathan Moyo's ministry and this was very destructive rather than constructive. Zaffiro (2002) further notes that due to harsh working conditions, some resigned, and others were fired and were replaced by inexperienced ZANU PF affiliated individuals. Journalist are forced to exercise self-censorship in a way that they always remain pro-government in their reporting.

Journalists and the editors also practice gatekeeping where they choose what's newsworthy and how to present it to the public in a way that downsize any potential political power and without causing harm to the existing government. Taha (2016: 138) notes that self-censorship was encouraged and investigative or undercover reporting which would criticize the government was discouraged.

This clearly shows how it is difficult for ZBC to give space to opposition parties who would want to challenge the status quo. Reporters working for the ZBC should have the extra skill of being patriotic such that they dissenting voices or views are not given space on ZBC news. The issue of government's appointment of ministers affiliated to ZANU PF is also relevant in explaining how patriotic journalism influences news production process. The government needs the media but the media should promote government's interests. The state controlled media is used to broadcast the patriotic history of Zimbabwe, highlighting that ZANU PF is the revolutionary party and cannot be challenged.

It seems to be like a norm for state owned media to be partisan because ZBC has always been promoting brand ZANU PF under even Robert Mugabe. The likes of Jonathan Moyo and Supa Mandiwanzira who have served as Ministers of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services for the past years are Robert Mugabe's close allies. The media industry has been in the hands of politically aligned ministers who are affiliated to ZANU PF.

Therefore, it's no doubt that ZBC has to be active in rebranding ZANU PF under Emmerson Mnangagwa so that ZANU PF remains the ruling party strong. Therefore, the way reporters write stories, is part of framing because they choose what to publish and what to exclude.

2.2.3 Representation of ZANU PF - Desire to Conserve the Status Quo

The driving force for the continued dominance of ZANU PF positive stories on ZBC news is the government's desire to maintain the status quo. Hall (1997) suggest that representation is the use of media discourse to convey a meaningful message about, or to represent the world meaningfully to other people. According to Taha (2016: 138) consolidating power and amplifying nation-building remained weak justifications for suffocating freedom of the media, the government media practices violated the right to free speech enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution.

ZANU PF uses the state controlled media to promote its dominance just like other authoritarian states. According to Walker and Orttung (2014: 75), authoritarian states make use of the state controlled media so that they attain comprehensive dominance by influencing four sets of audiences. These are; elites from the regime's coalition, the populace at large, the regular internet users and the political opposition and independent civil society.

News is framed in way that creates liking of the status quo and disliking of any opposition, thus maintaining the dominance of the ruling party. The rebranding of ZANU PF was necessary so that they discredit other opposition parties. Walker and Orttung (2014: 79) note that state-controlled media do not only praise the ruling government but they also work in putting down opposition parties.

Through representation of certain issues and events related to ZANU PF, ZBC was setting an agenda for the audience. The state owned media's aim is to make the audience fear, respect and to a large extent have a positive perception of the ruling party as well as upbringing apathy and inactiveness (Walker and Orttung 2014: 79). ZBC tried to do this by denying opposition politicians fair coverage just like what they do for ZANU PF. Walker and Orttung

(2014: 80) point out that in order to remain in power, the authoritarian has to keep a lot of people out of politics. This is the situation with ZBC where it always praises the ZANU PF party and hardly say anything positive about the most dominant opposition party, MDC Alliance and notable stories about MDC Alliance are usually negative since the broadcaster is trying to outstep the party. Walker and Ottung (2014: 80) state that, “state-controlled media can help by uniformly stressing the benefits of the status quo and demonizing any opposition to it”.

For a political part or authoritarian governments to remain in power, they have to make use of the media in order to reach a large number of people so that they get popularity. According to Livingstone and Lunt (1994) the mass media play a fundamental role in the modern political process, for even in elite forms of democracy, the polity requires some mediated communication with the populace to gain consent. Thus ZANU PF make use of ZBC to air out their views in order to gain popularity. The relationship which exists between ZANU PF and ZBC is meant to uphold the status of those with the political and economic muscle.

Since the government is constituted by members of the capitalist society, they use the media to air out ideologies that make the audience accept their oppression by the capitalist and not want to revolt against the system. According to Fuchs and Mosco (2016) ideology aims at instilling the belief in the system of capital and commodities into human’s subjectivity, the goal is that human opinions and actions do not go beyond capitalism, do not question and revolt against this system and thereby play the role of apparatuses for the perpetuation of capitalism. The broadcasting policy of RBC (which was to uphold the status of the ruling elite) continued even in the era of ZBC. According to Zaffiro (2002), ZBC’s editorial policy remained largely in support of the maintenance of the status quo or present circumstances although in new ideological clothes. Pleas to liberalise the airwaves and open up new private players in the industries have been made but the government has remained reluctant to put this into action. Masuku (2011) notes that ZANU PF has been reluctant to liberalise the media industry despite showing some intentions through enacting enabling legislation and agreements.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Framing Theory and Political Economy Theory. This theory help explain the production of news at ZBC during the period under study. The Framing

Theory also help to deduce the agenda of the media frames since this theory is an extension of the Agenda Setting Theory.

2.3.1 Framing Theory

This study is grounded in the *Framing Theory*. Frames are concepts that work to organize or structure message meaning. Framing has been identified as second level of agenda setting. Entman (1993:52) states that framing involves the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more prominent in media discourse.

The media tend to repeat certain issues and this makes such stories them more important because the audience will be encountering them constantly. The media make some bits of news very salient by placement or repetition, or by associating them with culturally familiar symbols (Entman 1993; McCombs et al 1997).

Framing influence the way people will perceive the issue being published. The media give their own version of reality and that might be biased information. According to Fiske and Taylor, (1991) if a story has been given prominence, the audiences will perceive the information as very important and they will actually store it in memory. McCombs et al (1997) posit that frames are an extension of the agenda setting theory because in framing news, an agenda is set. Thus when ZBC gave a positive representation of Emmerson Mnangagwa, they were at the same time setting an agenda, giving people what to think about.

By framing news, journalists contribute consciously or unconsciously to supporting the status quo. McCombs et al (1997) note that the process of framing in the news production may affect our perception of certain issues and we end up generating specific evaluations about politics. There are a number of factors which influence the way journalists frame news stories. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), these five factors are: social norms and values, organizational pressures and constraints, pressure of interests groups, journalistic routines, ideological and political orientations of journalists.

The organization has got certain editorial policies which journalists have to abide with. Tuchman (1978) reinforced the idea that organizational pressures and constraints, and work routines of journalists have got influence on how news is framed. In the case of ZBC, reporters in this organization frame political news in support of ZANU PF which is the ruling party. They present events in favour of ZANU PF sometimes by manipulating news so that

even if they were to undermine ZANU PF's reputation in the first place, they will remain consistent in promoting the dominance of ZANU PF.

Framing gives the audience a certain view of the story under discussion. The media gives people a certain representation of an event and it is a constructed reality. Tuchman (1978) notes that within the realm of political communication, framing has to be defined and operationalized on the basis of this social constructivism, mass media selectively set the frames of reference that readers or viewers use to interpret and discuss public events.

The choice of news frames is driven by ideology and prejudice (Entman, 1993). Scheufele (2000) further suggests framing is also linked to gatekeeping. Journalists for ZBC have got the power to select some news and publish while leaving other stories they deem harmful to the government. This can be related to gatekeeping process where reporters filter news by selecting some sources and omitting others. News are covered by journalists holding a mirror to themselves and reflecting their image to the audiences (Gans, 1997).

By framing, some news especially positive about the ruling party is put on the agenda while other stories are not. According to Scheufele (2000) news framing is also influenced by the organizational routines or political orientation of the medium. It is ZBC's relations with ZANU PF that also contribute to how the framing of news is done in that organization.

When Emmerson Mnangagwa became president, he set himself a target to achieve certain objectives with the first 100 days of his tenure but in reality. The state controlled media including ZBC publicized that the 100 days were a success, praising the president for the achievements but in actual fact they were a total failure. This reflects how news framing is instrumental in giving the audience a false version of reality.

2.3.2 Political Economy Theory

This study is also grounded in the *Political Economy Theory*. The theory suggests that the bourgeoisie who own means of production also have the control over means of mental production, which include the media industry (Marx and Engels, 1970). The elites who have ownership of the means of production, in this case, the media, determine the ideology that is advanced by the media to the audience. The media conveys the ideas of the ruling class or the politicians, who happen to be owners of the means of production, and do not publish or broadcast against their interests. Politicians take advantage of their ownership of the media to influence the media content.

They do this through passing editorial policies and media laws which do not go beyond their interest as well as employing or appointing influential employees who are affiliated to their political party. According to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), Curran, and Gurevitch, (1991), political economists agree that media ownership is the primary means through which the ruling class control media content. The media ownership patterns determine whose voice is going to be heard in the media.

According to Hardy (2014), the theory of political economy of the media explains why certain voices and concerns are communicated by the media and whose ideas and values are represented in media discourses, and how the news production process affects content? Political economy of the media focuses on the production and distribution of media discourses. Hardy (2014) further notes that the political economy theory focuses on the production and distribution of meaning. The issue of media ownership is reinforced by Herman and Chomsky (1988) propaganda model which outlines a number of news filters including ownership patterns.

The study unpacked how the ZANU-PF government, which owns and controls ZBC determined what ZBC communicated during the period under study in rebranding ZANU PF and how was it manipulated by ZANU PF as suggested by the political economy theory.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the *Framing Theory* and *Political Economy Theory* best explain how ZBC was active in rebranding ZANU PF in the new political dispensation. The chapter revealed how the media frame political news and how this leads to agenda setting in favour of the government. It looked at the scenario of the broadcast media during the Smith regime and the media environment, particularly ZBC in the Robert Mugabe era and the current government led by Emmerson Mnangagwa.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher outlines methods used to obtain, structure, and analyze data. It also highlights the population, sample, unit of analysis of the study. Kothari (2004) argues that the methodological and systematic process of searching for information can be regarded as research. The process methodology includes sampling, research design, data collection and data analysis (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001; Pandey and Pandey 2015; Mouton 1996; Miller and Robert 2003).

3.2 Research Approach

This particular study utilized a qualitative research paradigm or approach. Qualitative research can be described as a model which is used by researchers conducting a study so that they develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences and areas under study (Creswell, 1994; MacDonald and Headlam, 1986). Unlike quantitative research paradigm which is numerical, qualitative research allowed the researcher to get quality and critical information. In this study, the researcher goes beyond the surface to uncover through archival research how ZBC online news was crucial in rebranding the ZANU PF brand. The research identifies the frames which were used by ZBC on stories relating to the new administration and it also analyses the extent to which ZANU PF, as the ruling party influences content manipulation during the period under study.

3.3 Unit of analysis

Unity of analysis is generally what the researcher is studying. According to Trochim (2006), unit of analysis is all about who or what the researcher is focusing on and analyzing in their study. The research analyzed the ZBC news online articles which were relevant in rebranding ZANU PF in the new political dispensation.

3.4 Population

Population is a set or group of elements from which a researcher selects their sample. It should be noted that this term (population) or universe bears a different meaning than a traditional one. Pandey and Pandey (2015) note that in research population or universe simply means the group from which an investigation is being made, which is the parent group where the researcher will select a sample to be used in the study. Research population comprises all the participants under study, what Yount (2006) refers to as all the cases that constitute the known whole.

The population of this particular study is made up of ZBC news articles which were published on the website pertaining to ZANU PF government in the new political dispensation during the period of study.

3.5 Sampling

A sample is a segment selected from an entire population for analysis (Haralambos and Holbourn, 2008; Good and Hatt 1968; Pandey and Pandey 2015) agree that the proper definition of a sample is that it is a subgroup of the population or a representative test of a group. By studying the features of the sample, one can make note similarities with the features of the population from which it is drawn. The research employed purposive sampling in the selecting relevant news articles which were studied as well as interviewees.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

The research utilized purposive sampling technique. In purposive sampling, the idea is to pick out the sample considering that the sample is important to that particular study. Purposive sampling is all about the collection of groups or categories which the researcher wants to study noting the strengths of their applicability to research objectives and theoretical position (Yin 2011; Barreiro & Albandoz 2001; Babbie 2001). According to Kumar (2011) and Pandey & Pandey (2015) agree that when conducting a qualitative research, the researcher should clearly know that the respondents are known experts in the field of interest which the research or the study is interested in.

From the available online publications of the ZBC news, the researcher intentionally chose samples basing on his judgement; that is whether they would fit in his study. The researcher observed 28 stories which had anything to do with the rebranding of ZANU PF from December 2017 to March 2018. From these 28 stories the researcher then picked the most influential 11 stories which I thought were the most appropriate in answering the research

questions which were outlined in chapter one. However, the weakness with this type of sampling is that the researcher can easily make an error in judging and it can hardly be noticed therefore distorting the findings which would be presented.

3.6 Methods of Data Gathering

A researcher requires the most appropriate data gathering tools or techniques to the study in order for them to conduct a successful study. Data gathering is a systematic way of collecting information which is relevant to the research one is carrying out (Burns and Grove 2003).

This particular study employed archival collection and interviews to collect data. The researcher accessed news archives on ZBC's website.

3.6.1 Archival Research

The study made use of archival research. Archival research involves the collection of data that has already been generated. It's an investigation of documents and textual materials. Archival research is a process which involves a close examination of documents to be used in a particular research in order to come up with interesting answers to the research questions and objectives as well as helping researchers to address issues of change over time and it gives the researcher in depth information and evidence than any other data collection method (Creswell 2009). According to Philips & Bernard (1997) in archival research, the researcher uses the data and information which they would have not participated during its production.

In this study, archival collection was used to uncover ZBC's news online publications which were posted on the website during the period of under study. The researcher visited ZBC's website and read the news articles which he saw fit in the rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation. It was an added advantage to utilize online archives since hard copies may be hard to access and are prone to damage than online publications. I used the search box and calendar on ZBC website to navigate the dates and this made it easy to access the stories which were relevant to the study. This saved time.

However, archival research has its own weaknesses. Philips and Bernard (1997) suggests that the researcher might be affected by bias that may have taken place during data collection. This study is insulated from any such limitations as no one can undo what has been written and published.

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews fall under qualitative research methods. An interview is a two way communication that happens between two people or more. Goode and Hatt (2001) define interviewing as an essential process of social interaction. From this definition, it is now clear to define a face to face interview as a communication process which involves two or more people in a face to face situation who decisively discuss and obtain relevant information that helps the interviewer achieve his or her objectives in research (Kahn and Cannel: 1957). The study used interviews because they provide results that are usually comprehensive, offering ideas and opinions to inform a specific research (Heldalm and McDonad: 2008). Interviews are used to obtain the interviewees' perceptions and attitudes to the issues which are being researched.

In this study, the researcher interviewed political journalists in order to obtain their view of the way ZANU PF was being rebranded by ZBC news online.

Using interviews in this research was very useful because interviews gave researcher some information, by taking advantage of follow up questions that is difficult to obtain using other methods. According to Heldalm and McDonad (2008) it is valuable to carry out a research using interviews because an interview offers the researcher the opportunity to unearth information that is possibly not accessible using techniques such as questionnaires and observations. Using interviews also entails more accurate information because the interviewer may rephrase or clarify questions that could have been missed or not understood by their interviewees, thus being efficient. Interviewing people from the organization under study was helpful since they provided some first-hand information about the implications of political economy. As a result, more suitable answers and, successively, more accurate data was attained at the end.

However, interviews are prone to bias and may provide distorted results if not conducted correctly. In this study, some interviewees feared to disclose information that they thought was sensitive and this limited the study.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

After collecting data, there is need to analyze it so as to get a trend of the developments which took place during the period of study Creswell (2009) defines data analysis as a technique of revising and evaluating communication in a methodical, unbiased manner. In the analysis of data, the researcher used data analysis method to critique data. Philips and

Bernard (1971) defines data analysis as a process of revising the gathered material in order to discover inherent facts. The data are examined from as many angles as possible to explore the new facts. Kothari (2004) notes that this is essential for a scientific study and for ensuring that we have all relevant data for making contemplated comparisons and analysis, the processing implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of collected data so that they are amenable to analysis.

3.7.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used in this research. CDA is used to analyze data since its strength is that it seeks to relate a text to its social conditions, set of ideas and power relations that exist in societies (Van Dijk 1993).

CDA is mainly focused on telling the researcher the role of discourse in perpetuation dominance of certain ideologies at the expenses of the oppressed social groups. According to Van Dijk (1993) the role of CDA is to provide a deep explanation of the role language and its use and discourse or communicative events in the production and perpetuation of dominance and inequality in human societies. Creswell (2009) supports the idea adding that CDA's focus on language and discourse was introduced with the critical linguistics that emerged mostly in the United Kingdom and Australia at the end of the 1970s.

CDA includes description, interpretation and explanation of the texts through the use of semiotic analysis. Bernard (2010) states that the most important objective of CDA is to reveal the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the text. The most important point to note here is that CDA takes interest in the relationship between language and power. In this study, thus how the powerful elites (ZANU PF) use media text to promote the dominance of their ideology by constructing their own version of reality which serves their interests. Bernard (2010) advances that discourse is a game of power. ZANU PF exercise its powers on the media by circulating news which serve to protect their powers, avoiding the rise of social movements which might result in their downfall. CDA focuses on the methods in which discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce, or challenge relations of power abuse (dominance) in society. According to Van Dijk (1993) dominance is the exercise of social power by elites, institutions or groups, that results in social inequality, including political, cultural, class, ethnic, racial and gender inequality. In this case, CDA was used to analyze the data that the researcher collected so as to draw conclusion on what exactly are the

effects of government's control of state owned ZBC's content and how restructuring of the ZANU PF party has been reported on ZBC news.

3.8 Methods of Data Presentation

After data analysis, there is a systematic way of presenting data. The researcher applied thematic approach of presenting data. According to Creswell (2009) thematic approach involves identifying and describing both hidden and clear ideas within the data, that is, themes. Creswell (2009) reinforces the idea arguing that thematic analysis as a data presentation method, is used by researchers to assess classifications and themes or patterns that relate to the data. In this study, the researcher analyzed the framing of ZANU PF party in the new political dispensation on ZBC online news.

Thematic analyses helped me in grouping the data I had gathered in coming up with sound themes. Creswell (2009) further notes that thematic analysis allows the researcher to code and categorize the data so as to produce themes.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations included presenting interviewees with a clearly articulated and refined participant consent form from the researcher's institution that spelled out the purpose, requirements of this study investigation.

3.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher looked at the research approach and methodology used in the study. Archival research method was used to gather data. CDA and thematic analysis were used in analyzing and presenting the data gathered. The next chapter focuses on the organizational structure of ZBC paying particular attention to the political economy, funding mechanism and how this influences content production, distribution and consumption.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the organization's history, political economy, role, funding mechanism, organization structure and its links with other organization. Chiumbu et al, (2009) and Mukundu, (2006) have written extensively about Zimbabwe's media landscape.

4.2 Historical Background and Political Economy of ZBC

Initially, there was Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) during the colonial period and was funded through advertising and television license fee. During the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) period, RBC had employees who supported the Rhodesian Front government. After independence, ZRBC became known as Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). Blacks were now working for ZBC and things changed as they began to support the black government and Robert Mugabe who was previously regarded as a terrorist leader.

The broadcasting sector in Zimbabwe has not expanded significantly due to harsh media laws enacted by the government. According to Mukundu, (2006) in Zimbabwe, the broadcasting sector has not expanded in any significant manner since the country attained its independence in 1980 and has largely remained the preserve of the government. ZBC has been accused of being a government mouthpiece with no editorial independence.

4.2.1 Discussion

The term political economy or ownership patterns of ZBC clearly explains how it affects media content production, distribution and consumption. PE refers to the study of production, buying and selling and their relations with law, custom and government. Ownership and

control of the media are the most important elements which are discussed in political economy. In this research, it is the government's control of ZBC that determines its content. Herman & Chomsky (1988) assert to the view that the mass media are apparatuses of power that 'mobilize support for the special interests that dominate the state and private activity. Herman & Chomsky (1988) share Marx's view that the mass media are an ideological tool whose primary purpose is not to inform rational critical societal debate, but to naturalize the ideology of the ruling classes so that the masses accept it as God given.

4.3 The nature of the organization and core business

ZBC is the national broadcaster responsible for bringing news, entertainment, education and information to Zimbabweans in Zimbabwe and beyond. ZBC has got two major departments. ZBC is the sole television channel in Zimbabwe at the present moment. It has got an online site where it publishes news articles. The online platform has brought convenience and efficiency in this digital era because everyone can access news across the globe.

ZBC's *vision* is to be a leading Zimbabwean voice promoting Pan-African values locally and globally. According to this *vision* ZBC is a platform where voices of doing away with colonialism and white supremacy are expressed. Thus ZBC provides platform where Zimbabwean can express themselves in support of their nationality and Africa at large.

ZBC's *mission* is to produce high quality content that is innovative and commercially viable and projects the national voice in a Pan African perspective.

ZBC's core values are Ubuntu, Competitiveness, Innovation, Creativity, Stakeholder satisfaction, Quality, Professionalism and accountability

4.3.1 Discussion

The media should play a watchdog role in society. As according to the Libertarian Theory, the media operates as a watchdog. However, this is not the case with ZBC since its content is manipulated by political and market forces. The libertarian theory states that all individuals have an equal right to information, whether social, political or economic, (AL-Ahmed: 1987). ZBC is too much aligned to ZANU PF and its political news is more often positive about ZANU PF and at the same time undermining the main opposition party, MDC Alliance. ZBC is not an ideal public service broadcaster because of its ownership patterns. AL-Ahmed (1987) states that with the Libertarian Theory, here the media is not owned by the ruling

forces, but individuals have the right to own, operate and distribute media products. According to AL-Ahmed (1987) journalists have, in the theory, the right to gather any information from any source within or outside the national boundaries without any hindrance. On the ground, this is not the case with ZBC. News stories which are deemed harmful to the government are not broadcast despite the fact that they are newsworthy and the public has to know. Thus how ZBC has failed or is failing to conduct its normative roles in society.

The media have become producers of culture products which the audience consume and are affected by it. This affects the media's normative roles in society since the audience have been commodified by the culture industry. According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1975) the term "culture industry" refers to the commercial marketing of culture, the branch of industry (media) that deals specifically with the manufacture of culture that is in contrast to authentic culture. The masses have been reduced to passive recipients of culture products which are produced by the mass media. Adorno and Horkheimer (1975) contend that industrially produced culture robs people of their imagination and takes over their thinking for them. Therefore this violets the expected roles of ZBC.

4.4 Funding Mechanism

The national broadcaster, both under colonial rule of Ian Smith and since independence with Robert Mugabe, has been funded through public grants or subsidies, license fees, and commercial advertising and sponsorship, (Chiumbu et al: 2009). Direct government grants have always been the predominant source of funding for ZBC. Chiumbu et al (2009) note that section 38 of the ZBC Commercialization Act provides for license fees payable to the ZBC by listeners and viewers.

Though ZBC receives grants from the government, due to economic instability in the country the government sometimes fails to support ZBC financially. This therefore means that ZBC has to lure advertisers who can buy air time and this money will help to sustain the operations of the organization even if government grants are not received. According to Chiumbu et al (2009) the broadcaster is also said to be creating programming environment that is in tune with advertisers' preferences so that they continue surviving since the government is sometimes failing to provide adequate funds which can sustain the organization's daily business.

However, quality programming has inevitably led to most advertisers shying away from the ZBC and most viewers turning to satellite (free-to-air) broadcasting like DS TV and the recent Kwese TV, starving the corporation of much needed revenue. Most Zimbabweans are now relying on satellite television and they favour watching international news from BBC and CNN among other channels. This has affected ZBC even on the operations of its online sites since it affects workers' remunerations. The state is the sole shareholder in the ZBC. Chiumbu et al (2009) states that the ZBC (Commercialization) Act outlines that the state is the only shareholder of ZBC.

4.4.1 Discussion

Funding is one of the determinant factor of news content in media organizations. According to Newsbold et al (2002) funding is the most determining factor of the editorial policy of any media house. Media organizations get most of their funding from advertising revenues. The power of advertisers over television programs stems from the fact that they buy and pay for the programs. Herman and Chomsky (1988) state that advertisers are the patrons who provide the media funding and the choices of these patrons greatly affect the welfare of the media, and the patrons become what William Evan calls "*normative reference organizations*," whose requirements and demands the media must accommodate if they are to succeed. Large corporate advertisers on television will rarely sponsor programs that engage in serious criticisms of corporate activities, (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). Large corporations like Econet Wireless, Delta Beverages, TelOne among many others have their advertisements played on air and as a result, editors have to make sure that what they are publishing will not harm the interests of the advertisers otherwise they will withdraw their funding. At the end of the day, advertisers simply affect media content. Advertisers have indirectly influences the way new is produced in media organizations. CPE states that advertisers have become the latter-day licensing authority meaning that due to the enormous amounts they pay to place their adverts in newspapers they have somewhat indirect way of influencing the content that is placed in newspapers.

Given the situation with ZBC, it's suffice to say poor equipment and programing is turning away advertisers because the advertisers will not benefit much. This even explains why ZBC is taking so long to transform from the analog type of broadcasting to the digital type.

4.5 Organizational Structure

The organizational structure outlines the specific positions and duties assigned to persons occupying such positions at ZBC. According to Cornelissen (2004) organizational structure is the framework of the management process whose purpose is to create an arrangement of positions and responsibilities, through and by means of which an enterprise can carry out its work. The Minister of Information, Media and Publicity has got the duty to appoint a Board after consulting the President.

The Board is at the top of the organization and it is responsible for policy direction. Just below the Board there is the Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O). The C.E.O runs the day to day activities at the broadcaster and he or she is supposed to report to the Board (Chiumbu et al 2009). Chiumbu et al (2009) however argues that in actual fact, the practice of has been of the Ministry of Information, Media and Publicity to make all the final decisions on management and only less sensitive issues can be handled by the C.E.O. There are also heads of different departments including television, radio, news and current affairs, advertising and marketing, finance, human resources etc. Chiumbu et al (2009) argue that persons occupying these positions are appointed by the C.E.O in consultation with the Board and the Minister. There are also managers who are affiliated to ZANU PF. Chiumbu et al (2009) note that these are also political appointees and they exercise a lot of power over employees in news departments. Sensitive and scandalous issues are assessed by the heads of the news. Lastly there are all other low level workers and the ordinary staff. **[See appendices]**

Discussion

Most powerful and influential workers at ZBC are affiliates of ZANU PF party as evidenced by how they are appointed. This is a clear reflection of the political economy of ZBC because these appointments are politically motivated and the appointees are required to fulfill the demands of the government (Chiumbu et al 2009).

4.6 Links with other Organizations

The ZBC is a partisan broadcaster which reports along the party line. It also enjoys a warm relationship with the ZANU PF government. The broadcaster also enjoys a warm relationship with other newspapers under the Zimpapers stable which is also affiliated to ZANU PF. ZBC is also in good books with advertisers and NGOs who also support the ZANU PF party.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter looked at the organizational structure of ZBC. It is clear that the editorial policy of ZBC is influenced by the ZANU Pf party which is the ruling government, thus it can be said that ZBC serves the ruling party's interests by being its mouthpiece therefore establishing their political inclination. The next chapter focuses on the data presentation and analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings that the research established in the ZBC news coverage of ZANU PF related issues in trying to rebrand the party so as to gain voters loyalty in the new political dispensation. The findings address the research objectives and research questions which were drafted in chapter one. The findings are guided by CDA and thematic analysis. The findings are based on the news archives collected from the ZBC online news archives and interviews with ZBC reporters. However, there were not many interviews conducted due to maybe the fact that reporters feared to disclose the information which I required and this was a great challenge. I gathered several stories on ZBC's website and conducted interviews with political journalist and observed that there are several ways in which ZBC rebranded ZANU PF party. I selected 11 news articles which were published between the 1st of December 2017 and the 31st of March 2018. I further categorized them in different groups for my own purposes. I had stories which were talking about attracting investors from the international community, stories which were talking about Emmerson Mnangagwa's personality, stories about elections.

5.1.1 Presentation of findings

The extent to which ZBC has been rebranding ZANU PF party dated back to the period when the army conducted the Operation Restore Legacy which led to the ouster of the then President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe. ZBC online published several stories which gave a positive image to Emmerson Mnangagwa, other ZANU PF officials and the entire government. The study contends that ZBC online rebranded ZANU PF in several

ways that include branding Emmerson Mnangagwa himself as a new and different leader, ZBC also published massive articles complementing ZANU PF's mantra 'Zimbabwe is open for business', call for free and credible elections, amplifying unity with opposition parties, diplomatic relations, media reforms and embracing the military. The researcher observed that ZBC framed Emmerson Mnangagwa as a hardworking president and a committed person who is working hard towards restoring the country's economy to a stable position.

5.2 Framing of ZANU PF: A case of ZBC online news

5.2.1 Government Stabilizing the Economy

ZBC published a story with a headline: *Government to promote, guarantee safe investor climate* (20 December 2017). The phrase 'guarantee safe investor climate' was used because it is in line with the President's business mantra 'Zimbabwe is open for business' which he preached almost on daily basis. The article reads:

'Under the current drive to reboot the country's economy, government said it is open to doing business with every player and is currently engaging key multi-lateral institutions to assist in the revitalization of the country's economy'.

Another notable article on this issue is the one which was published on the 21st of December 2017 with a headline: *Zimbabwe now open for business: President Mnangagwa*. The phrase 'now open' means a lot. The article reads:

'President Emmerson Mnangagwa has assured Zimbabweans in the Diaspora and foreign investors that the new administration is revisiting the country's legislation in order to open up business'.

Moreover in another published article on the 26th of January 2018 with a headline '*President Mnangagwa meets Investors in Davos*' adds weight to Mnangagwa's business mantra. The article reads:

'Sources close to the meeting revealed that the response by investors to meet the Zimbabwean leadership is a show of confidence in the new administration and the strategies they are taking to transform the economy, and the queries raised by the

investors showed they have a genuine interest, while those who already have interests in Zimbabwe got re-assurances on areas of concern’.

5.2.2 New administration advocating for Free and credible elections

Another key area which revealed that ZBC was acting in the rebranding of ZANU PF is the issue of free, credible and fair elections and anticorruption. Many stories including; *ZEC promises free and fair elections* which was published on 24 December 2017 were analyzed. The story read:

‘... ZEC acting chairperson Commissioner Emmanuel Magade said the electoral body will leave no stone unturned to ensure the forthcoming elections will produce a credible outcome which will be accepted locally and internationally’.

A story with on the issue of credible elections is the one with a headline; *ED’s election mantra to steer economic turnaround* published on the 21st of January 2018. The theme goes back to business development. Part of the story article reads:

‘President Emmerson Mnangagwa’s repeated pronouncement that he will deliver a free, fair and credible election has been cited as an element that will set tone for international confidence on Zimbabwe’s economic turnaround’.

5.2.3 Mnangagwa’s personality

The researcher also discovered that they were stories which were centered on the president’s personality. For example, there was a story on 23 December 2017 with a headline ‘*Business as usual for President*’. The article reads:

‘While industry and other sectors have taken a break in this festive season, it is business as usual for President Mnangagwa’.

Another story which was published on the 2nd of January 2018 also framed the president and his ministers as hardworking. The story had a headline ‘*No holiday for President Mnangagwa*’ continued to say the president was always in his Munhumutapa offices doing his duties to deliver to the whole nation his services as a president. The article reads:

‘President Emmerson Mnangagwa has been working throughout the festive season. On New Year’s Day yesterday, the President was in his offices at Munhumutapa building. On the 31st of December, he was in Bulawayo for the National Thanksgiving and dedication Church Service. Today, he was at his offices. Several ministers who

spoke to ZBC News were in their offices and constituencies as most of them said they have to deliver to their principal's expectations'.

On the 6th of January 2018, there was also a story headlined '*ED's visit to Tsvangirai hailed*'. The story reads:

President Emmerson Mnangagwa's gesture to visit MDC-T leader Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, who is battling cancer of the colony, has been hailed by analysts as a demonstration of goodwill and African values, Ubuntu, which should be emulated by all progressive Zimbabweans regardless of political affiliation.

The researcher also made reference to a story published on 10 February 2018 about the president's personality which had a headline '*I share people's dreams*'.

The story read:

'President Emmerson Mnangagwa says he shares the vision of Zimbabwe and is committed to fulfilling them. "I have heard the call of the people of Zimbabwe, I share the vision of the people and I am committed to work for the country. I appreciate the realities of our country. Our industries are stagnant, unemployment rate high. Travelling around the country, I am saddened by the poverty in the communities," he said'.

The last story which was analyzed was published on 09 March 2018. The story had a headline '*ED administration impresses Britain*'. The article read:

'The British government says it is impressed by the commitment shown by the current Zimbabwean government in ensuring the role of law, transparent and efficient justice delivery is availed to all citizens'.

Discussion

Firstly, from the above mentioned findings, it was noted that ZBC was constructing its version of reality and conveying to the audiences a positive image of Emmerson Mnangagwa and his new administration, thus framing news. Goffman (1974) contends that frames are conceptual pillars that guide our understanding of a phenomenon. Entman (1993: 51) defines framing as a process of selecting some aspects of reality and make them more salient in communicating text. Applying this definition on the just mentioned findings, it is noticeable that ZBC gave prominence to issues to do with business development by of attracting

investors, Emmerson Mnangagwa's call for free and credible elections, and his positively portrayed personality in a way of representing ZANU PF to the audience as a party which is working to fulfil the electorates' needs.

For example, the government's business mantra, 'Zimbabwe is open for business' got coverage on the ZBC news online as evidenced by a number of articles pertaining to safe investor climate. Noticeable articles were: '*Government to promote, guarantee safe investor climate*' (20 December 2017), '*Zimbabwe now open for business*' (21 December 2017), '*President Mnangagwa meets investors in Davos*' (26 January 2018). All these article were preaching the discourse that the new administration was now opening doors for foreign investors who are willing to work with Zimbabwe to start doing so. The articles framed Emmerson Mnangagwa as more concerned and interested in democratic relations for uplifting the country's economy. Unlike Robert Mugabe's 'Look East Policy', Emmerson Mnangagwa is now inviting everyone across the globe.

On 21 December 2017, the article contains a phrase, 'the new administration is revisiting the country's legislation' which bears an interesting meaning. The old administration (Robert Mugabe) is blamed for locking Zimbabwe's business opportunities through legislation, Emmerson Mnangagwa is therefore being portrayed as visionary, willing to open the doors for foreign investors to boost local business sector. Like other stories which have been referred to earlier, 26 January 2018 article fames the new political dispensation or new administration as a government with open door policies to every willing investor across the globe. The agenda set by such stories was that the audience would think about a new Zimbabwe ready for economic transformation under the new administration. The audience would be made to believe that Emmerson Mnangagwa is a good leader has got better policies than those of Robert Mugabe.

Secondly, rebranding of ZANU PF was noticed on the issues free and credible elections. The study made reference to articles which include: '*ZEC promises free and fair elections*' (24 December 2017), '*ED's election mantra to steer economic turnaround*' (21 January 2018). ZBC gave prominence to the call for free and fair elections by the president stating that the statement was being repeated several times and this clearly shows that the government is committed to conduct free and fair 2018 elections in the new dispensation. ZANU PF had earned a bad reputation when the release of election results of 2008 was delayed and this actually gave suspicion that some acts of rigging were done. Therefore, ZBC framed the

government and the ZANU PF party of this new political dispensation as body that is now different from the Robert Mugabe era, thus rebranding.

Lastly, on issues to do with the president's personality, ZBC published several stories which positively portrayed Emmerson Mnangagwa. On 23 December, ZBC published a story headlined: *'Business as usual for president'* and on the 2nd of January 2018 it published a story with a headline: *'No holiday for President Mnangagwa'*. The president was framed as a hardworking person who could spend his own spare time or sacrifice his holidays just to perform his presidential duties. Another notable article was published on 10 February, 2018 with a headline: *'I share people's dreams; President'*. In this article, the president himself is quoted saying he is saddened by the poor living conditions of Zimbabweans across the country and he promises to work on improving the living standards of citizens.

However, a review of his history contradicts with his claims that he shares peoples' dreams. It is well known that he was actively involved in the *Gukurahundi* incident which led to thousands of people dying.

The Framing Theory is therefore relevant in explaining the media's construction of its own version of reality which the audience are exposed to. The impact of framing is that the audience will have a biased understanding of reality since it would have been distorted during the production of news articles which finally reach them on the ZBC website

5.3 Preservation of ZANU PF dominance. A case of ZBC news online

The rebranding also came after President Emmerson Mnangagwa made calls for the media to take a leading role in the rebranding of the nation, the *'Zimbabwe is Open for Business'* mantra in order to attract investors. During the operation restore legacy, just before Robert Mugabe's ouster, Sibusiso Moyo, an army general on ZBC news announced that the main aim of the Operation Restore Legacy was to restore the country's economy by making it an investor friendly country hence it can be argued that Emmerson Mnangagwa was or is just a puppet of the army so as to give an illusion that there is now a new ZANU PF party.

The 11 articles which were examined:

Attracting Foreign Direct Investments, ZANU PF to Transform the nation: President Mnangagwa (15 December 2017).

Government to Promote, Guarantee safe investor climate (20 December 2017).

Zim now open for Business: President Mnangagwa (21 December 2017).

'President Mnangagwa meets investors in Davos' (09 March 2018).

'Business as usual for President' (23 December 2017).

'No holiday for President Mnangagwa' (2nd of January 2018).

'ED's visit to Tsvangirai hailed' (6th of January 2018).

'I share people's dreams' (10 February 2018).

'ED administration impresses Britain' (09 March 2018).

'ZEC promises free and fair elections' (24 December 2017).

'ED's election mantra to steer economic turnaround' (21st of January 2018).

Discussion

The study contends that ZBC was an active participant in rebranding ZANU PF during the period under examination. ZBC perpetuated ZANU PF dominance.

The articles which were analyzed not only review how they framed Emmerson Mnangagwa or ZANU PF party. The articles also reflect a certain agenda which the media wanted to achieve. Since framing is said to be an extension of the Agenda Setting Theory, it is clear that when a frame is made there is an agenda which that story should achieve. The positive coverage of the new political dispensation gave the audience what to think about so that ZANU PF continues dominating the political spheres in the country.

Therefore, it's something like a norm which state controlled media have always adopted and act as industries that are perpetuating the interests of the government of the day. The researcher noticed that the rebranding of ZANU PF was meant to give a picture that ZANU PF is now no longer focused by politics but politics and economy (attracting investors). *'Zimbabwe is now open for business'* mantra's agenda was/is to convince the intended readers that the new administration is capable of revitalizing the country's economy. Given the harsh economic situation prevailing in the country, it would be good news for the audience to hear about the revitalization of the economy.

The production and distribution of news is meant to spread a certain agenda by the media. Media discourses carry meaning which is meant to perpetuate the dominance of the ruling class. Through conveying a certain message to the audience, an ideology is created. It is

VanDik's contention (2000) that ideologies are a set of ideas. Curran et al (1982) argue that the media always reproduce the perspectives of the dominant ideologies, which is to include the ideas of the dominant political system, and they do not work to promote alternative viewpoints which may degrade the ruling class. Social, political and religious ideas are shared by a single social group. In this research, it was observed that the headlines and the leads of the stories which were analyzed were or were influenced by the power relations between ZBC and ZANU PF.

5.2 Ownership patterns and implications on media content. A case of ZBC news online

The researcher conducted an interview with one of the ZBC reporter (*name withheld for security reasons*) so as to understand how political forces contributed to the rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation.

The interviewee noted that,

'We are guided by the editorial policy in such way that every time we look for stories we do it carefully so that we do not go beyond the guidance of the editorial policy. There are some stories we publish and some we don't but you might see them in other different media organizations because their editorial policy accommodates such kind of stories. So generally, every reporter already knows what's worth to be put on air and what should not be conveyed to the audience'.

'The political transition was not a difficulty for us, it's only about change of leadership but the party still the same so we still have our editorial policy as that during Robert Mugabe era.

Discussion

The researcher observed that the patterns of media ownership of ZBC have got a great impact on the generation, distribution of media content. The *Political Economy Theory* of media ownership best explains how those in power can exercise their power in influencing what the media is going to publish. Chandler (1994) contends that the Marxists view of media ownership patterns is that media institutions are limited to the ruling elites and they continuously work on promoting the dominant institutions in the society hence ZBC as the sole broadcaster in Zimbabwe continues to enjoy its monopoly in this new political dispensation. This is the systems which ZBC is operating under. ZBC has remained a mouth

piece of the government even in the new political dispensation. This trend dates back to the colonial period. The state media was even used for the perpetuation of the ruling elite interests.

This is supported by Moyo (2003) who postulates that when the Rhodesian Front government got into power, one of their biggest aim was to utilize that media, police and the courts to suppress the blacks. The government manipulate the state controlled media so that they act as their propaganda machine. This is evidenced by what President Emmerson Mnangagwa did when he came to power, the minister who was appointed to occupy the Ministry of Information, Media and Broadcasting Services is a ZANU PF member and has got power in the formulation and implementation of laws that govern the operations of the media. Therefore there is no way they would craft laws that will give the media an opportunity to exercise freedom that will criticize the government in sensitive issues.

Moreover, the government has exercised its powers on the media landscape of Zimbabwe through the enactment of media laws that limit freedom of the media practitioners and media organizations. Laws such as AIPPA, Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), Protection of Privacy Act (POSA) are some the harsh media laws in Zimbabwe.

Because of the power of the elites who have control over the media, the new dispensation has actually been reported as a success. The recent government has been framed as very committed to restore the country's economy and create jobs which many people are crying for. ZBC as a typical mainstream medium and a government controlled was used to promote ZANU PF ideologies and complement the new political dispensation.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented and critically analyzed the findings of the study. It is clearly noticed in the findings that ZBC continued to be a government mouthpiece as it was very instrumental in the rebranding and positive framing of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation. The researcher employed the qualitative research paradigm.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study exposed how ZBC news was used to accelerate the dominance of ZANU PF party in Zimbabwe despite change of leadership which happened in last quarter of 2017. In the first chapter, the researcher outlines a brief background to the study and also reveals the research objectives and questions.

Chapter two gave a review of the existing literature which is related to the study. It also explored the applicability of the *Political Economy Theory* and the *Framing Theory* in explaining the rebranding of ZANU PF and the forces behind such framing.

Chapter three is about the research methods and methodology. It gave a highlight of the methods which were employed to collect data, data analysis and presentation. The researcher also gave the justification for using the selected research methods.

Chapter four highlighted the organization's historical background, political economy, funding mechanism, organizational structure and its links with other organizations.

Chapter five is about data presentation and analysis. The researcher presented data which was collected through archival research and interviews. Critical discourse analysis was employed to analyze the data and it was presented thematically.

The researcher recommends that state owned broadcaster (ZBC) must join the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ). VMCZ was formed in 2007 as an independent body which seeks to promote professional journalistic standards and safeguard media

independence and integrity. VMCZ cries for a media environment with freedom of expression as enshrined in the Zimbabwean constitution despite the ownership patterns of the media house. VMCZ consists of local journalists, the civil society and other stakeholders that subscribe to the tenets of media freedom, independence and the practice of ethical journalism. By joining VMCZ, it will mean that ZBC journalists will be able to perform ethical journalism without fear of being victimized by the government. Balanced reporting will be experienced at ZBC.

Government and ZANU PF's influence on the operations of ZBC are very detrimental to the media industry. The media are regarded as the fourth estate and should play the watchdog role.

However, with the interference of the government and ZANU PF officials, ZBC has failed to perform its watchdog role because this will largely undermine the government and the ZANU PF party. If the government and ZANU PF officials de-invest in ZBC this will bring an ideal public service broadcaster which is free from political forces. The political economy of ZBC largely affects its content because it relies on government grants and it will be difficult for it to publish negative stories about the government. Some members of staff are very powerful ZANU PF members and they want to promote the ideology of the revolutionary party so there is no way they will let the state broadcaster airing out some scandalous stories which will backfire on the government and discredit it.

This study is confined to the framing of ZANU PF related news by ZBC at a time when the leader of ZANU PF party and president of Zimbabwe changed. The study did not examine how private broadcasting stations like Star FM and ZiFM radio stations covered ZANU PF stories without Robert Mugabe and with Emmerson Mnangagwa as the new leader and president of Zimbabwe. This is also an area of interest that provides an opportunity for further research by anyone interested in how the political economy is instrumental in manipulation of media content to produce certain perceived frames.

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TOPIC:

The rebranding of ZANU PF in the new political dispensation between the period of December 2017 and March 2018. A case of ZBC news online.
