

**The public broadcaster model and the
Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC):
an analytical study**

by

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Declaration

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Abstract

The aim of this analytical study was to establish whether the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) operates as a true public broadcaster or as a state-controlled broadcaster. The performance of the ZBC was analysed through its main 8.00 pm television news bulletins broadcast during the period between the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front, ZANU (PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) political parties in September 2008 and the establishment of the inclusive Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009. The study was undertaken from within the paradigms of the Social Responsibility Theory as this was deemed the most applicable in terms of the research subject. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied as part of a process of triangulation. The qualitative research method, as the main methodological approach, was applied to solicit views and opinions of participants by use of questionnaires designed to interview specific interviewees, namely the ZBC journalists and spokespersons for the various political parties now in the GNU. The journalists explained how they gathered and packaged news bulletins having to endure some government interference on a regular basis. The MDCs' spokespersons outlined how the ZBC denied them broadcast time for their rallies, press statements and participation in live debates. ZANU (PF) was of the view that the MDC parties only wanted to blame the previous ZANU (PF) government through "unsubstantiated" remarks about bias and the breakdown of the rule of law and absence of democracy and freedom of expression in the country. This, according to ZANU (PF), they did in order to please their alleged Western financiers like Britain and the United States who imposed targeted sanctions on the country. Through the analysis of political parties' accessibility to the main television news bulletins, the research confirmed the assumption that the ZBC is still biased in favour of the former sole ruling ZANU (PF) party which is also in charge of the information ministry in the GNU. The study concluded that since the ZBC, as a public-funded institution, was clearly not accessible to different political parties and civic society groups in order for them to participate in a crucial nation-building process, it failed to fulfil its expected mandate as a public broadcaster. By also negating a social responsibility role that calls for high professional conduct, fairness and objectivity expected of public broadcasters, this study showed that the ZBC was still a state-controlled broadcaster that needs to be reformed.

Opsomming

Die doel van hierdie analitiese studie was om vas te stel of die Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) as 'n ware openbare uitsaaier of as 'n staatsbeheerde uitsaaier funksioneer. Die werkverrigting van die ZBC is geanaliseer deur die 8 nm-TV-bulletin gedurende die periode tussen die ondertekening van die Global Political Agreement (GPA), deur die Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front, ZANU (PF) en die twee Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) politieke partye in September 2008 en die totstandkoming van die inklusiewe Government of National Unity (GNU) in Februarie 2009 te bestudeer. Beide kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe navorsingsmetodes is toegepas deur dit met die proses van triangulering te kombineer. Die kwalitatiewe navorsingsmetode, wat die hoof-metodologiese benadering is, is aangewend om perspektiewe en opinies van deelnemers te verkry, deur gebruik te maak van vraelyste wat ontwerp is vir spesifieke deelnemers, naamlik die ZBC joernaliste en woordvoerders van die verskillende politieke partye, tans in die GNU. Die joernaliste verduidelik hoe hulle met die inwin van nuus en samestelling van nuusbuletins inmenging van die staat op 'n gereelde basis moes verduur. Woordvoerders van die MDC het in breë trekke uiteengesit hoe die ZBC hul uitsaaityd geweier het vir hul byeenkomste, persverklarings en deelname aan regstreekse debatte. Die ZANU (PF)-deelnemers is van mening dat die MDC-partye net die vorige regering wou blameer deur 'ongesubstansieerde' opmerkings te maak oor vooroordeel en die ontbinding van die oppergesag van die gereg, die afwesigheid van demokrasie en vryheid van spraak in die land. Dit sou hulle doen om hul beweerde Westerse finansiers, soos Brittanje en die Verenigde State, wat geteikende sanksies op die partyleierskap opgelê het, insluitende president Robert Mugabe, tevrede te stel. 'n Analise van die politieke partye se toegang tot die hooftelevisie-nuusbuletins bevestig die hipotese dat die ZBC steeds die vorige enkel regerende ZANU (PF)-party wat in beheer van die inligtingsministerie in die GNU is, bevoordeel. Die slotsom is dat, aangesien die ZBC, 'n openbaar-gefinansierde instansie, ontoeganklik vir verskillende politieke partye en burgerlike gemeenskapsgroepe is, hulle van deelname aan 'n belangrike nasiebouproses uitgesluit is. Daarmee faal die ZBC in sy veronderstelde mandaat van 'n ware openbare uitsaaier, asook sy sosiale verantwoordelikhedsrol, wat hoë professionele gedrag, regverdigheid en objektiwiteit van openbare uitsaaiers vereis. Die studie bewys die ZBC is steeds 'n staatsbeheerde uitsaaier wat hervorm moet word.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Brief history of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe gained its independence from British colonial rule on 18 April, 1980 after a long and turbulent history dominated by white minority rule (Stoneman, 1981: 9-10). Stoneman states that during the colonial period, vast stretches of the best land, mineral concessions, ownership of the industry that had grown up over many years, freehold rights in the urban areas, professional, managerial and skilled jobs, and sound basic education, were all preserved predominantly, and some exclusively, for whites. The blacks were cast for the most part in the role of poorly-paid labourers, often as migrants, on the white farms or mines as workers and work-seekers. In 1965, Ian Smith, prime minister of the then self-governing British colony of Southern Rhodesia, unilaterally declared the independence of a new country called Rhodesia (Chiumbu, 2009: 1). However, the move was not recognised by the majority of his countrymen and women, as well as the colonial power, Britain, or the international community. This was followed by a long and bloody liberation struggle mobilised by various political groupings under the leadership of Joshua Nkomo, who led the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mugabe of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and others. Smith's Rhodesia Front regime was only backed by South African troops and international mercenaries. It was after several failed conferences to resolve the Rhodesian question that in 1979 the final conference was held at Lancaster House in London, that led to an agreement, ceasefire and the holding of the first democratic elections. Robert Mugabe, now leading the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), after forging a loose alliance with Joshua Nkomo under the banner of the Patriotic Front, won the 1980 elections. Mugabe has been at the helm of the country, first as prime minister and later, in 1987, as executive president (MISA, 2004: 114-115).

Mugabe has over the years successfully consolidated his power, crushing political opposition and uprisings in the 1980s in Matabeleland where lives were lost until a unity pact was reached with Joshua Nkomo's PF(ZAPU) (Chiumbu, 2009: 1). This resulted in the formation of a united ZANU(PF) party through which Mugabe pursued his failed ambitions of creating a one-party state in Zimbabwe. However, this was finally crushed when the first broad-based opposition party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by Morgan Tsvangirai was founded in 1999. Its first major task was to campaign for a no-vote in a 2000

constitutional referendum after Mugabe and ZANU(PF) had proposed that the state president be given more powers (Chiumbu, 2009: 2).

Following a fast-track land reform programme and violent election campaigns for general and presidential elections since 2000 and the subsequent winning of the March 2008 election by Tsvangirai's MDC, although falling short of the required votes to be able to form a government, a one person run-off presidential election was held, through which Mugabe continued to retain power. This forced the Southern Africa Development Community to bring ZANU (PF) and the two MDC factions to the negotiating table in order to form a government of national unity on 15 February 2009 after signing the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15 September 2008. Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara of the breakaway MDC faction were appointed Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister respectively. Zimbabwe, currently under a fragile Government of National Unity (GNU) has embarked on national healing and constitution-making processes with the hope of holding the next elections in 2011, under the supervision of SADC (ZESN, 2008: 13-16).

1.2 The broadcasting landscape

Since the enactment of the Broadcasting Services Act in 2001, Zimbabwe has maintained what is described by MISA (2010: 160) as a dubious distinction among the few countries that are still to liberalise their airwaves to allow for the establishment of privately-owned radio and television stations as espoused under the African Charter on Broadcasting and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) protocol on Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs).

Both the ZANU (PF) and the new national unity governments have been reluctant to liberalise the airwaves despite showing some intentions through enacting enabling legislation and agreements. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) has maintained the monopoly of the airwaves on radio and television dating back from the pre-independence era. A Supreme Court challenge by the privately-owned Capital Radio resulted in the promulgation of a new Broadcasting Services Act in 2001, which provided for the appointment of the regulator, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) which to date has not called for the licensing of new radio and television stations (MISA, 2004: 115-116).

Since the ZBC has over the years been biased towards ZANU (PF), the GPA specifically calls for the establishment of an impartial public service broadcaster without political interference

and the closure of exiled alternative radio stations broadcasting on Short Wave in order to provide balanced news (GPA, 2008: 12). Civic society groups have called for broadcasting reforms in order to diversify the media landscape through new private radio and television stations. The reforms also include the transformation of the ZBC from state-control to being a true public broadcaster under a proposed ZBC Act which guarantees its editorial independence (MAZ, 2008: 1-2).

1.3 Focus of study

Public broadcasting is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as “an information and education tool, accessible to all and meant for all, whatever their social or economic status” (Bussiek & Bussiek: 2004: 6). The World Radio and Television Council (WRTC) describes public broadcasting as “a meeting place where all citizens are welcome and considered equals”. Its mandate is not restricted to information and cultural development, but public broadcasting must also appeal to the imagination and entertain (WRTC, 2002: 1).

Bussiek and Bussiek (2004: 6) also cite a definition by the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) which states that public broadcasting is broadcasting made for the public, financed by the public and controlled by the public. This therefore means that public broadcasting provides programmes for all, in which everyone, be it the general public or minority audiences, will find material which will inform, entertain and enrich them.

According to the Media Institute of Southern Africa-Zimbabwean chapter (Mawarire & Nyakunu 2007: 8), public service broadcasting plays a critical role in a situation where structural imbalances and scarcities of media access can undermine democratisation and development. MISA further states that in a country like Zimbabwe, the public broadcaster, the ZBC, enjoys the monopoly of the airwaves since no privately-owned radio and television stations have been licensed (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 8).

1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this analytical study is that television prime time news bulletins on ZBC, after the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) between the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the two Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, leading to the establishment of the inclusive Government of National Unity (GNU),

did not present fair, balanced news and views of all three principal political parties as expected of a public broadcaster. To test this hypothesis, news bulletins over a period of 30 days during the review period will be studied and analysed to establish whether the ZBC fulfilled its mandate as a public broadcaster.

As a public broadcaster, one could assume that according to such a model, the ZBC will, through balanced reporting, contribute to nation-building and national healing processes in a country where it is generally accepted that democracy and rule of law had collapsed due to the repressive years under the Mugabe regime.

1.5 Context: Broadcasting models

To provide context, this researcher will now discuss different broadcasting models namely the public broadcasting model and the state-controlled broadcasting model.

1.5.1 The Public Broadcasting Model

Fourie (2007a: 196) posits that a public broadcaster should strive towards high programme standards; use broadcasting to elevate public taste; bring into the greatest number of homes all that was best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement; preserve a high moral tone, avoiding vulgarities, and lead in public taste rather than pander to it.

Formulated by Sir John Reith, the first director-general of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the 1930s, these “Reithian principles” which emphasise the role of media as a provider of education, information and entertainment, are historically seen as the overall philosophy underlying the nature of public service broadcasting all over the world (WRTC, 2002: 1-2).

The concept of public broadcasting, which emerged in Western Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, had at its core a cultural mission: to facilitate nation-building efforts, to build a common culture, and to provide information, entertainment and education to the citizens. Public service broadcasting can also be understood as a medium that provides all members of society access to information and knowledge that enables them to fully exercise their roles as citizens (Ndelela & Moyo, 2006: 29-30).

The World Radio and Television Council notes that public broadcasting is guided by the principles of universality, diversity, independence, mandate and mission which remain essential

today, and therefore public broadcasting authorities must give them a meaning and reinterpret them in some way in a world characterised by media fragmentation (WRTC, 2002: 1). The WRTC also adopted the following basic principles:

- Public broadcasting must be accessible to all citizens throughout the country. This does not mean that public broadcasting should try to optimise its ratings at all times, as commercial broadcasting does, but rather that it should endeavour to make the whole of its programming accessible to the entire population, ensuring that everyone can understand and follow its programming.
- The service offered by public broadcasting must be diversified in terms of genres of programmes offered, audiences targeted and the subjects discussed. Different types of programmes must be offered and through subjects discussed, public broadcasting can seek to respond to varied interests of the public and reflect the whole range of current issues in society.
- Public broadcasting is a forum where ideas should be expressed freely and where information, opinions and criticisms circulate. This is possible if the freedom of public broadcasting is maintained against commercial pressures or political influence. If the information provided by the public broadcaster were influenced by government, people would no longer believe in it. Likewise, if the public broadcaster's programming were designed for commercial ends, people would not understand why they are being asked to finance such a predominantly private service.
- Public broadcasting services should be distinguished from other types of broadcasting services. The public must be able to distinguish services from one another and a platform should be created for other audiences who are usually left out as minorities (WRTC, 2002: 1).

1.5.2 The State Broadcasting Model

State broadcasting is defined as broadcasting which is biased in favour of the state authorities and is therefore not guaranteed to provide an open forum for democratic debate (Bussiek & Bussiek, 2004: 8). Bussiek and Bussiek also state that unlike public broadcasting, state broadcasting serves the interests of the state, which invariably is defined as the government of the day.

Ramadi and Kandjii (2006: 33-34) observe that some of the state broadcasters in the Southern African region are government departments under the information ministries. They state that some come in the form of broadcasting corporations with boards under the control of the information and communications ministers, as in the case of the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, and the ZBC. Bussiek and Bussiek (2004: 8) further proffer that market-driven radio and television stations are always tempted to trivialise and sensationalise in order to boost their ratings and they have no time for lengthy debates and explanation of issues which might offend the audience.

1.5.3 Transformation from state-controlled to public broadcasters

Most countries in Africa, according to Ramadi and Kandjii (2006: 33), maintain a tight grip on national broadcasters which were established by colonial rulers in order to advance their own political and cultural interests. The new governments after independence continued to use such broadcasters as tools for propaganda. The biggest challenge for broadcasting reform in most of Africa, therefore, is the transformation of state broadcasters into public broadcasters, especially through the enactment of broadcasting legislation which guarantees the three-tier system of broadcasting, namely public, community and commercial (Ramadi & Kandjii, 2006: 33).

Berger (2009: 14) notes that the evolution of the telecommunications industry should inform state-owned broadcasters that they need to shift from the notion of a passive and singular audience towards acknowledging more assertive individuals and collectives. Berger adds that for broadcasting institutions that are still government-controlled, the imperative is thus not only to transform into a public service broadcaster according to the Charter of Broadcasting and the African Commission Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression, but to transition even further into a public interest communications agency that includes a service of public interest news.

Mbaine (2003: 138) also observes that most African countries inherited national broadcasting institutions at independence created for propaganda purposes during the colonial era, and elected to retain their monopoly over the airwaves. In practice, therefore, national broadcasters, although officially designated as public service broadcasters, became state broadcasters, meaning that broadcasting was in all respects owned, controlled and financed by the state. Their role in both colonial and post colonial Africa was mainly to support the ideology of the government and party in power and generally play a propaganda role for the government by not respecting editorial independence. Mbaine (2003: 138) adds that control by a central authority like the ruling party and government inevitably obscured the necessity of alternative ideas and programmes.

Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007: 15) observe that since the ZBC is blatantly a state broadcaster it means that the politicians can use it during election campaign periods to further their political ambitions.

The African Charter on Broadcasting, observes Article 19 (2003: 201-202), explicitly points out that all state and government-controlled broadcasters should be transformed into public service broadcasters, which are accountable to all strata of the people as represented by an independent board which serves the overall public interest, avoiding one-sided reporting and programming in regard to religion, political belief, culture, race and gender. Public service broadcasters, like broadcasting and telecommunications regulators, as converged or stand alone bodies, should be governed by bodies which are protected against interference. In that respect the editorial independence of public service broadcasters should be guaranteed (Article 19, 2003: 201-202).

Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007: 4) argue that political processes often have an influence on the news media because unchecked political power can easily be transformed into control over the news media. Political power can also have a major influence on who owns the media and how they should operate, thus any analysis of who speaks through the media should be cognisant of who wields the political power as well as the ownership and management structure of the given media.

Ramadi and Kandjii (2006: 37) outline what is imperative in ensuring a concrete transformation from state to public broadcasters, including the following:

“The status and responsibilities of public broadcasters should be provided by legislation which states and defines the mandate, powers, responsibilities, modalities of appointments, funding and accountability mechanisms.

“The independence of regulatory bodies should be guaranteed by law and respected in practice. Appointments of members of such bodies should be done in transparent public processes.

“The editorial independence of the public broadcasters should be guaranteed by law and respected in practice.

“Public awareness and demand for public broadcasting.”

In order to avoid state interference it is imperative for the regulatory bodies such as the BAZ and public broadcasters like the ZBC to have their public status and responsibilities clearly defined by law (Hondora, 2003: 2).

Berger (2009: 6) posits that there is need to continue the task of transforming government broadcasters into public service broadcasters. What has been seen is the lack of political will of governments, especially through ruling parties, to relinquish political control which has prevented the transformation of state into truly public broadcasters. Thus, further observes Berger (2009: 6), state-controlled broadcasters increasingly exist in a context of many broadcasters, which raises new questions about their role and business model in a pluralistic environment.

Two examples of public broadcasters will next be discussed, looking at their strengths and weaknesses, after which the ZBC will be discussed in terms of the definition of a “public broadcaster”.

1.5.4 The South African Broadcasting Corporation’s (SABC) quest to be a “model public broadcaster”

After the 1990s the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) was for a few years, soon after the dismantling of apartheid, viewed as a better model of a public broadcaster in Africa (Ramadi & Kandjii, 2006: 33). As part of a new dispensation in South Africa and in order to meet the challenges brought about by many new competitors, the SABC entered into a lengthy phase of restructuring in order to fulfil its role as the nation’s public broadcaster (FXI, 2006: 28).

Resultantly, argues the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), the SABC's independence can only be inferred from Section 16 of the country's constitution which guarantees freedom of expression and media freedom. The inference means that the state is precluded from controlling the affairs of the public broadcaster, particularly its policies, because this threatens the diversity of views essential to freedom of expression (FXI, 2006: 28).

The SABC's Board appointments, financial and institutional control and editorial independence to a large extent point to the existence of a model public broadcaster, but recent developments have indicated weaknesses. Orgeret (2006: 329), in her study of the SABC's first decade between 1994 and 2004, noted a trend of editorial independence being eroded to make way for an uncertain trend which has continued into recent years and seriously damaged the credibility of SABC news coverage and the institution as a whole. Orgeret concluded:

“After the new SABC board came into office in January 2004 and appointed people from within the heart of the ANC strategic positions in the SABC, the trend to push forward a political agenda in the news bulletins increased significantly. The increasing affinity in the SABC news coverage to confound the party and the nation and the party leader with the national leader is a worrying tendency and a threat to editorial independence” (Orgeret, 2006: 138).

The SABC is accountable to Parliament through the minister responsible for communication (MISA, 2003: 1). The Board furnishes the minister with an annual report on its work, together with a balance sheet and a complete statement of revenue and expenditure for every financial year. The corporation is also subject to the regulatory framework of the broadcasting industry and is answerable to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), the Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa (BCCSA) and the Advertising Standards Authority (MISA, 2003: 1).

The SABC's editorial policy document emerged at a time when public broadcasters throughout the world were faced with an assortment of problems ranging from fragmented audiences, intense competition and limited cash flows. However, it was argued that the Board should ensure that there is public participation in the development of the policies (MISA, 2003: 2). The adoption of a new editorial code in 1994 resulted in the commercial versus public service ethos debate in the corporation. It was decided that editorial independence should

be preserved in the editorial code and that the SABC board had the right to determine editorial policy. One faction wanted to maintain editorial control with the news but only retreated when challenged by trade unions. The final version stressed overall management accountability as opposed to day to day interference in the compilation of news (Orgeret, 2006: 135).

The SABC's public service image has in recent years also been tarnished by the notorious “blacklisting” saga in which some people were to be sidelined by the public broadcaster. This followed allegations that the then managing director for news, Snuki Zikalala, had issued specific instructions not to include certain personalities viewed as being critical of President Thabo Mbeki as political commentators (Dramat, 2007: 62).

According to Lepere (2007: 62) the banning of certain individuals from SABC programmes was seen by many as a departure from the usual way in which a public broadcaster should operate – namely to provide a space for a range of diverse voices that reflect differing opinions. Lepere adds that the SABC, for many South Africans, is the only source of news and therefore considered to have a special responsibility to its audience of 19 million radio listeners and 18 million television viewers.

In 2009, the SABC were again making news itself. Controversies pertaining to the removal and appointment of a new board following allegations of deteriorating relationships between the old SABC board and management, which manifested itself in poor corporate governance, bankruptcy and absence of sound tender procurement procedures, were making headlines. The new board members were subsequently appointed amid controversy that the composition was tilted in favour of the ruling African National Congress (Presence, 2009: 1).

Before the recent appointment of the new SABC Board, the FXI blamed management for no action against poor programming decisions and the Board for not punishing employees who caused the corporation to violate its licence conditions, the Broadcasting Act and the South African constitution (FXI, 2009: 1).

1.5.5 The Finnish Broadcasting Company as a “model public broadcaster”

The Finnish public broadcaster, Yleisradio, according to Buckley, Duer, Mendel & O’ Siochru (2008: 195-196), is a good example of how legislation governing public service broadcasting can address the needs and interests of persons belonging to minorities. Yleisradio programmes are structured in order to fulfil the following public service obligations, among others:

- Support democracy and everyone's opportunity to participate by providing a wide variety of information, opinions and debates as well as opportunities to interact.
- Produce, create and develop Finnish culture, art and inspiring entertainment.
- Treat, in its broadcasting, Finnish speaking and Swedish speaking citizens on equal grounds and produce services in the Sami, Romany, and sign languages, as well as, where applicable, in the languages of other language groups in the country.
- Support tolerance and multiculturalism and provide programming for minority and special groups.
- Promote cultural interaction and provide programming directed abroad.

In concrete terms, Buckley *et al.* (2008: 195-196) conclude that the Finnish public broadcaster's programming objectives aim to promote democratic values and practices, as well as participatory and interactive opportunities. Taken together, they are important for fostering intergroup understanding and societal cohesion.

The Finnish model does not seem to have been dented with interference from both the state and its board and as a result presents a better and more exemplary model of the two examples given.

1.6 The ZBC as a “public broadcaster”

The public broadcaster in Zimbabwe is defined by the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) as meaning the ZBC or any other broadcasting entity established by law which is wholly owned and controlled by the state (Broadcasting Services Act, 2001: 26).

According to this act the ZBC was deemed to be automatically licensed to provide every class of broadcasting service that it provided before its enactment, meaning that it did not have to go through the licensing process under the regulator, the BAZ. The minister of information ensured that a public broadcasting licence was automatically issued to the ZBC and such a licence can be renewed or amended, and all frequencies were allocated immediately to the ZBC just before the enabling act came into force. However, as it stands, the corporation does not have features which generally characterise a public broadcaster, as the government is clearly determined to control it directly, as outlined in the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001, argues Hondora (2003: 71).

During the 2008 parliamentary elections the ZBC struggled without success to become a true public broadcaster, according to the Media Monitoring Project-Zimbabwe (MMPZ, 2008a: 1). The MMPZ study found that:

“The many hours of advertising and party political broadcasts that briefly flooded the airwaves gave the impression that the ZBC was adhering to local laws and regional guidelines governing the performance of the media during an election. Initially, there was unprecedented access to the Zimbabwean public by political parties and candidates through the services of the ZBC which was a welcome development. The content of the national public broadcaster’s news coverage of contesting political parties during an election period was also controlled by the same broadcasting regulations, which demand ‘balanced, fair, complete and accurate’ coverage of the contestants” (MMPZ, 2008a: 1-2).

A MISA case study undertaken by Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 6) which assessed how ordinary voices were featured on the ZBC, the state broadcaster, within a selected period, with the existence or non-existence of an editorial policy is of immense interest. The study reveals that several enquiries about the availability of the editorial policy which were made by the Federation of African Media Women of Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) did not yield any positive results. Even senior employees who have been with the corporation for many years claim that they have never seen a written document to that effect.

According to the same researchers (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 6) the study also revealed that ZBC journalists are inducted by merely observing how others carry out their duties. It adds that since there is no written document pertaining to editorial policy, the journalists at the national broadcaster have accepted that their mandate is to echo government policies with the misplaced understanding that government positions equate to public sentiment, since it is believed that government represents the people. Finally, the report recommends that the ZBC should have geographic universality, cater for all interest groups and tastes, cater for minorities, and be detached from vested government interests and other stakeholders (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 6-7).

In a general study of public broadcasting in Zimbabwe, Mano (1997: 21) concluded that the public broadcaster, the ZBC, due to poor and limited transmission networks failed to cater for all sections of the community by not reaching all parts of the country with a mission to educate,

inform, improve and prepare to lead public opinion rather than follow it. He contends that the corporation shows an outright departure from a notion of a system whose first duty is to a public within a democracy which regards audience as constituting citizens, members of communities and individuals, rather than merely as consumers.

Mazango (2001: 46), in his study of broadcasting and telecommunications law in Zimbabwe, concluded that the future viability and status of the ZBC as a public broadcaster should be an issue of major public policy debate. When new private broadcasters are eventually licensed, there is a need to define what public broadcasting means in the Zimbabwean context, as well as clarify further the ZBC's mandate, including programming content and general restructuring in the light of increased commercial competition.

1.7 Central Research Question

In the light of the above, having defined and discussed the public broadcasting model, as well as a brief discussion of the Zimbabwean situation, and based on the initial hypothesis, this researcher therefore would like to formulate the following as the central research question for this thesis:

Did the ZBC, as a public broadcaster, present a fair and balanced picture and viewpoints from all major political parties regarding developments from the signing of the Global Political Agreement until the formation of the inclusive Government of National Unity in Zimbabwe?

This central research question will also be part of the questionnaire to be put to spokespersons of the major political parties, the ZBC reporters, news editors and political commentators.

1.8 Research design and methodology

This thesis will follow the structure of an analytical study, which will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on research design and methodology. In this chapter, the concept of a case study will be discussed, as well as the applicable methodologies in this case, since both qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be used together in what is referred to as triangulation in order to collect data.

In brief, television main news bulletins were recorded, covering a continuous period of thirty days within the time of the signing of the GPA and the actual formation of the GNU. The news bulletins will be analysed in quantitative form to determine how many stories were attributed to each political party in the inclusive government. Positive and negative stories about each political party were recorded.

To complete the triangulation process, structured questions were also put to spokespersons of the major political parties, political commentators and the ZBC journalists in order to bring out the qualitative aspects of the study. For the purposes of this study, the results of the Literature Review together with the news bulletin analysis and interviews form the triangulation process. The interviews sought to establish in a qualitative manner whether there was fair, balanced coverage of all political parties.

The thesis will consist of the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology

Chapter 5: Findings/Data

Chapter 6: Conclusion/recommendation

References

The unstructured questionnaires will be added as Addendum A, B and C. A list of the television news bulletins that were analysed will form Addendum D.

1.9 Theoretical points of departure

The Social Responsibility Theory was regarded to be the most appropriate in the analysis of the role of the ZBC as a public broadcaster. According to Fourie (2007a: 195-196) exponents of this theory try to reconcile the ideas of freedom and independence with responsibility towards society because it is based on the premise that media should support democratic political principles and is also under an obligation to create a forum for different viewpoints.

As a theoretical departure point this study investigates how the ZBC's coverage of the transition period soon after the signing of the GPA, went on to fulfil the expectations of the Social Responsibility Theory, especially those of representing views from all sections of society.

The Social Responsibility Theory, as the main theory, will also be investigated in terms of the public sphere concept which, according to Fourie (2007b: 217), requires open access, the freedom to express opinions and the freedom to discuss matters of the state.

1.10 Summary

This chapter introduced the rationale and context of the study, defined public broadcasting and state-controlled broadcasting, and also referred to some recent studies of the ZBC which shall be discussed in more detail in the literature review (Chapter Two).

The next chapter will deal with an in-depth review of literature related to this thesis topic as well as ZBC structures and operational systems to provide further context for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

It is important to carry out a literature review in order to establish what else has been written on the same subject being pursued.

According to Mouton (2006: 6) the main reasons are to ensure that one does not merely duplicate a previous study; to discover what the most recent and authoritative theorising about the subject is and to find out what the most widely accepted empirical findings in the field of study are.

It is also important to identify available instrumentation that has proven validity and reliability and to ascertain what the most widely accepted definitions of key concepts in the field are. Du Plooy (2007: 58-60) states that literature can be searched by computer or manually. Although a manual search takes longer, it can provide access to sources and specific authors that may not be available by using a computer search. Du Plooy adds that a review of literature means a systematic and thorough survey of publications that are relevant to a research project. The researcher's role therefore, is that of a critical reader and not one of leisure.

The decision to review the literature in this chapter came after the formulation of the research topic entitled "The public broadcasting model and the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation: an analytical study". The study looks at the operations of the ZBC as a public broadcaster during the period between the signing of the GPA and the actual formation of the GNU. In this regard, previously written literature on the topic was searched, identified and reviewed.

A study by Mano on public broadcasting in Zimbabwe was a publication already in this researcher's possession due to my interest in the topic.

The studies by Chiumbu, Mawarire and Nyakunu were sourced from the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe), which has led a strong public broadcasting reform campaign since the late 1990s.

Academic searches were done on the Internet using the following key terms: 'Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation', 'Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings', and 'Public Service Broadcasting in Zimbabwe'.

The search engines that were used were Springlink, SAGE, JSTOR and Sabinet. With regards to the Stellenbosch University library services, some electronic journals like *Equid Novi/African Journalism Studies* and the *Journal of African Communication Research* were also consulted. However, no comprehensive information relevant to the topic could be found. Other academic searches done on the Internet also did not supply this researcher with studies on the topic. Information was also sought from local libraries in Harare like the Municipal Library, the Parliament of Zimbabwe library and the National Archives.

Therefore, after both manual and computer searches, literature found to be most relevant to this study were “Public Service Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: A Brief on Promise, Performance and Problems” by Mano (1997), “Missing Voices from Within”, a MISA study by Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007) and “Public Broadcasting in Africa Series: Zimbabwe” by Chiumbu (2009). A study by Robinson (2007), “The feasibility of regional television (RTV) in South Africa – A study of the official processes towards the issuing of licences for RTV and subsequent developments”, which was found in the Stellenbosch University library catalogue, was not deemed applicable to the focus of this study.

After completing the above extensive search it can be said that academic literature on public service broadcasting in Zimbabwe, in general, and the ZBC, in particular, has been very limited, including the period before the country gained political independence from British colonial rule.

This review will now proceed to analyse three relevant studies published between 1997 and 2009, since it is the only period during which some relatively detailed research was carried out on public service broadcasting and the ZBC’s role and status in terms of this model.

In his 1997 journal article entitled “Public Service Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: A Brief on Promise, Performance and Problems” Mano discussed the ZBC in relation to theories on public service broadcasting and the emphasis on state control and alternative commercialisation (Mano, 1997).

In 2007, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) commissioned a study entitled “Missing Voices from Within: A report on the voices featured in Zimbabwe’s National Broadcaster as an assessment of its nature as a Public Broadcaster”, conducted by Mawarire and Nyakunu into ZBC’s coverage of topical issues such as HIV/AIDS, water and electricity shortages, as well as the Southern African Development Community’s (SADC) initiatives to resolve the Zimbabwean political crisis among other issues to gauge the levels of compliance with SADC Principles and the African Charter on Broadcasting (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007).

The most recent research by Chiumbu, published in 2009, produced a country report of public service broadcasting in Zimbabwe, which includes a comprehensive survey of the organisational structure and activities of the ZBC (Chiumbu, 2009).

This research will now proceed to discuss these three previous studies in detail.

2.2 Review: “Public Service Broadcasting in Zimbabwe: A Brief on Promise, Performance and Problems”

Mano (1997: 6) wrote at a time when the monopoly of the ZBC was deeply entrenched under the old Broadcasting Act of 1957 which was established in the then Rhodesia before the attainment of independence for the new country, Zimbabwe, in 1980. The Act did not allow any other broadcasting organisations to be licensed and clearly stated:

“Subject to the provisions of this Act, no persons other than the Corporation or a person exempted in terms of subsection (3) shall operate a diffusion service in Rhodesia other than in accordance with conditions issued by the Corporation with the approval of the Minister and with the approval of the Posts Corporation.” Mano (1997: 6).

In his study, Mano (1997: 11) concluded that the ZBC clearly enjoyed an unchallenged right to broadcast in the country until the 1957 Act was later scrapped after a successful constitutional challenge by Capital Radio in 2000. Through the 1957 broadcasting legislation, which clearly promoted state broadcasting monopoly, the ZBC and its colonial predecessor were effectively protected from any competition unauthorised by the government. The emphasis was on state control rather than on promoting its public service mandate.

The state president retained the right to appoint and dismiss the board of governors at the ZBC. The appointments were not sanctioned by any restrictions except that the candidates should not have a criminal record. Mano argues that in theory the control structure was potentially good in that it ensured that there was an overseer into the affairs of the public service broadcaster, although in reality it made the corporation vulnerable to strong interest groups, chief among them, the state itself (Mano, 1997: 10).

Addressing a broadcasting conference in Manchester, United Kingdom, soon after the transformation of the Rhodesia Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) to the ZBC, former ZBC

director-general, Tirivafi Kangai, and the then director of programmes, Charles Ndlovu, presented some policy guidelines which Mano (1997: 12) cited as follows:

“The newly independent nation of Zimbabwe has to be informed and educated in modern methods, including good health and hygiene, and broadcasting should mobilise the public for national development through formal and non-formal education. It should be the duty of the service to be the carrier of information between the national leaders at all levels and the masses they lead. Radio and television should play the role that was played by our grandparents, the role of story-telling in the evenings while waiting for supper.”

In analysing Kangai and Ndlovu’s policy outline, Mano (1997: 12) welcomed their pronouncement as introducing a new phenomenon which would make politics more transparent and create a public sphere in which everyone would take part. Mano concluded that broadcasting should be the facilitator of open dialogue between the rulers and the ruled, whereby it is believed that exposure to the media results in mobilising more people for national development.

Mano’s study notes that the mere fact that the institution of public service broadcasting in Zimbabwe, like in many other former British-controlled territories, was modelled after the BBC was cause for suspicion, since the two societies are historically different. For example, in Zimbabwe between 1980 and 2000, parliament was dominated by members of one political party, ZANU (PF), who publicly stated that they were keen to advance the cause of media freedom. However, this did not prevent attacks on the media whenever they were made by top government and ruling party officials (Mano, 1997: 19).

Mano (1997: 20) observes that in Zimbabwe the gap between intention and performance in public service broadcasting pointedly illustrated that the service offered by the ZBC in the mid-1980s was not consistent with the early promises made by both the government and the corporation’s policy makers. Thus, argues Mano, there was a wide gap between conceptualisation of broadcasting at the dawn of independence and the actual performance of the institution in the post-colonial era. He adds that the concept of public broadcasting in a monopolistic environment must imply catering for all sections of the community, reaching all parts of the country, regardless of cost, seeking to educate, inform and improve, and be prepared to lead public opinion rather than follow it. Mano (1997: 20) states that the ZBC apparently

failed in this regard, and in many other ways showed an outright departure from the promise and intention of policy-makers.

On broadcast signal reach, Mano discovered that the most apparent failure of the ZBC to perform its duty concerned the essential obligation of providing a universal service reaching all parts of the country, regardless of cost. Across the country the research discovered that many Zimbabweans could not receive local radio and television signals. The service was so unevenly spread, just like in the colonial era, when it was biased in favour of city and town dwellers (Mano, 1997: 21).

Mano (1997: 37) also notes that the monopolistic public service broadcasting which existed in Zimbabwe soon after independence failed to provide a nationwide service in terms of diverse language coverage and balanced representation of views, and lacked meaningful penetration of Zimbabwean society.

Mano further observes that the control structure left the ZBC too vulnerable to political interference and effectively disabled it, making it difficult to fulfil its obligations to the Zimbabwean public in return for distinct privileges afforded it. Mano identified the real source of danger to the public service broadcasting system in Zimbabwe as the constant abuse it endured from the state and political party interests (Mano, 1997: 37).

As early as 1997 Mano recommended a total reform of the public service broadcasting system in Zimbabwe in order to make it more representative of the whole society, not only in terms of language coverage, but most important of all, in creating a vibrant public sphere accessible to all. He noted that the option of allowing private television stations to complement the ZBC on its channels, currently out of use like TV2 in order to carry out the public service role, though with its own weaknesses, remained plausible at that time (Mano, 1997: 38).

2.3 Review: “Missing Voices from Within”

In 2007, MISA-Zimbabwe researchers Mawarire and Nyakunu conducted a study into the ZBC’s coverage of topical issues of the time. This study, a textual analysis of the ZBC-TV main news coverage from 1 to 7 May 2007, was carried out with the sole purpose of identifying the voices quoted in the stories and explaining why these exclusive voices were quoted. Critical discourse analysis was used to interrogate the patterns coming out of the content analysis through in-depth interviews with key ZBC staff.

As already concluded by Mano (1997: 38), Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 5) also observed that, guided by the Broadcasting Act of 1957, the then RBC's thrust was to project government interests and those of the minority government in order to perpetuate the status quo. The Act sought to ensure that the RBC remained the only broadcaster in the country. The new ZANU (PF) government conveniently inherited this colonial legacy and used it to further its own interests as the incoming ruling party. The MISA-commissioned study took place under the new Broadcasting Services Act of 2001, which was followed by the repeal of the monopoly of the ZBC on paper, but did not in reality result in the opening up of the airwaves in order to allow new broadcasters to be licensed.

Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 5) note that it would appear that the repression that President Robert Mugabe and his colleagues suffered under the colonial period taught his government the importance of media control in order to hold on to power, since they themselves were denied publicity as nationalists and freedom fighters. The researchers proffer that the government perfected the art of controlling the electronic media, with the ZBC acting as a subsidiary of the government by denying opposition political groups access to the airwaves while affording the government and the then ruling party, before the current unity government, unfettered access to the broadcast media. Government activities and pronouncements by ZANU (PF) officials were prominently featured on radio and television while opponents were hardly featured. Pronouncements by Mugabe usually led radio and television news broadcasts, notwithstanding their newsworthiness (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 6).

With regard to editorial policy, Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 6) state that the existence or non-existence of the ZBC's editorial policy during their research was of immense interest. Several inquiries about its availability did not indicate that it was in existence as a formally written document. They concluded that while they could not find any document on the editorial policy of the ZBC, such deliberate unavailability of policy might be policy on its own in order to allow for manipulation. They assumed that it might mean that whatever the authorities at the broadcaster choose to do or not to do, become policy in the absence of a written document. During Mawarire and Nyakunu's research, a senior ZBC editor indicated that new reporters were inducted through mere observation, adding that since there was no written document pertaining to editorial policy, the journalists at the institution have grown to assume that their mandate is to echo government positions with the misplaced understanding that government's point of view equates to public sentiment, since the government "represents" the people.

To establish why some voices were excluded from news coverage while others were included, Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 11) argued that there is a need to understand the characteristics and normative role that a media institution supportive of democracy should play. In Zimbabwe, radio and television are state monopolies, and as a result they present news in order to please the ruling party and government. The prevalence of government-sourced stories during the week analysed, indicated that the government and ruling party commanded the overall power to communicate in the country. The state also determined the content of what was communicated, its purpose and to whom it was communicated.

The MISA study observed that ZBC journalists routinely relied on political elites when defining and framing the news agenda (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 6). The corporation ensured that it put in place a sourcing filter of the propaganda model, which according to Golding and Murdock (2000: 73) are propaganda campaigns managed by powerful people, to maintain a system where journalists fall back on the vast volume of public relations materials disseminated by government in order to generate a steady and rapid supply of stories. By doing so, it also ensured that it excluded anti-elite, anti-government analyses that were likely to come out of sections of the public that were not part of the ruling elite. The recruitment of pro-government, pro-ruling party staff at the ZBC served government interests and such journalists did not question the ethicality and professionalism of a journalistic routine that left out voices of members of the public in favour of government and official positions on issues that have a direct bearing on the lives and aspirations of the ordinary person (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 12).

Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 14) noted the ZBC's use of a false ideology strategy in which the government managed to create anti-imperialist and anti-neo-colonialist ideological statements which were consistently propagated through the corporation and used to label as unpatriotic anyone who questioned the government's policy on land redistribution. This gave ZBC journalists a ready-made template with which to "understand" domestic and global events and provided political elites with a powerful rhetorical tool with which to ridicule anyone opposed to the land reform and other controversial policies the government might have been implementing at the time. This approach ensured that voices likely to question government policy were left out or attacked on the basis of them being "unpatriotic". In this regard, the ZBC helped to create a political world that was culturally speaking, upside down. In such a world the government is able to define its own publics and create a situation where democracy becomes whatever the government ends up doing (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 15).

In their conclusion and recommendations, Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 18-19) noted that the content and voices that were quoted in the stories which they analysed were heavily

biased towards government and the ruling party, an indication of a propaganda model at work in the national broadcaster's programming and news coverage.

The researchers' recommendations were that apart from increasing the number of voices quoted in the stories, there is need to diversify the socio-economic and political backgrounds of the sources of news that the ZBC uses. There is also need to increase the plurality of voices by ensuring that the regulator, the BAZ, licences more broadcasters to break the ZBC monopoly that has worked in favour of President Robert Mugabe's ZANU (PF) party, especially during parliamentary and presidential elections, where it is the only party that enjoys unlimited access to the public through its monopoly of the national broadcaster (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 19-20).

The researchers further recommended that journalists should be encouraged to concentrate on their professional ethics and ensure that they cover events that reflect the diversity of opinions, cultural practices, tastes and expectations of the citizenry which can come to an end only if the broadcaster stops relying heavily on government press statements and state organised functions as its primary sources of news. There is also need to ensure that it receives grant funding through parliament to which it should also be answerable as opposed to doing so through the parent ministry of media, information and publicity (Mawarire & Nyakunu, 2007: 19-20).

2.4 Review: "Public broadcasting in Africa series: Zimbabwe"

Chiumbu's 2009 study, commissioned by the Africa Governance Monitoring and Advocacy Project (AfriMap), Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and Open Society Institute Media Programme (OSIMP), focuses on public broadcasting in Zimbabwe as part of a wider public broadcasting research project covering many African countries. It starts with a comprehensive audit of existing media laws and legislation with an impact on freedom of expression and a critical in-depth assessment of broadcasting legislation. It also includes a detailed study of the ZBC in which it looks at broadcasting legislation and organisational structures, funding and programming (Chiumbu, 2009: x).

For the purposes of this research project, Chiumbu's study is reviewed mainly in relation to the mission of public broadcasting as expounded by the Southern Africa Broadcasting Association (SABA) and the African Charter on Broadcasting which emphasises the editorial independence of the public broadcaster.

Chiumbu (2009: 69) found the ZBC to be a state and government-controlled broadcaster which is accountable to the government by law. It is governed by a board appointed by government and does not enjoy any semblance of editorial independence. The national broadcaster, both under colonial rule and since independence, has been funded through public grants or subsidies, licence fees, commercial advertising and sponsorship. Direct government grants have always been the predominant source of funding although the amounts dwindled tremendously in the 1990s.

Chiumbu (2009: 69) recommends that the ZBC should be governed by a board established and acting according to open and transparent procedures, free from political interference. The board should represent a broad cross section of the Zimbabwean population. Office bearers of political parties and those with business interests in the media industry should not be eligible for board membership. The Board should not interfere in the day to day decision making of the broadcaster, especially in relation to broadcast content and respect the principle of editorial independence.

The new ZBC Act should guarantee editorial independence for the ZBC in order to eliminate political interference. Management and journalists at the ZBC need training in order to fully understand the concept of public broadcasting, focusing on principles and values, the role of journalists and management, as well as challenges faced by public broadcasting in the era of commercialisation, competition and the digital era (Chiumbu, 2009: 70).

Between 1995 and 2000, as a result of a failed economic structural adjustment programme, advertising revenue and licence fees also declined sharply and left the ZBC in a serious financial crisis. This brought about the promulgation of the Commercialisation Act which saw the ZBC being registered under the companies' legislation as the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) so that it could generate revenue independently from the treasury (Chiumbu, 2009: 71).

Chiumbu therefore recommends the repeal of the ZBC Commercialisation Act which split the organisation into separate programming and transmission companies, namely ZBH and Transmedia to be scrapped and replaced by a specific ZBC Act as a matter of urgency. This will result in a return to the original establishment where programming and transmission are administered by the same authority (Chiumbu, 2009: 72).

Chiumbu (2009: 76) revealed that details about the ZBC's current sources of funding and spending trends since 2000 were not publicly available as should be the case. The corporation's employees feared that they might divulge information which was regarded as "politically

sensitive”, considering that the researcher was linked to MISA, a civic society organisation, which ZANU (PF) and the previous government labelled as agents of regime change because of its call for the reformation of the ZBC from a state broadcaster into a true public service broadcasting institution.

In order to turn the ZBC around to become a truly accountable public broadcaster, Chiumbu recommended a thorough audit of the corporation’s financial status by an independent accounting firm and the drawing up of a business plan outlining financial needs and potential sources of revenue. Regarding licence fees, Chiumbu recommended that they form the backbone of the ZBC’s revenue sources because they provide stable, predictable multi-year funding and allow the broadcaster to plan and implement the necessary investment in programming and operational improvements. Regarding revenue channelled from state coffers, Chiumbu (2009: 76 -77) recommends that a panel of experts determine the amount of subsidies needed by the ZBC over a three-year-period to fulfil its public broadcasting mandate.

Parliament should fund the public broadcaster directly and not through a ministry or department, on the basis of the amount determined by the panel of experts. On other revenue generation strategies, the ZBC should develop clear and strict guidelines on soliciting advertisements and conditions for accepting advertisements and programme sponsorships that will safeguard the broadcaster’s editorial independence and clearly separate responsibilities of editorial and marketing departments (Chiumbu, 2009: 77).

On programming and news which are the core business of the corporation, Chiumbu (2009: 89) concluded that the ZBC’s offerings, both on radio and television, are still extremely poor and do not serve diverse interests of the audience as outlined by the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) and the African Charter on Broadcasting, of which it is a member. The corporation also does not provide quality information, education and entertainment.

Chiumbu also concluded that editorial independence at the ZBC is non-existent and the broadcaster is *de facto* run from the ministry of information, with allegations of direct political interference which has resulted in news blackouts and stoppage of any programmes which are deemed unsuitable by the state. At times, according to Chiumbu’s findings, insiders say the minister of information and the permanent secretary do not even have to give instructions for the banning of certain information, but the journalists resort to self-censorship and “sunshine journalism” (praise singing approach to reporting) out of fear of offending the authorities (Chiumbu, 2009: 65).

As in the Mano as well as the Mawarire and Nyakunu studies, Chiumbu also found that accessibility throughout the country is generally poor due to the aging broadcasting and transmission equipment still in use.

In order to drastically improve programme output, Chiumbu recommended that the ZBC should develop a programming charter that adheres to public service broadcasting principles and promote public interest programming. The corporation should also develop a code of conduct and establish an effective internal complaints mechanism through which citizens can express their concerns about content that they find inappropriate or unacceptable. The ZBC should consult widely with stakeholders and the public at large to develop an appropriate local content policy and also develop a professional and mutually beneficial relationship with local audio-visual production companies to whom some production duties would be assigned (Chiumbu, 2009: 89).

2.5 Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter point to the ZBC, as a “public broadcaster”, completely disregarding different charters, principles and guidelines which have been formulated in order to improve public service broadcasting in Africa, in general, and Zimbabwe, in particular.

From the research on public service broadcasting conducted as early as the 1990s, it is evident that the Zimbabwean government still wants to maintain a monopoly on the electronic media despite calls for media reform, especially from civic society organisations. Another point that is explicit is the recommendation for the formulation of one ZBC Act that will do away with the present segmentation into programming and transmission companies which was a result of the ZBC Commercialisation Act of 2001.

From the studies discussed in this chapter one can conclude that the ZBC can be categorised as a state broadcaster and not as a public broadcaster. However, this study is set to confirm whether this is still the case considering that it is being undertaken in the backdrop of a specific nation-building process in which the need for the complete impartiality of the public broadcaster was specifically stressed in the GPA signed by three principal political parties in the GNU (GPA, 2008: 12).

The next chapter deals with a detailed theoretical framework in which applicable theories that are relevant to the notion of public broadcasting will be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a discussion about which theoretical framework is suitable for the study. In this case, three theories, namely the Critical Theory, Public Sphere Theory and Social Responsibility Theory which by and large relate to public service broadcasting, are relevant, and will be defined and contextualised for the purposes of this study.

This researcher will then focus on the Social Responsibility Theory, as it provides a specific and appropriate theoretical framework for this study, and which will also guide the study on whether the performance of the ZBC reflects a true public service broadcaster model.

In carrying out academic research, it is important to provide a theoretical framework in order to guide any given study, since a theory's scientific value is that it teaches how to describe, interpret, understand, evaluate and predict a phenomenon. This, according to Fourie (2007a: 230), formulates the goals of theory, meaning that before we can comment on how something works, we must first give a clear description of the process. Before we can understand, predict or change something, there must be an explanation of how it works. Fourie further states that description and explanation lead to understanding on the basis on which certain predictions of how something works and how it can be controlled can be done.

As groundwork to the explanation of broadcasting and public service theory, Curran and Seaton (1989: 263) assert that the work of broadcasting should be regarded as a public service for a social purpose. The concept of broadcasting has always been that of a comprehensive service that gives the public corporation a duty of bringing to public awareness the whole range of activities and expressions developed in society. Many commissions of inquiry into broadcasting in the United Kingdom produced reports that developed the idea of broadcasting as a public service – catering for all sections of the community, reaching all parts of the country regardless of cost, seeking to educate, inform, improve and lead public opinion rather than follow it.

3.2 Identification of a suitable theoretical framework

When analysing the role of the ZBC during the period from a *de facto* one party government to a Government of National Unity, consideration is made of the observation by Orgeret (2006: 18)

that public service broadcasting has an important role to play and even a responsibility in periods of transition and in the construction of a democracy. It has the potential to fulfil the public's entitlement to information about its rights and duties as citizens. Orgeret adds that in this regard, democratic media can subject government to restrain and redress itself and that media can serve as a two-way channel between the governing body and the governed.

This researcher will now present an explanation of dominant and pluralistic media models which are important in order to understand the operations of the ZBC. In discussing media and power, in an attempt to analyse the ZBC in proper context, McQuail (1994: 69) posits that there are two media models which are opposed to each other. One is a model of dominant media and the other a pluralistic one.

According to McQuail (1994: 69), the dominant model sees media as subservient to other institutions, which are in themselves interrelated. In this view, media organisations are likely to be owned or controlled by a small number of powerful interests and they disseminate a limited and undifferentiated view of the world, shaped by the perspectives of ruling interests. The result is to reinforce and legitimise the prevailing structure of power and to head off challenge by filtering out alternative voices. This can be related to this study's hypothesis, which argues that the ZBC did not give fair and balanced coverage even after the signing of the GPA among three political parties represented in the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The corporation also remained under the firm control of the former ruling party which was also given the media and information ministry portfolio in the GNU.

The pluralist model, argues McQuail (1994: 69), is nearly in every respect the opposite, allowing for diversity and unpredictability. While the dominant model is preferred by conservatives, pessimistic about the rise of the masses and the critics of capitalist society and disappointed by the failure of the revolution to happen, the pluralist view is an idealised version of what liberalism and the free market will lead to.

The Critical Theory and Public Sphere Theory which are to some extent relevant to public broadcasting will be discussed in brief before the study focuses on the Social Responsibility Theory, which is the major theory informing this research.

3.3 The Critical Theory

Regarding Critical Theory in mass communication, media are seen to be the "most pervasive ideological agent" in the late twentieth century and early twenty-first century society. Fourie

(2007a: 241) proffers that one of the underlying assumptions of Critical Theory are that media is seen as a form of symbolic expression concerned with the relation between itself and the underlying production conventions. It is argued that media mainly support the political, economic and social interests of one group at the cost of another group.

This theory is relevant to this study as the assumption is that public media, particularly the ZBC, openly supported the ruling ZANU (PF) party and former government and undermined the other two political parties which were entering government under the GNU. According to Fourie (2007b: 131) critical theorists today are primarily concerned about the media's ideological manipulation of the masses and the capitalistic misuse of the media by owners to foster capitalistic values. Fourie adds that the theory also makes too rigid a distinction between those with power and the masses that are presumed to be without power. It is also too often ignorant of media users' ability to judge and be critical. The critical approach, with its emphasis on ideology, power and inequity, aims to expose the misuse of the media by a power elite with the purpose of spreading and entrenching the ideologies of those in power (Fourie, 2007b: 145).

The above observations by Fourie strongly suggest that the Critical Theory is more concerned with monitoring and evaluating the abuse of media for reasons of wanting to dominate society than to actually call it to account as the Social Responsibility Theory does.

Therefore, from the above assertions, the Critical Theory does not fully offer itself as the key theory to guide this study on public service broadcasting focusing on the role of the ZBC. Next, this researcher shall examine the Public Sphere Theory.

3.4 The Public Sphere Theory

It is applicable to this study to discuss the Public Sphere Theory, recognising that although a new dispensation was emerging following the signing of the agreement leading to the formation of an inclusive government in Zimbabwe, the hypothesis infers that the ZBC by and large did not create space for new political and social commentators other than those aligned to ZANU (PF). Very little space was created in order for different people to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the then envisaged inclusive government and the process leading to its formation. As a result, the corporation continued to behave as if Zimbabwe was still under a *de facto* one-party state (Ruhanya, 2010: 3).

By making something public, argues Fourie (2007a: 217), the media claim to contribute to democracy and to be a pillar of democracy. The media have a duty to provide a platform for

public debate and the formation of public opinion. To be an authentic public sphere, Fourie lists the following attributes of public media (Fourie, 2007a: 217):

- open access;
- voluntary participation;
- participation outside institutional roles;
- the generation of public opinion through assemblies of citizens who engage in rational argument;
- the freedom to express opinions;
- the freedom to discuss matters of state and
- the freedom to criticise the way state power is organised.

In explaining the Public Sphere Theory Garnham (1996: 248) states:

“That the public service model of the media has at its heart a set of proper political values and that the operation both requires and fosters a set of social relations distinct from and opposed to the economic values and relations which are essential to an operating democracy. In particular the public service model has failed to come to terms with the proper and necessary social function of both journalists and politicians. In relation to both groups there is a failure to sufficiently distinguish between two communicative functions, with the public sphere on the one hand and the collection and dissemination of information and on the other, creating the provision of a forum for debate.”

The traditional Liberal Theory to which the public sphere concept belongs, perceives the political system to be constituted primarily by government and individuals, with the media serving a role to protect, inform, gather together and represent private citizens and enable them to supervise government through the agency of public opinion (Curran, 2000: 134).

However, Curran further notes that the theory fails to recognise that people are represented primarily through political parties, interest groups and the myriad structures of civil society. The debate triggered by these views gave rise to a normative conception of the

contemporary public sphere as a neutral space within society, free from both state or corporate control, in which the media should make available information affecting the public good and facilitate a free, open and reasoned public dialogue that guides the public direction of society (Curran, 2000: 135).

Citing philosopher and sociologist Jürgen Habermas, who originally formulated the Public Sphere Theory, Fourie (2007a: 218) concluded that “public sphere”, first of all and ideally, means a domain of social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed. Access to the public sphere is in principle open to all citizens. Citizens act as a public when they deal with matters of general interest without being subjected to coercion, thus with the guarantee that they may assemble and unite freely, and express and publicise their opinions without hindrance.

The ZBC evidently mobilised people from one political party for television debates and interviews in order to express one point of view, despite the fact that the process under review, namely creating a government of national unity, was geared towards nation building after the signing of a political agreement (Vava, 2010: 16).

On the importance of participation through public broadcasting, Buckley *et al.* (2008: 14) state that media can provide the means by which people can speak out and participate in political debates, creating crucial space in which public deliberations on matters of national concern can take place. This provides opportunities for people to articulate their concerns and ideas to one another and to government, a role that is particularly important for poor and marginalised groups.

It is argued that in the Zimbabwean polity not enough space was given by the ZBC for people to debate matters pertaining to the formation of the inclusive government. As a result, not all the principal political parties had an opportunity to listen to the people’s perceptions when they went about discussing the constitution, different amended laws and the allocation of government ministries among themselves as part of the inclusiveness of government (ZLHR, 2010: 43).

This study did not select the Public Sphere Theory as the major theory informing the research on the ZBC’s performance as a public broadcaster because it looks at media in its broadest sense.

This researcher therefore selected the Social Responsibility Theory as the key theory to analyse the media phenomenon in Zimbabwe, as this theory actually calls for a public

broadcaster to specifically fulfil its public service role. The discussion on the Social Responsibility Theory will now follow.

3.5 The Social Responsibility Theory

In analysing the ZBC's performance as public broadcaster, this researcher selected the Social Responsibility Theory as being an appropriate analytical framework.

According to McQuail (1994: 124), the Social Responsibility Theory was formulated in order to specify the main standards (or principles) which a responsible media should observe. This means the provision of a full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning. Secondly, the press should serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism and be common carriers of public expression. McQuail (1994: 124) outlines the Social Responsibility Theory as follows:

- “The media have obligations to society, and media ownership is a public trust;
- “News media should be truthful, accurate, fair objective and relevant;
- “The media should provide a forum for ideas;
- “The media should be free but self-regulated;
- “Media should follow agreed codes of ethics and professional standards;
- “Under some circumstances, society may need to intervene in the public interest.”

Fourie (2007b: 194) further refines the Social Responsibility Theory, which this researcher then contextualises below as follows:

- The media should fulfil their responsibilities mainly by setting professional standards with regard to the supply of information and the truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance of their reporting. This thesis examines whether the ZBC followed laid out editorial standards when reporting its news and in the making of programmes during the period under review.
- The media should self-regulate within the framework of the law and established institutions. This thesis examines the ZBC's adherence to the Broadcasting Services

Act of 2001 and other charters of which it is a signatory, such as the African Charter on Broadcasting and the principles of the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA).

- The media should avoid publicising information that can lead to crime, violence or social disruption as well as information that can offend ethnic, political or religious minorities. The research design of this thesis analyses the action and language that was used in the ZBC news main bulletins to determine how it castigated or undermined other political parties or groups in society.
- The media collectively should represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints. It is in this regard that this researcher formulated the hypothesis of this study which states the ZBC did not give balanced viewpoints from all political groups on its services, especially on national television whose news bulletins will be presented and analysed as a case study.
- Society is entitled to expect high professional standards and intervention is justifiable if the media fail to meet these standards. The research interrogates representatives of different political parties and ZBC editorial staff to establish whether high professional standards were observed and if not, what the reasons could have been.

Curran and Seaton (1989: 270) argue that the significance of broadcasting independence is disputable, with one side suggesting that the independence is functional and must be extended to guarantee accountable broadcasting. The other argues that this same independence poses a serious threat to political institutions whose control over broadcasting should be strengthened. In arguing in favour of the Social Responsibility Theory the following analogy about the independence of broadcasting is crucial (Curran & Seaton, 1989: 270):

“Broadcasters are not free, but are brokers and megaphones, impresarios and mediators. The independence of broadcasting institutions from political control was one solution to a dilemma all broadcasting systems had to solve, namely the necessity not only for regulating the right to broadcast but also of ensuring that broadcasting served the interests of all sections of society. Broadcasters are obliged to negotiate the resolution of

political conflict – and not necessarily take sides in it. This is precisely because of the immense and dangerous nature of their power.”

Another researcher, Hallin (2000: 220), recalls that the 1940s Commission of Freedom of the Press articulated what came to be called Social Responsibility Theory of the press. This came as a result of increased media ownership in which it was felt that the public interest could no longer be protected simply by preventing government interference with the rise of what became known as the “market place of ideas”, which means the abundance of many media channels articulating different points of view. It was concerned with the danger that media owners would exclude political views which were contrary to their own and the danger that commercialisation would undermine responsible reporting.

Hallin (2000: 220) adds that the ideology of public service in the media was connected with the notion of public service in a broader sense, the fact that it was possible for journalists to report events from a non-political and non-sectarian standpoint, relying on neutral criteria of newsworthiness to make the inevitable choices that gatekeepers have to make. However, according to Hallin, professionalisation certainly never eliminated the underlying contradictions of journalistic practice, since there was always, for example, an ambiguity over how the need to interpret news to make it comprehensible to the audience could be reconciled with the demand for objectivity.

As a way of measuring the ZBC’s professionalism, this study interviewed reporters and sub-editors to establish how they selected their news items pertaining to the formation of the GNU for coverage, and inclusion for broadcasting in the main television news bulletins. Questions were also asked whether these journalists were guided by any written set of editorial guidelines.

The Social Responsibility Theory, according to Fourie (2007b: 272), offers two types of solutions to the problem of reconciling freedom with social responsibility. In Zimbabwe, however, such institutes which are pertinent to the operations of the ZBC and other media organisations are not yet fully developed; observe Mtetwa, Magede, Gambe & Saki (2010: 21).

The development of public institutions, supposedly independent of government, for the control of the broadcasting industry, has not yet been realised (Mtetwa *et al.*, 2010:21). Unfortunately, the regulator BAZ has been subject to much bickering among principal political parties and civic society since the former ruling party, ZANU (PF), has always handpicked its

own loyal members, leaving out those of other parties or professional representatives (ZLHR, 2010: 46). The recently appointed BAZ board was rejected by the former opposition parties which are now part of the government of national unity with a demand that it should be reconstituted by the responsible minister, a fact that was concurred by the state president when he addressed editors (Moyo, 2010: 15).

Mtewa *et al.* (2010: 21) note that the continuing development of professionalism should advance and nurture balanced and impartial news presentation. In Zimbabwe, a wide section of the journalism fraternity has rejected the idea of statutory regulation and opted for self regulation (Moyo, 2010: 15-16). Journalism associations and media advocacy groups formed the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) to be in charge of the process of self-regulation. However, VMCZ's current challenge is that of non-recognition by all state-controlled media organisations such as the ZBC and the Zimbabwe Newspapers group (Mtewa *et al.*, 2010: 21). The previous chapter, which reviewed relevant public broadcasting studies, highlighted many shortcomings of the ZBC regarding its flouting of basic editorial standards although it has always gone unpunished (Chiumbu, 2009: 67). The inclusive government has, through parliament, established the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) whose commissioners have been endorsed by all the three political parties in the GNU. It is hoped that the ZMC, which has already licenced five new publications, will deal with all media shortcomings, without fear or favour, whether it is public or private media issues (Mtewa *et al.*, 2010: 21).

In articulating the Social Responsibility Theory for both the organisation and the practitioner, McQuail (1994: 126) outlines a comparative analysis of journalists' ethics and the public service idea. According to McQuail, the journalistic ethics include:

“Truth and accuracy, impartiality and fairness, respect for individual privacy, independence from vested interests, responsibility to society and the public good, respect for law and moral decency and good taste.”

On the other hand the public service idea embraces:

“Universal service, diversity, editorial independence, social responsibility and accountability, cultural quality and identity, public financing and non-profit operation” (McQuail, 1994: 126-127).

From the above assertions by McQuail, it can be concluded that the Social Responsibility Theory is applicable to both journalists and the public service organisation which employs them. In this regard the journalist has an obligation to be ethical and balanced when reporting and making programmes, while the organisation through its news and programmes has to offer a platform that provides diversity, editorial independence and accountability among others in order to embrace all sectors of society.

3.6 Summary

This chapter discussed some relevant theories that inform public broadcasting, namely Critical Theory, the Public Sphere Theory and the Social Responsibility Theory.

The first two theories were discussed briefly as this researcher came to the conclusion that the Social Responsibility Theory is most relevant to the chosen topic, namely an assessment of the performance of the ZBC as a public broadcaster, since it specifically calls on it as a public service body to be accountable.

The Public Sphere Theory, despite its inclusion of similar points as the Social Responsibility Theory, is general in nature and does not specifically pin down the ZBC in its individual capacity into accounting for its public service performance.

The Critical Theory is more concerned with ideology, power and inequity. It primarily focuses on the media's ideological manipulation of the masses. While it can criticise the ZBC for its lack of impartiality, it does not provide a theoretical framework in the same way the Social Responsibility Theory does with regards to satisfying a truly public service role.

The next chapter will deal with the research design and the methodology selected for this thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In order to adequately formulate an effective research design and methodological approach it is important to recall the hypothesis of the study. The hypothesis of this research is that the ZBC, through its prime time news bulletins, failed to present a fair and balanced picture of the situation in the country by not broadcasting viewpoints from all major political parties fairly and objectively, regarding the developments towards the formation of an inclusive government of national unity in Zimbabwe after the signing of the GPA.

The research project will take the form of an analytical study using the qualitative research method. What this entails will be dealt with later in this chapter.

As a public broadcaster, one could assume that according to a public broadcaster model, the ZBC will, through balanced reporting, contribute to a nation-building process in a country where it is generally accepted that democracy and the rule of law had collapsed due to the repressive years under the Mugabe regime. This hypothesis was largely informed by watching the main television news bulletins as well as reading regular reports published by the Media Monitoring Project (MMPZ) which tabulates the content coverage by most local media organisations, including the ZBC.

4.1.1 Research design

In order to critically evaluate how far the ZBC satisfied the requirements of the public service broadcaster model, a suitable research design will be chosen. According to Mouton (2006: 56) a research design is a plan or blueprint regarding how one intends conducting the research focusing on the end product as opposed to the research methodology which focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. Anderson and Poole (2009: 22) concur by stating that a design for a study essentially involves selecting the most appropriate methods or techniques to solve the particular problem under investigation. This particular research is a study of the public broadcaster model with specific reference to the news gathering approach of the ZBC. It will gather evidence of how the broadcaster compiles its news bulletins

from journalists and sample news bulletins in order to address the research question adequately.

This researcher will now move on to discuss qualitative and quantitative research methods that will be used. The qualitative research methodology which will be used for this study will first be discussed, followed by the relevant quantitative methodology.

4.2 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is research conducted using a range of methods which use qualifying words and descriptions to record and investigate aspects of social reality (Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee, 2009: 184). Du Plooy (2007: 39) also proffers that qualitative research denotes interpretive and exploratory activities, rather than those which are factually descriptive.

The reason for doing qualitative research is to add depth and understanding to the “dry” data and figures from quantitative research and the various uses of questionnaires (Mytton, 1992: 46). Mytton further outlines the main characteristics of qualitative research as follows:

“Qualitative research only uses relatively small numbers of people. Structured questionnaires are not used and the results are not normally open to any kind of statistical analysis. Qualitative research cannot prove or disprove anything in the way quantitative research may be able to do. Used effectively and appropriately, qualitative research may be the only way we can really understand people and organisations’ motivation, attitudes and behaviour.”

Questionnaires (Addenda A, B and C) with unstructured questions were used in the collection of qualitative data from the respondents. Respondents were identified as representatives of newsroom staff from the ZBC itself, spokespersons of principal political parties in the GNU, namely ZANU (PF) led by President Mugabe and the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) formations, led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M), as well as from political commentators known to be aligned to these different political parties. This was done in order to present a representative cross-section of views in order to analyse the hypothesis of the study in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

4.2.1 Relevance of triangulation

While qualitative research will be the major methodology, quantitative research will also be incorporated (see 4.3). The use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same study can be defined as triangulation that is, using two or more theories, types of sampling, investigators, sources of data and research methods (Du Plooy, 2007: 39).

For triangulation purposes in this study, the quantitative research method will be applied in order to reinforce qualitative research during the analyses of thirty consecutively recorded main television news bulletins which were recorded in the months of January 2009 and February 2009. This chosen timeframe is within the period between the signing of the GPA in September 2008, which culminated in the formation of the GNU in February 2009. The period was crucial, considering that former sworn political enemies were now in the process of preparing to be part of one inclusive government, soon after a violent election period between March and June 2008 (MMPZ, 2008b: 94). The news bulletins will be analysed to show:

- Whether the ZBC gave equal, fair and balanced coverage to all three principal political parties between the signing of the GPA in September 2008 and the actual formation of the GNU in February 2009.
- Whether the ZBC promoted the idea of nation building which was the spirit and letter of the talks, which the three major political parties represented in Parliament embarked on, after the controversial elections held in March and June 2008. This was mainly through the identification of hate language and bias proffered by political parties themselves and their sympathisers in the main television news bulletins.
- Whether the ZBC strived to get the political parties' points of view on the airwaves regardless of how popular or different the viewpoints expressed may have been in order for people to get a full picture and make informed choices about the envisaged government of national unity that was about to be established.

4.2.2 Importance of qualitative research

A number of choices are available when qualitative research such as this analytical study on the ZBC is embarked on.

A case study, such as this research which analyses the ZBC, refers to the fact that a number of units of analysis, such as a group or institution, are studied intensively (Fox &

Bayat, 2010: 69). According to Du Plooy (2007: 162) a case study involves the observation and in-depth analysis of a single system. It is used when conducting field observations, with the objective of collecting qualitative information.

The qualitative approach is only useful when its limitations are recognised. It is often difficult to draw definite conclusions from the findings, owing to the small scale type of the method and the often quite unrepresentative samples that are used (Orgeret, 2006: 38).

Qualitative research often precedes quantitative research in order to clarify a given situation. In qualitative research, questionnaires are designed with a fairly clear picture about the expected outcome. Qualitative research can also give a clue needed for quantitative research to be set in context and it can also be used soon after quantitative research (Mytton, 1992: 47). In this regard, the results from the recorded television news bulletins which constitute a quantitative survey will be analysed together with the responses to unstructured questions put across to ZBC journalistic staff, political party spokespersons and political commentators, which constitute the qualitative research aspect.

4.2.3 *Shortcomings and margins of error*

The shortcomings of qualitative research would manifest for this particular study from the fact that some important respondents from the ZBC had resigned or were dismissed prior to the research. According to Iwata (2010: 1) the margin of error is simply a measure of how “precise” the data are. The margin of error is a necessary tool because few organisations have the time or money to survey the entire population on a particular subject. Rather, adds Iwata, “samples” of the population are taken using various surveying techniques. As a result, it is necessary to know how precisely the results of the sample reflect the true feeling of the entire population.

Bless *et al.* (2009: 165) observe that the sources of error can be introduced at all levels of the research process, namely vagueness of the definitions and inaccuracy of the hypothesis; inadequacy of the design and the planning of the research; sampling and other errors, as well as bias. In this case, this researcher could be considered biased due to the fact that he works for a rival, alternative broadcasting station. The researcher therefore has tried his utmost to ensure that the research methodologies are applied in a correct way to ensure that the ensuing data will not be corrupt but be as credible as possible.

4.2.4 *Sampling and qualitative data collection*

Sampling is a technique by which a sample – that is the group of elements drawn from the population that is considered to be representative of the population, and which is studied in order to acquire some knowledge about the entire population – is selected (Bless *et al.*, 2009: 185).

In order to solicit qualitative data, a sample of respondents from the ZBC news staff, the main political parties' spokespersons and political commentators was identified. The questionnaires (See Addenda A, B & C) with in-depth unstructured questions, concentrating on the coverage of unity talks and steps towards the formation of a Government of National Unity, were also designed in order to assist this researcher to remain focused when approaching all the respondents.

According to Mytton (1992: 13), questionnaire design should be logical to ensure that the information being sought is provided unambiguously and in a way that can be codified and analysed. The questions are designed to put answers into categories that make analysis possible. They need to guide people in order to answer the questions without any vagueness. Some other important characteristics of questionnaires are that they should not contain undefined, vague words or double-barrelled questions that combine two questions in one.

According to Mouton (2006: 103) the order or sequence of questions may affect response accuracy and response rates. Also to be avoided are fictitious constructs or attitudes that do not exist, as well as leading questions, where the respondent is being led or influenced to a certain response through the wording of the questions. Mouton also states that research has shown that those questionnaires that are too long, or negatively phrased, have a direct and often negative impact on the quality of responses. The questions for this particular study were designed in order to be used by this researcher, who acted as the interviewer. The questionnaires used were not self-administrative ones, since some room was left for follow-up questions by the researcher. (Mouton, 2006: 103-104).

Pretesting, also known as a pilot study was done on a small scale with five colleagues at the researcher's office to ensure that questions are well understood and unambiguous. Two colleagues were journalists with university level education, two had diploma qualifications in accounting and administration and the fifth was a receptionist with ordinary level secondary school qualifications and a certificate in telephone operating. In cases where the questions sounded vague or unclear during pretesting, some changes were made until they could be clearly understood to mean the same thing to different people.

As stated, the interview format used in this research was in the form of unstructured questions. Although Du Plooy (2007: 143) states that an interview cannot be entirely unstructured, it is differentiated from the structured and semi-structured interview by the role fulfilled by the interviewer and the objective of such an interview. Du Plooy adds that during an unstructured interview, the role of the interviewer is to create an atmosphere of trust and to encourage the respondent to talk about a particular broad topic freely. Although this is a time-consuming process, it allows the interviewer to discover the respondent's ideas, views, suggestions and queries.

Mytton (1992: 21) also notes that the design, wording and order of questions asked, the tone of voice, the body language of the interviewer and the relationship of the interviewer and interviewee are all important. They can completely change the answers given, especially if the questions have something to do with attitudes and opinion.

Unstructured questions, which according to Du Plooy (2007: 46), consist of open-ended questions, free narration questions, role-playing questions and follow up questions, were used in order to solicit information from key ZBC newsroom personnel responsible for news collected in the field and those who decide what items are eventually broadcast in the main news television bulletins. These included the television news editor and field reporters based in both urban and rural areas. A sub-editor, whose job, in this case, is to rewrite the news bulletins before they are broadcast, was also interviewed.

This researcher decided to interview reporters who operated from different locations in order to present a picture from two extreme positions, as political conditions in urban and rural areas are different, as stated by MMPZ (2009a: 44). The former ruling party, ZANU (PF), which is now also part of the GNU, has over many years made most rural areas inaccessible to opposition political parties and civic society organisations, especially during election campaigns by using liberation war veterans and youth militias to unleash violence and this has also made the work of non-state journalists very difficult (MMPZ, 2009a: 94). The Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN), a civic society organisation which monitors the conducting of elections, confirmed this trend as follows:

“The political environment preceding Zimbabwe's harmonised elections held on 29 March 2008, and the subsequent 27 June 2008 presidential run-off, remained one of the most hostile in the country's post-independence history. It was characterised by sustained ruling party aggression against all perceived opposition, especially its chief political rival, the MDC formation led by Morgan Tsvangirai. Such manifest political

intolerance was not simply an overnight event, but the ultimate sum of a series of worsening political events that manifested themselves following ZANU (PF)'s loss in a Constitutional Referendum back in 2000" (ZESN, 2009: 19).

The purpose of interviewing the key ZBC newsroom staff was to find out what influenced their decisions to cover certain news stories and leave out others. This researcher wanted to establish what influenced their editorial decisions, whether it was an editorial charter or direct interference from their superiors, especially those in the ruling party and government. The questions put across to these different categories (reporters, and sub-editor) were slightly different, but all focused on the coverage of the progress of the unity talks leading to the formation of the government of national unity.

An example of such questions put across to reporters is:

"Were you specifically assigned to cover the MDC (and ZANU PF) events or interviews about the unity talks in a particular style? Please elaborate."

Another question was formulated as follows:

"Statistical data in the media shows that ZANU (PF) had many stories about unity talks and steps towards the formation of a unity government than the two MDCs. Why was that so?"

Editors and sub-editors are regarded as newsroom gatekeepers and therefore the questions put to them centred on packaging of the final product which is the news bulletin that is prepared for the viewing public to watch (Potter, 2006: 32-33). Some questions for the sub-editor were phrased as follows:

"Was there a specific editorial policy or instruction for you regarding broadcasting of stories related to the unity talks and steps towards forming a government of national unity that resulted in the two MDC formations having fewer stories than ZANU (PF)? Please elaborate."

Although qualitative in nature, this question has a direct relationship with preliminary quantitative data which already showed that the ruling party received more ZBC television news coverage than the opposition parties (MMPZ, 2008a: 7). To assist this researcher in the formulation of questions, it was noted that in their weekly media monitoring updates of 8 December 2008 to 14 December 2008 and 19 January to 25 January 2009, respectively with regards to the ZBC main television news bulletins, the Media Monitoring Project-Zimbabwe (MMPZ) recorded twenty one voices of ZANU (PF) officials as opposed to two for the MDC officials, seventeen voices for ZANU (PF), and zero for MDC officials (MMPZ, 2008a: 9; MMPZ, 2009a: 7).

Political party spokespersons were selected as representative samples of their political parties and asked general and specific questions about whether they were satisfied with the coverage they received, and, if so, to explain what they found to be most unfair. One question put to them was formulated as:

“How would you describe the ZBC’s coverage of your party regarding the progress of the unity talks leading to the formation of the government of national unity?”

Another one was formulated as:

“What do you think was the reason for your party to receive less coverage than ZANU (PF) in the ZBC news broadcasts as indicated in some media reports?”

The qualitative type of responses to these questions will then be compared and analysed together with the quantitative results from the television news recordings.

4.2.5 Ethical considerations during research

In order to carry out interviews with the ZBC news personnel related to the period leading to the formation of the unity government, this researcher decided to approach the respondents individually because a formal request through the ZBC management would have not been yielded positive results, considering the researcher’s status of working for Radio Voice of the People (VOP), an alternative exiled radio station which is usually referred to in former ruling

party circles as “pirate” and “regime change” agents (Masuku, 2007: 22). Some of the respondents, who were the main actors in news gathering during the period under review, had also left the corporation and were replaced by new staff. Fortunately, they were all still available in Zimbabwe and were willing and able to answer this researcher’s questions.

The reasons for the journalists’ removal from the ZBC were that they were suspected to have favoured the opposition political parties in their reporting and packaging of news bulletins during the controversial elections (Ncube, 2008: 1). Interviewees were those still employed and those who had left, but requested anonymity, because they feared for their lives if their identities were made public.

More confidence was gained when all the research participants, including non- journalists, realised that this researcher had signed an ethics consent form from the Stellenbosch University’s ethics committee confirming that confidentiality will be respected in the research process. Since they were confident in providing information to this researcher personally it was not difficult to solicit information from them as long as their security was guaranteed through assurances of keeping them anonymous. Political party spokespersons wrote confirmation letters acknowledging that they consented to being interviewed by this researcher.

According to Bless *et al.* (2009: 142-143), participants have a right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation and the fact that they have a right to decline to participate if they choose to do so. This point was covered as well in the researcher’s signed informed consent form from Stellenbosch University.

The interviews for journalistic personnel were all done separately, away from the ZBC’s premises, and there was no occasion where interviewees were asked questions while they were seated together. In all cases, the questionnaires were used as a guide for basic questions put across by this researcher, although some follow-up questions were also made.

4.2.6 Lessons from an SABC study

In preparing this research design and methodology approach, this researcher drew a number of examples from an almost similar research project by Orgeret (2006), who interviewed SABC personnel for her doctoral dissertation focusing on the corporation’s public broadcasting role during the first ten years after the first democratic elections in 1994. On the question of challenges faced by a journalist gathering data for academic research purposes at a media organisation, Orgeret reflects as follows (2006: 48):

“It was instructive to notice that the challenges faced in deciding what treatment obtained from various interviews echoed some of the ethical choices news workers meet with through their work. Questions of anonymity, protection and transparency, or about how much hearsay and gossip, are part of many journalists’ daily considerations. The main difference between the two situations is evidently that one is journalistic while the other is part of an academic exercise. The need for transparency about own techniques is nevertheless important for both journalists and researchers.”

Orgeret (2006: 52) further argues that the news analysis format, which this particular thesis is mostly about, is the most researched and arguably the most central genre in media studies. She notes that in the early days of news analysis, quantitative research methods were the most popular since the researchers were to a great extent occupied with measuring volumes of print by thematic categories in order to give a systematic and quantitative description of content. That changed in favour of qualitative approaches of analysis. Through a qualitative analysis of the ZBC news bulletins, the aim of this research is to establish and clarify matters relating to editorial policy, independence and objectivity.

4.3 Quantitative research method

Quantitative research is research conducted using a range of methods which use measurement to record and investigate aspects of social reality (Bless *et al.*, 2009: 184).

Mouton (2006: 165-166) observes that quantitative research is particularly useful for research involving large volumes of text. However, the limitations include the authenticity of data sources and the representativeness of texts analysed, which makes the overall external validity of the findings limited.

The study period of this research, between the signing of the GPA on 15 September 2008 and the actual formation of the GNU on 15 February 2009, was almost close to five months. However, this researcher decided to use only thirty days of consecutive television news bulletins within that time frame as being representative enough to produce the desired results. Mytton (1992: 9) refers to this as sampling, which he describes as the process of selecting people or items to represent those who are not selected. Mytton adds that it is important to avoid bias when selecting a suitable sampling frame. Bless *et al.* (2009: 165) define bias as the systematic introduction of extraneous variables that may distort or disguise the relationships among

experimental variables. Bias can be committed by the interviewer, respondent, analyst and researcher.

4.3.1 Sampling quantitative data

The ZBC television news bulletins in English were recorded from the archives of the MMPZ which monitors local and international media, including ZBC news bulletins, on a day to day basis. It was not possible to record the bulletins directly from the ZBC itself because the corporation's archiving system was erratic due to technical problems which have been experienced in the past few years.

For purposes of this study, the main television news bulletins broadcast at 8.00 pm every day for thirty days consecutively, from 1 January 2009 until 2 February 2009, were recorded on DVDs as a representative sample for quantitative research purposes.

According to Du Plooy (2007: 100), sampling involves following a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a larger population or aggregate. Du Plooy adds that in quantitative research a sample must be drawn in such a way that is representative and its parameters are defined. For example, in this study the parameters were that the news bulletins recorded for thirty consecutive days should be within the prime time ZBC television news segment. Therefore the population (five months television news bulletins) from which a thirty day sample is selected should have four population parameters in common: they are broadcast on a daily basis, during a particular time, by the ZBC television service, within a specified period, that is, between the signing of the GPA and the establishment of the GNU. Du Plooy (2007: 101) further notes that due to constraints such as time, cost and personnel, it is not always possible to have access to the exact population to generalise research findings.

4.3.2 Categorisation for content analysis

Content analysis is the study that analyses content of texts or documents (Mouton, 2006:165). The criteria or rules used to categorise the content of the news text must be impartial and unbiased to ensure objectivity and validity. Specified criteria enable critics to evaluate the conclusions reached and also allow subsequent researchers to replicate the study. The content must be quantified, usually as numerical values or percentage frequencies and the meaning of these proportions or percentages has to be interpreted in the context in which the research problems originated (Du Plooy, 2007: 192). The quantification of the ZBC main news bulletins

into specific categories will be graphically and analytically presented in Chapter 5, which dwells on the main findings of the research.

Categorisation of the news bulletins will be done as follows:

- Overall distribution of stories about ZANU (PF), Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) and the faction led by Arthur Mutambara (MDC-M) activities in terms of time and numbers.
- Voice distributions (showing how often party representatives were directly quoted verbatim) of Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara as leaders of the principal political parties in terms of time and numbers.
- Voice actualities of ZANU (PF), MDC-T, MDC-M, civil society and the business sector in terms of time and numbers.
- Frequency of hate language/bias proffered against other parties, civic society and foreign governments by ZANU (PF), MDC-T and MDC-M.
- Citing of political analysts from ZANU (PF), MDC-T, MDC-M, civic society and the business sector and the formation of the GNU.

The above categories will be presented in tabulated form as a visual portrayal of the results and also analysed together with the responses to questions put across to the ZBC editorial staff, political party representatives and commentators.

The major shortcoming of this quantitative research methodology is the fact that out of a population of about six months of ZBC television news only one month was selected. The sample recording of the thirty consecutive television news bulletins could have been increased in order to create more news items for analysis, but the process would be time consuming, considering the size of the research project. The interview base could have also been widened to include more ZBC news personnel, political party representatives, civic society organisations, women's and youth groups among others. This researcher however, concluded that the use of official spokespersons and ZBC news personnel would suffice as samples for their various groups.

4.4 The GPA and its relevance to the thesis

While conducting this study, this researcher notes that the GPA signed on 15 September 2008 by ZANU (PF) and the two MDC parties, in its own right, called for the reformation of the ZBC to be a true public broadcaster, and also called on all public and private media to desist from using hate language (GPA, 2008: 12; ZLHR, 2010: 43). The GPA specifically states:

“That steps be taken to ensure that the public media provides balanced and fair coverage to all political parties for their legitimate political activities; that the public and private media shall refrain from using abusive language that may incite hostility, political intolerance and ethnic hatred or that unfairly undermines political parties and other organisations. To this end the inclusive government shall ensure that appropriate measures are taken to achieve this objective” (GPA, 2008: 12).

4.5 Summary

This chapter explained the research design and methodology which was applied in order to establish whether the ZBC performed its role as a public service broadcaster during the period leading to the formation of the GNU in Zimbabwe. Although the qualitative method is the most dominant method used, both quantitative and qualitative methods are applied, eventually resulting in the triangulation approach together with the literature review.

The next chapter shall be a presentation of research findings and an analysis of data collected.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the results of the research will be presented and a discussion, based on the findings, will follow. The findings are largely based on the central research question and its sub-questions. The central research question was:

Did the ZBC, as a public broadcaster, present a fair and balanced picture and viewpoints from all major political parties regarding developments, from the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) until the formation of the inclusive government of national unity in Zimbabwe?

The following were the three main research sub-questions:

- Did the ZBC, in its main television news bulletins, give equal, fair and balanced coverage to all political parties and civil society from the time they entered into the GPA in September 2008 until they formed the GNU in February 2009?
- Did the ZBC, in its main television news bulletins, promote the idea of nation-building and national unity which was in the spirit and letter of the GPA signed by the three major political parties after the controversial March and June 2008 elections?
- Did the ZBC, in its main television news bulletins, strive to get all voices related to the formation of the government of national unity on the airwaves, regardless of how popular or different the viewpoints expressed may be, so that the people could make informed choices and opinions?

5.2 Research context

For the purposes of this chapter, this researcher will briefly revisit the research context in terms of sample and participant selection in order to reinforce the clarity of the presentation of results. The study focused on the policies and operations of the ZBC as a supposedly public service news disseminating institution. Its journalists, responsible for reporting and packaging news bulletins under a defined or undefined policy framework, were interviewed. Also interviewed were

spokespersons and analysts aligned to political parties, namely ZANU (PF), MDC-T and MDC-M, which constitute the GNU, formed under the GPA. Data discussed and analysed in this study was obtained through unstructured interviews conducted with ZBC journalistic staff, representatives of political parties, political commentators and sample recordings of main 8.00 pm television news bulletins broadcast from 1 January 2009 to 2 February 2009.

5.2.1 Participant selection

The participants in the research were selected to represent different types of the population which were pertinent to the study. On the journalistic side, two field reporters were selected to represent two different types of operational environments, namely urban and rural centres. A television news sub-editor represented the section which is responsible for deciding what goes into the final television news bulletins that are broadcast on air. All ZBC journalistic participants chose to remain unnamed for fear of victimisation since they felt that the organisation they worked for was very protective of its actions and would not allow them to talk publicly about their work.

For the purposes of this study's report, as already indicated in the ethics and consent forms, they will be referred to as Urban Reporter, Rural Reporter and Sub-Editor whenever they are cited. Spokespersons of the principal political parties in the inclusive government were selected to answer questions pertaining to their parties' positions as part of their day to day responsibilities. Political analysts were chosen because of their known allegiance to different political parties under scrutiny. Party spokespersons and political analysts did not object to being identified. Through this selection, this researcher ensured that the choice of participants was representative of all major political parties.

5.2.2 Sample television news bulletins

The sample, namely the 8.00 pm main television news bulletins (of 30 minutes each) recorded from 1 January 2009 to 2 February 2009 was deemed to be representative enough of the entire population of five months' worth of news bulletins. This researcher believes that the thirty news bulletins recorded consecutively would indicate a general trend that was representative of the ZBC's approach to news dissemination within the researched period between 15 September 2008 and 15 February 2009.

5.3 Presentation of findings

In presenting the findings this researcher formulated the topics based on the questionnaires that had been used in interviewing journalists, political party spokespersons and political analysts. The topics on reporting and journalism practice as well the one on government interference in editorial decisions capture the responses of reporters and the sub-editor. The topic on bias and manipulation of news and the one on the use of hate language and undermining of the nation building process capture the responses of political party spokespersons and analysts.

5.3.1 Reporting and journalism practice

The findings under this section largely pertain to reporting and professional journalism practice practised at the ZBC:

- Both the Urban Reporter and the Rural Reporter preferred to cover the opposition parties only upon being instructed to do so by the ZBC General Manager for News. They preferred not to suggest diary items in their news coverage involving the MDC formations for fear of being labelled anti-government (Urban Reporter, 2010; Rural Reporter, 2010).
- According to both Urban Reporter and Rural Reporter, all recorded raw material pertaining to MDC rallies and interviews from urban and rural areas were strictly subject to prior viewing by the ZBC General Manager for News who would instruct which sections to include in the news bulletins (Urban Reporter, 2010; Rural Reporter, 2010).
- The ZBC General Manager for News or his senior editors regularly consulted the Ministry of Media, Information and Publicity on how to deal with what they perceived to be difficult political stories to handle (Sub-Editor, 2010). In this regard, stories involving Tsvangirai and his MDC-T party members would take about three days to air, and when that happened, they were mainly narrations which excluded their voices and current footage (Sub-Editor, 2010).
- Both Urban Reporter and Rural Reporter always felt frightened when interviewing members of the MDC parties during the talks and events that led to the signing of the GPA and formation of GNU for fear of being labelled pro-MDC (Urban Reporter, 2010; Rural Reporter, 2010).

- It was common practice for all edited stories to be completely changed by senior personnel, long after the reporters had gone home, according to Urban Reporter (2010) who states:

“Sometimes we would do balanced stories featuring all GPA negotiators, namely Tendai Biti of MDC-T, Welshman Ncube of MDC-M and Patrick Chinamasa of ZANU (PF), but we would be surprised to see Chinamasa being the only one appearing on the screen. When we tried to ask why this was happening the General Manager for News also asked us why we were so obsessed with giving air-time to members of the opposition despite the fact that in reality they were no longer in opposition.”

- Reporters were instructed by the General Manager for News to quote MDC officials out of context or only when they made some controversial remarks that would be the subject of ridicule in future news bulletins and in discussion programmes with ZANU (PF) aligned political analysts (Sub-Editor, 2010). For example, whenever MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai made any reference to countries and donors in Europe, this would result in political analysts in news and current affairs programmes, criticising him of being a “puppet” of the Western countries like Britain and the United States of America. This, according to pro-ZANU (PF) analysts, influenced Tsvangirai to delay assumption of duty as Prime Minister in the GNU as he was supposedly waiting for his masters’ instructions (Sub-Editor, 2010).
- The rural population was rarely asked to comment about the intended formation of the GNU. In the few instances that they were interviewed, only “stage managed” interviews in which they purportedly urged the MDC parties not to ‘reverse’ the land reform programme already implemented by ZANU (PF) were the ones which were broadcast (Rural Reporter, 2010).
- The General Manager for News issued a specific order not to criticise Thabo Mbeki, the talks’ facilitator and former president of South Africa. The MDC-T party often accused Mbeki of being biased in favour of ZANU (PF) in his mediation and recommended that he should be replaced by someone they deemed to be fair (Sub-Editor, 2010).

5.3.2 *Government interference in editorial decisions*

The ZBC news staff operating from both in the field and at the editorial desk all confirmed that there was regular government interference in their operations, especially with regards the portrayal of the MDC parties. The findings were as follows:

- The Permanent Secretary in the ministry of Media Information and Publicity, George Charamba, instructed the ZBC General Manager for News to brief him about the angle which was to be used in the daily political news bulletins. Any stories critical of ZANU (PF) were removed or twisted to sound favourable to the party. According to Sub-Editor (2010):

“No MDC-related stories would be broadcast before being cleared by the General Manager for News, who in turn sought clearance from the ministry. Three of our supervisors were suspended on allegations of leaking the directive to the private media. The General Manager for News was personally involved in the editing and clearing of all stories related to the unity talks leading to the formation of the Government of National Unity. He further instructed that in all news bulletins we should refer to President Mugabe as ‘Head of state and government and the commander-in-chief of the Zimbabwe defence forces’ while Prime Minister Tsvangirai was to be referred to only as ‘Mr.’.”

- The General Manager for News instructed that only pro-ZANU (PF) political analysts like Maxwell Hove, Tafataona Mahoso, Godwills Masimirembwa and Goodson Nguni would be invited to participate in live television news bulletins in order to “blast” the MDC parties for demanding to be allocated important ministries in the new government (Sub-Editor, 2010). No pro-MDC political commentators were invited to participate in the live news bulletins. Only very few commentators from civic society and the business world were invited (Urban Reporter, 2010; Sub-Editor, 2010)
- There were no written newsroom guidelines for journalists and sub-editors. Urban Reporter (2010), Rural Reporter (2010) and Sub-Editor (2010) all said new people only followed the work culture they found in existence. They all acknowledged that there was a lot of self-censorship among journalists.

5.3.3 *Bias and manipulation of news*

The ZBC news staff reported that besides being instructed to adopt negative angles in covering the MDC parties, their reports were sometimes changed if they portrayed the former opposition parties in positive light. The study found that:

- While ZBC news crews attended several MDC-T and MDC-M press conferences and rallies, most of the material gathered was not always shown on television news bulletins. Whatever was shown was manipulated to suit the ZANU (PF) political agenda. According to MDC-M's Mushoriwa (2010) who state that:

“To talk of fairness from ZBC is not proper. It has been known to propagate the views of ZANU (PF) only. During those unity talks they manipulated the press conferences to the extent of pointing cameras to corners without capturing any news when covering opposition parties. We have been victims of distortion.”

- MDC-T and MDC-M parties claimed that their party spokespersons were not invited to speak on live news bulletins and current affairs programmes. According to MDC-T's Chamisa (2010):

“There has been a lot of bias against our party; ZBC brought a lot of ZANU (PF) people to speak on behalf of the MDC, instead of inviting us to speak for ourselves. In fact, they covered all our meetings, rallies or statements, but we never saw the news items on television except sections where ZANU (PF) people speak on our behalf. Falsehood and distortion is always part of the editorial policy at ZBC. They like to engineer and manufacture facts in order to denigrate the MDC-T.”

- ZANU (PF) asserted that ZBC reportage was fair and balanced (Chaibva, 2010). It claimed that MDC-T and MDC-M parties were regularly invited to live television news debates or asked to comment in news stories, but always gave excuses in order to portray the ZBC as a ZANU (PF) mouthpiece. According to ZANU (PF)'s Chaibva (2010):

“MDC-T in particular did not want to divulge information about what they were up to when they took a long time to join the government of national unity in the period stipulated by the GPA. They were more interested in being interviewed on BBC, CNN, Sky News and pirate radio stations than on ZBC. MDC-T also wanted to use the state broadcaster to denigrate the authority of the state president in order for them to complain that the ZBC was a party-controlled broadcasting institution, and of course the ZBC would not allow such undermining of the head of state and government to be broadcast.”

5.3.4 Use of hate language and undermining of nation-building process

The study also found that the ZBC deliberately used hate language in its news bulletins, thus undermining the nation-building process that was supposed to be promoted through the GNU:

- Both MDC parties complained that the ZBC broadcast hate language and biased information against them (Chamisa: 2010; Mushoriwa: 2010). MDC-T’s Chamisa (2010) observed that:

“ZBC news bulletins were always disparaging, degrading, denigrating, and excruciating, ever attacking and literally portraying the MDC-T as a ragtag of an organisation.”

- ZANU (PF) denied that the ZBC allowed hate language directed against the MDC parties but only told the truth about the former opposition parties’ correct profiles. ZANU (PF)’s Chaibva (2010) stated that:

“It’s not hate language to say that the MDC is a puppet of the British and other Western imperialist countries that fund and also gave it instructions regarding how to position itself during the process leading to the formation of a government of national unity. Besides undermining the liberation struggle and the land reform programme spearheaded by ZANU (PF), the party also wanted to use the ZBC to regurgitate the foreign policies of their former colonial masters in the West. Of course this was rejected by the national broadcaster.”

- MDC-aligned political commentators asserted that hate language remained prevalent in the ZBC news bulletins in order to accentuate tensions and threats that existed during the June 2008 presidential run-off elections which were characterised by a lot of violence which ZANU (PF) used in order to instil some fear in people (Zhangazha, 2010). According to Zhangazha (2010):

“ZBC was biased and wanted to push the ZANU (PF) political agenda, which included the endorsement of the violent June 2008 presidential run-off elections in which Mugabe participated unopposed after Tsvangirai withdrew following the upsurge of violence against his party supporters. This was also designed to strengthen the former ruling party’s weak negotiation base in the GPA talks, having been defeated in both the parliamentary and presidential elections of March 2008.”

5.4 Analysis of the 8.00 pm television news bulletins: 1 January 2009-2 February 2009

Out of the 30 main 8.00 pm ZBC television news bulletins broadcast during the period under review, there were 40 news items which were specifically related to political parties, civic society and the corporate sector in relation to the formation of the GNU (ZBC News, 2009a).

5.4.1 Overall distribution of stories about ZANU (PF), MDC-T and MDC-M activities and comments

Of the 40 news items in which political comments associated with unity talks and the formation of the GNU were mentioned, ZANU (PF) was mentioned in all 40 items, representing 100%, the MDC-T in 24, representing 60% and MDC-M in 4 items, representing 10%. Figure 1 below illustrates this graphically.

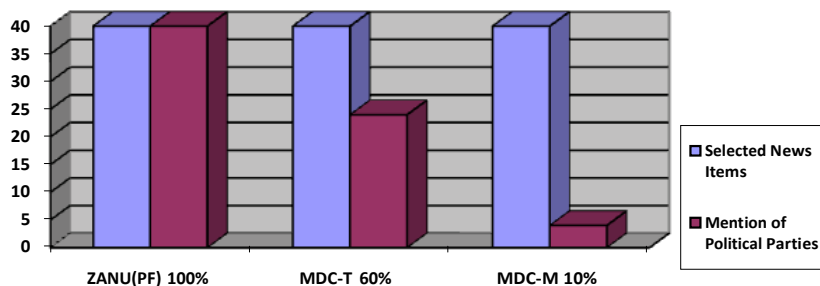


Figure 1

5.4.2 *Voice actuality distributions of Robert Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara as leaders of the principal political parties to the GPA, in terms of frequency of mention. (Voice actuality refers to actual usage of recorded voice.)*

In the 40 news items in which political party comments and activities associated with unity talks and the formation of the inclusive government leaders' voices were heard, Mugabe was featured 2 times, representing 5%, Tsvangirai 0 and Mutambara also 0, both in other words representing 0%. Figure 2 below illustrates this graphically. It needs to be mentioned that during the period under review Mugabe was on his annual leave (ZBC News, 2009b).

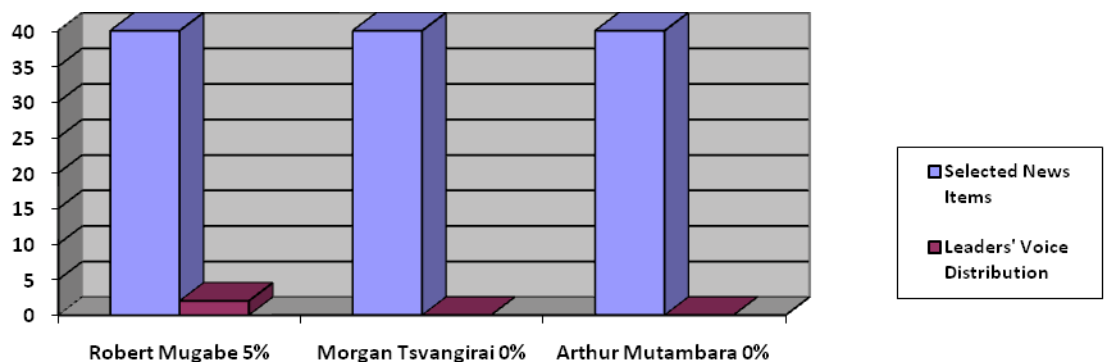


Figure 2

5.4.3 *Voice actuality distributions of ZANU (PF), MDC-T, MDC-M, civil society and business sector representatives in terms of frequency of mention. (Voice actuality refers to actual usage of recorded voice.)*

ZANU (PF) was featured 40 times, representing 100%, while MDC-T was featured 0 times, representing 0%, and, MDC-M 0 also 0 % times, while Civil Society/Business Society were featured 3 times representing 8%. Figure 3 below illustrates this point.

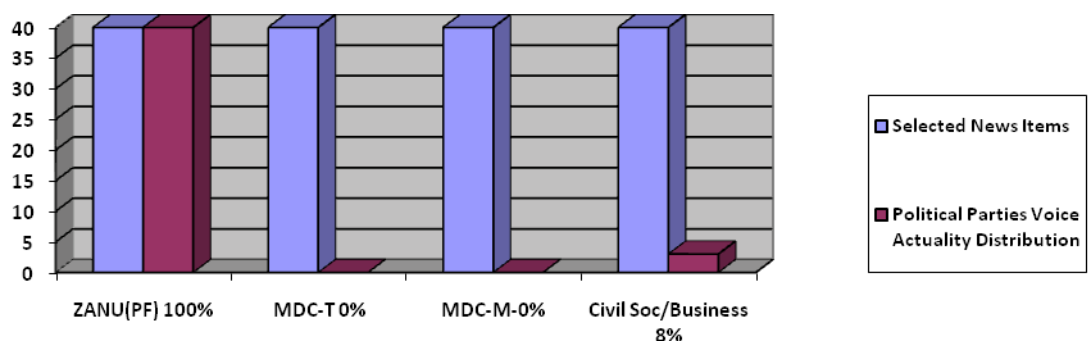


Figure 3

5.4.4 *Frequency of hate language/bias proffered against other parties, civic society and foreign governments by ZANU (PF), MDC-T, and MDC-M.*

Hate speech is language intended to degrade, intimidate, or incite violence or prejudicial action against a person or group of people based on their moral or political views, socio-economic class and religion among others (MMPZ, 2009b: 1). ZANU (PF) had 22 news bulletins containing hate speech elements and biased information against other parties and countries, representing 55%, MDC-T had 0 hate speech elements and biased information, while MDC-M also had 0 news bulletins containing hate speech and biased information. Both MDC parties thus represent 0% of the total number. Figure 4 below illustrates this point.

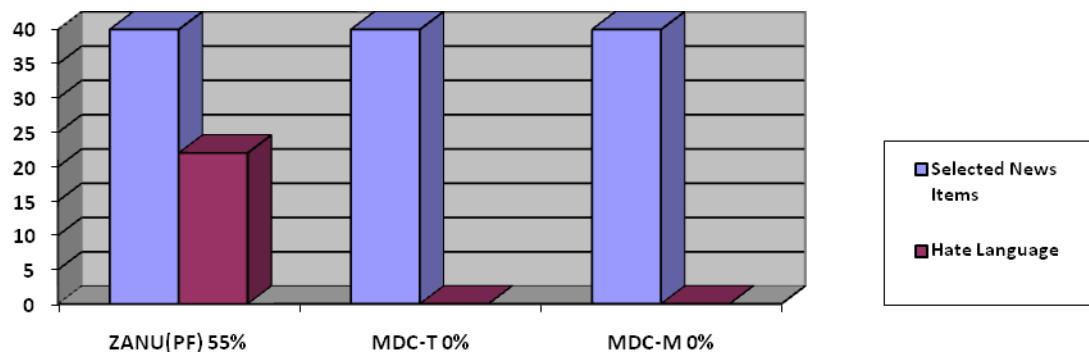


Figure 4

5.4.5 *Direct quoting of ZANU (PF), MDC-T, MDC-M, and Civic Society/Business sector's aligned political analysts about the formation of the GNU's future prospects.*

ZANU (PF) was directly quoted 24 times, representing 60% of the total, MDC-T was quoted 0 times and MDC-M was quoted 0 times, both representing 0%, and Civic Society/Business was quoted 6 times, representing 15%. Figure 5 below illustrates this point.

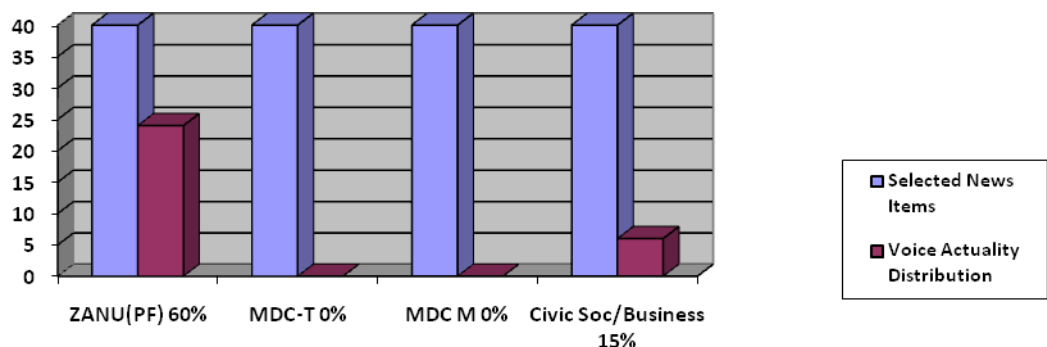


Figure 5

5.5 Discussion

The findings of this research will be discussed and analysed in the context of the central research question of the study, which asked whether the ZBC, as a public broadcaster, presented a fair and balanced picture and viewpoints from all major political parties regarding developments, from the signing of the GPA on 15 September 2008, until the formation of the GNU in Zimbabwe on 15 February 2009.

In responding to the research sub-questions the discussion will critique the provision of equal, fair and balanced reporting, the inclusion of divergent voices and the promotion of national unity and nation-building.

5.5.1 *Provision of equal, fair and balanced coverage*

According to the findings drawn from the interviews and the analysis of the news bulletins, one can state that the ZBC did not provide equal, fair and balanced coverage to all the political parties which had agreed to form the inclusive government. Coverage was tilted in favour of ZANU (PF), which was still in control of the information ministry prior and after the formation of the new government.

This was confirmed by the reporters who were either advised not to cover MDC meetings, rallies and press statements, or whose finished news product would be altered on the instructions of the General Manager for News (Urban Reporter, 2010; Rural Reporter, 2010). This was also confirmed by the television news Sub-Editor whose section would alter the bulletins at times on the direct instructions from the officials from the Ministry of Media, Information and Publicity. The Sub-Editor (2010) also alluded to the fact that their desk would be asked to distort speeches and statements from the MDC parties and try by all means to leave out anything that made sense in order for them to appear “useless” to the viewers.

While Chamisa (2010) and Mushoriwa (2010), the spokespersons of MDC-T and MDC-M respectively, confirmed that ZBC reporters would be present at most of their rallies and meetings, they noted that voices and footage of their political party leaders were not featured on the ZBC prime time television news bulletins or in any others. The Sub-Editor (2010) confirmed that scripts not related to the actual event covered would be prepared in advance and used with selected footage brought by reporters in order to tell a completely distorted story. This was also evident while viewing the analysed news bulletins as the results showed that there was no distribution of MDC parties’ actual voices, although there were a number of stories about the parties which were only narrated by reporters and ZANU (PF) political analysts.

The television news voice actuality distributions of Mugabe, Tsvangirai and Mutambara are all very low. While the general assumption by this researcher, based on regular MMPZ reports of 2008 is that Mugabe's actualities could have been more by the usual ZBC standards (MMPZ, 2008b: 1-2). For example during the June 2008 presidential run-off elections, out of the 758 minutes and 27 seconds, 755 minutes and 36 seconds of news (99.6%) were favourable coverage of Mugabe and ZANU(PF) while two minutes and 51 seconds (0.45%) were about MDC-T and Tsvangirai (MMPZ, 2009c: 128). Another illustration of ZANU (PF) abuse of the publicly funded television station was clearly demonstrated on the eve of the presidential run-off where Mugabe's last campaign rally was allocated an uninterrupted 21 minutes 29 seconds on the station's main 8.00 pm bulletin. This constituted more than half of the news airtime (MMPZ, 2009c: 128). The low figures in this study can thus be attributed to the fact that, during the period reviewed, Mugabe was taking his annual leave and was in and out of the country (ZBC News, 2009b).

5.5.2 Inclusion of divergent views

According to the Sub-Editor (2010), ZANU (PF)-aligned political analysts were the only ones invited to comment on various issues pertaining to the unity talks and the formation of the national unity government.

ZANU (PF) argued that MDC officials, including the MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, were invited by the ZBC, but alleged that they were afraid to participate in live programmes, because they had nothing to offer (Chaibva, 2010).

This was disputed by MDC-T's Chamisa (2010), who denied being invited to the live news bulletins on which he watched ZANU (PF) aligned political analysts being interviewed about MDC-T's policies and operations. Zhangazha (2010) also argued that ZANU (PF) could not afford to bring participants who would proffer statements which would be contrary to its calculated agenda of misleading the public that its presidential candidate, Mugabe, had won the presidential election run-off which Tsvangirai pulled out of, because of widespread violence and intimidation of his party's supporters. As a result they only wanted ZANU (PF) aligned analysts to comment unchallenged.

The Sub-Editor (2010) confirmed that his section was given instructions from the Information ministry, through the ZBC Chief Executive Officer and the General Manager for News, which directed the news desk with regard to which political analysts to use during prime time live television news bulletins.

One would have expected the ZBC to feature more divergent views from civic society organisations as well as the business sector during the process of rebuilding the country, but this was not so. The ZBC prime time television news bulletins which were viewed showed that from the civic and business world only a few people were interviewed (See Figure 5).

5.5.3 Promotion of national unity and nation-building

MDC-T's spokesperson Chamisa (2010) described the ZBC's coverage of his MDC-T party as "disparaging, degrading, denigrating, and excruciating, ever attacking and literary portraying the MDC-T as a ragtag of an organisation".

Chamisa was referring to hate language proffered by most ZANU (PF)-aligned political analysts which was contrary to the spirit of nation-building and national unity. Yet, ZANU (PF)'s Chaibva (2010) said the comments were in conformity to the correct profile of the MDC-T, which his ZANU (PF) party often described as a "puppet" of the Western countries, pursuing a regime change agenda bent on reversing the gains of the liberation struggle, especially land reform.

However, one would wonder why such language was necessary during a process leading towards nation-building, especially after the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, followed by the GPA among former polarised political parties which in Article VII also specifically launched the programme of national healing (GPA, 2008,7). Sub-Editor (2010) stated that his desk was given specific instructions to use only well known ZANU (PF) political sympathisers to participate in live television news broadcasts, even discussing issues about policies and operations of both MDC parties.

The television news viewed also confirmed what Urban Reporter (2010), Rural Reporter (2010) and Sub-Editor (2010) stated regarding the use of only ZANU (PF)-aligned political analysts such as Tafataona Mahoso, Christopher Mutsvangwa and Caesar Zvayi, among others, who allowed using what was tantamount to hate language when analysing the activities and statements of the MDC-T.

One can conclude that it even sounded as if Zimbabwe was being transformed into a military junta, as the ZBC news department was instructed to always refer to President Mugabe as "Head of State and Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence forces" (Sub-Editor, 2010). This was part of ZANU (PF)'s agenda of ending Mugabe's credibility crisis by constantly reminding the public which leader had more constitutional power between Mugabe

(the President), and Tsvangirai (the Prime Minister) (Sub-Editor, 2010 & Zhangazha, 2010), following the disputed elections of June 2008.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter research findings were presented and discussed. Firstly, the findings were presented based on the responses to unstructured questions which were put across to the ZBC journalistic staff, namely two reporters and a television news sub-editor, political party spokespersons and political analysts.

Secondly, the findings were also presented based on the viewing of the ZBC main 8.00 pm television news bulletins which were broadcast consecutively between 1 January 2009 and 2 February 2009.

The analyses of both findings, based on the key research question and its sub-questions, established that the ZBC did not provide equal, fair and balanced coverage of all political parties which signed the GPA and were on the verge of establishing the GNU. Only ZANU (PF) members and pro-ZANU (PF) political analysts dominated the news bulletins and current affairs programmes as a result of deliberate bias and manipulation of news. This was mainly on the instructions of the information ministry, which is controlled by a ZANU (PF) minister and his permanent secretary, who is Mugabe's official spokesperson.

The analysis further revealed that divergent views of all political parties, civic society and the business world were limited or not included at all. ZANU (PF)-aligned political analysts were the only ones asked to comment about ongoing unity talks and the prospects of forming the national unity government, including presenting the views of both MDC parties

Lastly, the analysis revealed that the ZBC allowed ZANU (PF)-aligned political analysts to denigrate the MDC-T and MDC-M parties to the extent of proffering hate language at a time when the process of nation-building leading towards the formation of an inclusive government of national unity was in progress.

The next chapter will discuss the conclusions drawn from this study's findings and their subsequent analysis, and also make some recommendations regarding the transformation of the ZBC into a true public broadcaster.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research was to establish whether the ZBC operates as a true public broadcaster or as a state-controlled broadcaster. The hypothesis of this analytical study is that television prime time news bulletins on the ZBC, after the signing of the GPA between the ZANU (PF) and the two MDC parties, leading to the establishment of the GNU, did not present fair, balanced news and views of all three principal political parties as expected of a public broadcaster. As a result, this study set out to answer the following central research question:

Did the ZBC, as public broadcaster, present a fair and balanced picture and viewpoints from all major political parties regarding developments, from the signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) until the actual formation of the government of national unity in Zimbabwe?

Based on the central research question an approach in the form of an analytical study of the ZBC was adopted. Further sub-questions helped to decide on qualitative and quantitative methods to gather data for analysis. Questionnaires were designed to gather facts from the ZBC journalistic staff, political party spokespersons and analysts. Recordings of thirty days of the 8.00 pm ZBC News bulletins were also made between 1 January and 2 February 2009.

6.2 Main findings

The main findings of this study can be formulated as follows:

- The ZBC failed to provide equal, fair and balanced coverage to all political parties working towards the formation of the inclusive government of national unity. ZANU (PF) members and party events were given preferential treatment while MDC party and government activities were not fairly broadcast. The ZBC reporters attended MDC rallies and meetings only to distort and twist facts about the party's operations and profile, rather than to report about it objectively.
- The ZBC did not have an editorial policy in place to guide news staff in the practice of professional and ethical journalism.

- Divergent views, especially those of both the MDC parties, civic society and the corporate world were largely left out in news reports and live television analyses during the period leading to the formation of a national unity government.
- There was blatant interference from the parent Ministry of Media, Information and Publicity, which issued regular directives regarding which news angles to be taken and which people to interview for comments in political news items and “live” studio analytical discussions.
- The ZBC deliberately allowed hate and derogatory language to be used by ZANU (PF) political analysts in describing the MDC-T and MDC-M, which were rarely given the opportunity to participate in radio and television news and current affairs programmes.

6.3 Interpretation of findings in terms of hypothesis

Below is an interpretation of the research findings according to the hypothesis of the study.

6.3.1 Lack of equal fair and balanced coverage

The ZBC failed to provide equal, fair and balanced coverage to all political parties soon after signing the GPA in the process leading to the formation of the GNU.

In Chapter Two this researcher discussed a related point made by Mano in his 1997 study on public service broadcasting. Mano concluded that the ZANU (PF) government perfected the art of controlling the ZBC and confining coverage to the ruling party and government as something which the leadership had learnt during the days of nationalism and the liberation struggle when colonial governments blacked out the coverage of their movements. He also observed that the control structure at the ZBC remained too vulnerable to political interference, thus making it difficult to fulfill its obligations to the public through equal, fair and balanced journalism (Mano 1997: 37-38).

In the same chapter the research discussed Mawarire and Nyakunu’s conclusion about the lack of fair and balanced coverage on the ZBC, due to the policy of recruiting pro-ZANU (PF) staff which serves the interests of the party at the expense of ethical and professional journalism. In their study, Mawarire and Nyakunu (2007: 12) concluded that journalists should be encouraged to concentrate on their professional ethics and ensure that they cover events to reflect the diversity of opinions, cultural practices, tastes and expectations of the citizenry.

In Chapter Two the study also cited Chiumbu (2009: 65), stating that the editorial independence at the ZBC was non-existent since the broadcaster is *de facto* run from the information ministry. This ministry also directly instructed the journalists with regard to which stories to run and which people to approach for comment. Chiumbu further suggested the establishment of an editorial and programming charter which would ensure that the ZBC adhered to public service principles and promote public interest programming.

6.3.2 *Lack of a written editorial policy*

The ZBC lacks a clear editorial policy to guide its journalistic staff in news gathering, bulletin compilation and broadcasts.

Similarly, Chapter Two confirmed that Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007: 6) could not find any document on the editorial policy of the ZBC and concluded that such a deliberate unavailability of policy might actually be “indirect” policy which leaves room for manipulation of news bulletins and programmes.

6.3.3 *Absence of diverse views*

On the absence of diverse views on the ZBC as concluded by this study, Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007:11) had also established in the literature review section that in Zimbabwe, radio and television are state monopolies, and as a result they presented news in order to please the then ruling ZANU (PF) party and government. Although at present ZANU (PF) is no longer the sole ruling party, it is still in charge of the information ministry portfolio in the national unity government as prescribed in the GPA (2008:12).

6.3.4 *Government interference in ZBC editorial decisions*

This study discovered consistent government interference in the packaging and broadcasting of ZBC news bulletins. Such interference manifests itself in the ZBC news department by being given direct instructions by government officials like the permanent secretary for information regarding how it should gather and compile its news bulletins. In Chapter Two, this study cited Mano (1997: 37-38) as being critical of the vulnerability of the ZBC to political manipulation, as has also been revealed by this study.

Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007: 11) confirmed the prevalence of government-sourced stories in the ZBC news bulletins which meant that the government and ZANU (PF) commanded

the overall power to communicate in the country. This study also found out how the Ministry of Media, Information and Publicity actually directs editorial policy at the ZBC by issuing directives to news staff regarding which stories to carry in the news bulletins and which people to use as news sources and political analysts. This is corroborated by Chiumbu (2009: 65) who, in the literature review, also concluded that the editorial independence at the ZBC is non-existent and described the broadcaster as being run from the information ministry.

6.3.5 Bias and hate language

The literature reviewed in this study did not delve deeper into issues related to hate language as revealed by research findings. However, in dealing with matters related to government and the former ruling party, ZANU (PF)'s interference in the ZBC's editorial policy Mano (1997: 37-38), Mwarire and Nyakunu (2007: 6) as well as Chiumbu (2009: 65) all concur with the research findings in that the direct involvement of the broadcaster's parent information ministry resulted in bias against other political parties and civic society organisations which were critical of ZANU (PF) policies.

6.4 Interpretation of findings in terms of the theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of the study was premised on the Social Responsibility Theory which was discussed in Chapter Three. From that theoretical perspective, the public broadcaster should fulfil its responsibilities by setting professional standards with regard to the supply of information and the truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance of their reporting. It should collectively represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints (Fourie, 2007b: 194). This researcher identified it as the most suitable theory for analysing the ZBC's suitability as a true public broadcaster. In the same chapter the theory was contextualised by highlighting its major points as part of the checklist which will now be interrogated below.

6.4.1 Setting of professional journalism standards

The study concluded that no proper journalism standards were set by the ZBC because it did not have a proper editorial policy to guide its editorial and journalistic staff. Contrary to the principles of the Social Responsibility Theory, the ZBC also manipulated news and avoided balanced reporting of all political parties and civic society organisations in the country. On the journalistic side the theory emphasises truth and accuracy, impartiality and fairness, respect for

individual privacy, independence from vested interference and also stipulates that society is entitled to high professional standards from media such as the ZBC (McQuail, 1994: 124). However, this study concluded that the aggrieved political parties could not seek redress from the ZANU (PF)-controlled information ministry since it was the one violating professional standards through direct interference in the ZBC's editorial decisions.

6.4.2 Use of offensive information and hate language

This study concluded that the ZBC deliberately broadcast hate and offensive language by so-called ZANU (PF) political commentators against the MDC parties. According to the discussion on the Social Responsibility Theory, in Chapter Three, the media should avoid publicising information that can lead to social disruption or offend other political, ethnic and religious groups (Fourie, 2007b: 194).

6.4.3 Self-regulation within the law

The ZBC, through the Zimbabwean government, is a signatory to different charters which promote professional media practice (Chiumbu, 2009: 14-17). According to the discussion on the Social Responsibility Theory in the public service, it embraces universal service, diversity, editorial independence, social responsibility and accountability (McQuail, 1994: 126-127). But as this research concluded in its findings, the ZBC deliberately flouted the African Charter on Broadcasting and the principles of the Southern African Broadcasting Association (SABA) which promote editorial independence (Article 19, 2003: 201-202).

6.4.4 Inclusion of divergent views

While the Social Responsibility Theory (Fourie, 2007b: 194) calls for the media to represent all social groups and reflect the diversity of society by giving people access to a variety of viewpoints and the right to react to these viewpoints, this study concluded that the ZBC denied access to members of political parties other than ZANU (PF) as resource persons in news bulletins and as political analysts in current affairs programmes. Such action was also a confirmation of this research's stated hypothesis.

6.5 Confirmation of the hypothesis

From the interpretation of the findings according to the reviewed literature and theoretical framework, this researcher can conclude that the ZBC, through its prime time television news

bulletins, for the period spanning from the signing of the GPA between the ZANU (PF) and the MDC parties, and the establishment of the GNU, failed to present equal, fair and balanced coverage to all political parties, civic society organisations and the business sector in order to promote national unity and nation-building.

According to definitions of public broadcasting discussed in Chapter One, literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the Social Responsibility theoretical framework proffered in Chapter Three, this study concludes that the ZBC cannot be classified as a true public broadcaster, but a state-controlled broadcaster. Regarding public broadcasting definitions presented in Chapter One, the research also confirms:

- The ZBC's news programming does not comply with the World Radio and Television Council's principle of diversity and independence which states that public broadcasting should be a forum where ideas should be expressed freely and where information, opinions and criticisms circulate. This is possible if the freedom of public broadcasting is maintained against commercial pressures or political influence (WRTC, 2002:1).
- The ZBC's failure to abide by principles of the African Charter on Broadcasting of which Zimbabwe is a signatory. This charter states that public broadcasters should serve the public interest and avoid one-sided reporting and programming with regards to religion, political beliefs, culture, race and gender and calls for the guaranteeing of the editorial independence of public broadcasters (Article 19, 2003: 201-202).
- The ZBC's failure to pass the European Broadcasting Union's definition which states that public broadcasting is broadcasting made for the public, financed by the public and controlled by the public, providing programmes acceptable to all people (Bussiek & Bussiek, 2004: 6).

6.5.1 Anomalies or surprising results

The research did not find any surprising results. Most findings seem to corroborate this researcher's original assumptions which helped in the formulation of the hypothesis and central research question, after watching the trend of ZBC radio and television news bulletins and studying the Media Monitoring Project - Zimbabwe (MMPZ) reports pertaining to the general performance of the media in Zimbabwe (MMPZ, 2008b: 2-3).

6.6 Relevance of the study

This analytical study of the ZBC's performance as a public broadcaster is relevant in order to argue why the broadcaster should be transformed from being a state-controlled entity and become a true public broadcaster.

This researcher feels that it is important to critically study the ZBC from different angles, particularly its performance during nation-building processes like constitution-making, national healing, general elections and the establishment of the GNU.

Since the ZBC still enjoys the monopoly of the airwaves, its performance requires constant checks and critique in order to stimulate debates regarding how it can be transformed without further delay into a truly public broadcaster (MAZ, 2008: 1-2). In carrying out this study this researcher was, among many other motivations, inspired by the question: "What is wrong with the current ZBC?" as asked by the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) in its advocacy brochure used in campaigns geared towards the transformation of the ZBC (MAZ, 2008: 3).

6.7 Recommendations

Since this research has concluded that the ZBC failed to perform its functions as a true public broadcaster during an important nation-building process leading to the formation of an inclusive government of national unity in Zimbabwe, this researcher therefore makes the following recommendations:

- The ZBC should put in place a properly written editorial policy for circulation to its entire editorial and journalistic staff and to the public for transparency and accountability purposes. The editorial policy document should emphasise adherence to professional and ethical journalism and universal principles of Public Service Broadcasting, to educate, inform and entertain the public.
- The Parliament of Zimbabwe should pass a specific law which prohibits governments of the day from interfering with the day-to-day running of the public broadcaster, especially on editorial and programming policies. The proposed law should ensure that the ZBC is a non-partisan platform which promotes democratic debate, where different views and opinions are broadcast fairly and objectively. The law should also make it an offence for the ZBC or any other broadcaster for that matter to allow hate speech on the airwaves.

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ADDENDUM A

Questionnaire for unstructured interviews with ZBC television news reporters (one urban-based, one rural-based)

The purpose of these questions is to find out how the ZBC covered the principal political parties during the period between signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15th September 2008 and the actual establishment of the inclusive government of national unity (GNU) on 15th February 2000.

Names of interviewee:

Position:

Date of interview:

Place:

1. Were you specifically assigned to cover the MDC events or interviews about the unity talks in a certain style? Please elaborate.
2. Were you specifically assigned to cover ZANU (PF) events or interviews about unity talks in a certain style? Please elaborate.
3. Were your stories about unity talks always used in news bulletins? If not why?
4. What were the reasons for editors turning down any of your stories about MDC views regarding progress of unity talks?
5. Were your stories about unity talks always packaged to your satisfaction? If not why?
6. Statistical data in the media shows that that ZANU (PF) ended up with many stories about unity talks than the two MDCs because you were instructed not to cover the opposition. Why was that so?
7. Did you adhere to written editorial guidelines in writing your stories?

ADDENDUM B

Questionnaire for unstructured interview with ZBC Television news editor/sub-editor

The purpose of these questions is to find out how the ZBC covered the principal political parties during the period between signing of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) on 15th September 2008 and the actual establishment of the inclusive government of national unity (GNU) on 15th February 2009.

Names of interviewee:

Position:

Date of interview:

Place:

1. What was the ZBC newsroom policy regarding coverage of ruling, opposition and civic society viewpoints on unity talks that led to ZANU PF having more stories?
2. Did you receive any directives not to include the opposition views on unity talks in your news bulletins? Please elaborate.
3. What caused ZANU (PF) to have many stories on unity talks and formation of GNU than the opposition MDCs?
4. Why were opposition rallies and interviews known to have been covered by ZBC not featured in radio and television news bulletins?
5. Does the corporation have a written editorial policy available to all journalists? Please elaborate.
6. Did you adhere to written editorial guidelines?

ADDENDUM C

Questionnaire for unstructured interviews with political party spokespersons/social commentators (pro-ZANU-PF party & the other two pro-MDCs, separately)

Name of Interviewee:

Date of interview:

1. Was the ZBC coverage of the ZANU (PF) and MDCs fair in terms of, balance, objectivity and frequency?
2. Do you think ZBC was always objective in its presentation of opposition political party views on GNU in its main news bulletins? Why do you say so?
3. Statistical data from media monitoring organisations shows that ZBC had more stories about ZANU (PF) views than those of the MDCs. What is your comment about this view?
4. Usage of hate language against opposition parties on ZBC news bulletins still appeared even after the signing of the GPA, towards peace and nation building. Why do you think it was still allowed to prevail on national television?

ADDENDUM D

(ZBC 8.00pm Main Television News Bulletins, 1 Jan-2 Feb 2009)

Date	Political Party target	Approx Time Allocated	Video Clip	Description of television news item
01/01/09	None			
02/01/09	None			
03/01/09	MDC-T	7.9min	Y	MDC-T leader urged to come back home to re-vitalize plans for improving the economic conditions, said the members of the public. Need to work on the all-inclusive government issue. Tsvangirai said to be slowing down the progress by being out of the country.
04/01/09	Zanu PF	4.68min	Y	Zanu PF official Dickson Mafios encouraging office bearers to live up to their expectations and election promises. John Mafa pledges to live up to this.
04/01/09	Zanu PF	0.55min	N	President Robert Mugabe on leave which was said to be more of a retreat for reflecting on the inclusive government structures and removing sanctions.
05/01/09	None			
06/01/09	None			
07/01/09	MDC-T	4.4min	N	Article authored by MDC-T's Eddie Cross described as unfortunate and misleading by unnamed analysts. Dr David Chikowore an academic at UZ said the stance clearly demonstrates that the MDC-T formation does not have the peoples' interests at heart. He said the MDC-T leader enjoys in neighbouring countries while the people remain suffering under sanctions that he (Tsvangirai) called for. Tafataona Mahoso says doom predictions by Eddie Cross are typical of Rhodesian mentality of wait and see. Mean while Mugabe says a new government should be in place by the end of next month.
07/01/09	Zanu PF	4min	Y	Min. Of Policy Implementation Webster Shamu addressing party supporters in Mhondoro-Ngezi during the distribution of part of The 60 tonnes of mealie meal allocated to the area donated by ZimPlats said Zimbabweans should own majority shares in mines and factories in order for complete empowerment to be achieved. He took swipe on government officials accused of corruption in distribution issues.

08/01/09				
09/01/09	MDC, Zanu	6.5min	Y	Obert Mpofu slammed industries that proposed to close operations till next month which would be longer than usual. Reporter then commented that such a move came at a time in which MDC in implementing all tactics to delay formation of an all-inclusive government, while Mugabe and other SADC leaders have done their best to make an inclusive government formation. They say Tsvangirai should come back and be sworn in as Prime Minister. Also mentioned Eddie Cross' article saying MDC-T is waiting for Zimbabwe to crash and thus give MDC an opportunity to take over. Some unnamed analysts say the move by some industries to delay opening is in sync with MDC's strategies to increase economic suffering in the country.
09/01/09	MDC	2.8min	Y	Inclusive government minus land is what MDC and its allies want says police commissioner general Chihuri commenting during a ceremony in which he was applauding those who had carried out their peace keeping duties well in Liberia and Kosovo. Chihuri says MDC is just changing goal posts showing confusion and will thus continue to cause problems.
09/01/09	MDC-T	3.45min	Y	Magistrate Olivier Mariga has dismissed the application of refusal of further remand of MDC activists accused of insurgency, terrorism damage of property etc. By MDC activists.
09/01/09	MDC-T	3.3min	Y	Bright Matonga Deputy Minister of Information and Publicity says government will not fall prey on MDC's plan to bring the country down through its voting of the September 15 amendment bill and withdrawing from the all inclusive government later on. Instead it will concentrate on addressing issues affecting the nation, channelling resources to people. He said, "veMDC vakataimira mota vobva vatiza" literary meaning that MDC MPs are waiting for vehicles to escape.
10/01/09	Zanu PF	5mins	Y	Rally aiming to curb party factionalism by Masvingo seven chapters of the 3arms of war of Liberation united to fight against Factionalism in the ruling party. Chivi North MP Francis Guruva says rallies aimed to keep the party together reminding of past inheritance obtained through R. G Mugabe. The 3arms are: War Vets, ZIPEDRA and Zimbabwe War Collaborators Association (ZWCA).
11/01/09	NONE			
12/01/09	All	6.2min	Y	State challenged to take ideological stance by Ministry of Information and Publicity. It says the country is in an undeclared war with the West. Says "The West want their own leader in the country so Zimbabweans die slowly...not question of Zanu PF or MDC but question of the West fighting the state hood of Zimbabwe using economic leavers that message should be sent to the people so they understand we are in a war..."

12/01/09	Zanu, MDC	2min	N	President still on annual leave, still time to reflect and plan on issue of inclusive government. President says he has invited the two MDC formations but they have not responded. Hence the delay is because MDC-T's endless demands from 'Western Masters'.
12/01/09	Zanu PF	4.7min	Y	Company based in India interested in diamond processing in Zimbabwe. Zanu PF delegation led by Kumbirai Kangai included Min. Of International Trade Cde Obert Mpofu visited India recently. He said the delegation was impressed with the quality of work at the Indian based company. There is some suspecting of illicit diamond trade activity by the 3 rd parties delivering diamonds to the company in India. Cde Mpofu hopes, "party will pursue this issue. but it is up to government to decide who will participate in this lucrative program".
12/01/09	MDC	6.7min	Y	MDC legislators failed to understand how matters are discussed politically and the protocol that is used in the august house (Parliament). Main story about the Parliament of Zimbabwe informatics database workshop in which provincial legislators meeting in Manicaland will update the database which helps Parliamentarians understand some sort of code of conduct. MDC legislators boycotting development workshops has also led to the delay in development of an all-inclusive government(said by observers). During this particular workshop MDC legislators walked out after deputy clerk of parliament after a provincial administrator had been asked to give comments on the database issue. MDC walked out led by legislator Chikangamvura. MDC chief whip interviewed explained why the MDC legislators walked out in accordance to the September 15 agreement that provincial administrators' issue had not yet been resolved. However, Zanu PF legislator said it is not surprising that MDC legislators display childish politics as it has become quite prevalent among elected members of parliament.
12/01/09	Zanu PF	3.2mins	Y	Zanu PF councillor Masimba Rubatika of Ward 2 in Manyame rural district council has urged people in leadership positions who benefited from the land reform program to lead by example in agricultural production. He thanked President R.G Mugabe for love for the people in giving them land.
13/01/09	Zanu, MDC	13.8mins	Y Bad Sound	Formation of an all inclusive government eminent seems MDC-T leader will participate. George Charamba, presidential Spokesperson says the British element in MDC has been the destabilising factor. MDC does not realize the grandeur nature of the matter. There is sufficient understanding sitting in the Zanu PF party to deal with the Rhodesian factor. MDC-T leader coming back home is the only way to survive.
13/01/09	MDC-T	1.15mins	N	MDC-T legislator Lynette Karengi has lost the mandate to represent the Chimanimani West constituency after she was convicted Of forgery by Magistrate Billiard Musakwa to a 20 day prison sentence or ZW\$20 billion fine for forging signatures. She has also been banned from contesting in any other elections for the next 5years.
14/01/09				

15/01/09				
16/01/09	Zanu PF	3min	N	Zanu PF Manicaland Province secretary for Information and Publicity Cde Kenneth Saruchera says conflict in the Middle East has exposed the double standard of George Bush and his allies. They have been advocating for inhumane action and have been encouraging this in Zimbabwe as a result of the illegal sanctions imposed. He is surprised that Bishop Tutu, Kofi Anan, Botswana president are silent on the issue.
17/01/09	None			
18/01/09	MDC-T	6.7min	Y	MDC-T leader urged by war veterans to stop dragging his feet but to join with Mugabe for the all inclusive government. They also said he should stop listening to the West. Unnamed political analyst said President does not want to waste anymore time.
18/01/09	War Vets	4.55min	Y	Tribulation for the late Chimutengwende a ZANU (PF) member (Sunday Edition; Looking Back).
19/01/09	Zanu, MDC	4.5min	Y	The public comments on the unity talks, they say they want it to work, need to put the public first and have agreement.
19/01/09		5.15mins	Y	State media urged to continue portray government positively by Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana, acting Minister of Information & Publicity. Says it is also important to keep workers happy.
19/01/09	MDC, Zanu	5.5mins	Phone Call	Senior ZBC reporter Reuben Barwe giving an update from the hotel where inclusive government formation talks are being held.
20/01/09				
21/01/09	MDC-T, Zanu	7.4mins	Y	Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa says Tsvangirai's demands are unacceptable, SADC extraordinary meeting to give way forward. Says there is no commitment from the MDC-T even from the amendment Zimbabwe constitution No. 19 Bill. Need for commitment from all 3parties. Chinamasa outlines how the MDC-T leadership does not understand the amendments and other procedures e.g. "He refers the president as the designate"; president is not mandated to consult a political office holder whether Zanu PF or MDC, only has legal obligation to act in accordance with constitution. President can only refer to Prime Minister after amendment No. 19 has been enacted. Chinamasa says having a vacancy in the RBZ governor would help MDC-T leader' course in making the country ungovernable.
21/01/09	MDC-T	8.1mins	Y	Political analyst Tafataona Mahoso says fresh demands by MDC-T leader show that the leader is not committed to the formation of an all inclusive government. He has a plan to delay everything. Zimbabweans shouldn't mind but must start working fighting sanctions in all spheres especially health and economy. President can only work if he knows that all understand the nation's interests. Political analyst Caesar Zvayi pointed that Tsvangirai does not want the process to be completed, he failed regime change. Tsvangirai will not accept an inclusive government with Mugabe as this is the position that has been taken by the USA and British governments so he is just taking people for a ride as it never was his intention to be part of an inclusive government.

				Members of the public interviewed showed their unhappiness regarding Tsvangirai's delaying the formation of the inclusive government.
21/01/09	MDC, Zanu	5.15mins	Y	Walter Muzembi has urged people to put their political differences and work on the September 15 agreement. Says leaders on Both sides are so preoccupied about sharing power instead of concentrating on the issues affecting the nation at large. CZI representative Cliff Dube also echoed same sentiments. Meanwhile MDC-T has brought in new demands aimed to scuttle the implementation says an unnamed analyst (reporter speaking). At the same time MDC-legislators have threatened to vote against constitution amendment No. 19 Bill despite all parties having agreed to it being enacted as law.
21/01/09	Zanu PF	5.45mins	Y	Zanu PF is holding district leadership aimed at inducting members to give insight into their roles, party constitution, and manifest to among other things. First , Hurungwe district, opened by Edna Madzongwe president of the Senate who said history should always mention role played by the party's first secretary Robert Mugabe in liberating the country and promoting those who were marginalised.
22/01/09				
23/01/09	Zanu PF	5.4mins	Y	Zanu PF prepared to implement the SADC resolution in forming an all inclusive government but rejects all the 5 conditions that presented by the MDC-T as they aim at delaying economic improvements in the country says Justice Min. Patrick Chinamasa.
23/01/09		9.6mins	Y	Church groups, women and political commentators say Zimbabwe has been kept waiting too long and Monday's summit should bring closure. All are in agreement that president Mugabe should go ahead with the government formation. Oppah Muchinguri says it is time political leadership came to an agreement. Father Fidelis Mukonori of the Roman Catholic church says compromise is the key to the success of the talks on Monday; the politicians should not come back empty handed. Media analyst Caesar Zvayi concurred that too much had been wasted. Says Tsvangirai has been reneging and delaying showing that he does not want this process to end. He also says the president has tolerated Tsvangirai for 2years and so government should go on with or without him.
23/01/09	War vets, MDC	5.45mins	Y	War vets say if Tsvangirai continues to delay he will be relegated to the dustbin of political history. He should show he is his own man and stop taking instructions from the West. They (the War vets) are ready to protest for the departure of the MDC-T leader if he is not ready to work for the nation.
24/01/09	MDC-T	3.8mins	Y	SADC urged to take tough stance if MDC continues to be difficult while implementing the inclusive government, read MDC-T leader's moves if he defies the SADC resolutions. Analyst Tafataona Mahoso commented that that person who had to do with the sanctions can now be included in the government should not have 'offices' in Joburg, Lusaka, etc. His opinions were echoed

24/01/09	MDC-T	4.2mins	Y	<p>by analyst ambassador Christopher Mutsvangwa who said that MDC-T should consider the suffering of the Zimbabweans. If Tsvangirai refuses to follow mandate, Zimbabwe should continue without him for progress' sake. He said the height of influence was when George Bush was still in power in the USA.</p> <p>MDC oppositions urged the president to continue with the formation of the government even if MDC-T leaders do not comply after Monday's SADC summit meeting. Zanu-Ndonga chairman Mr Gunduza said this is the last chance MDC-T leader has to prove his willingness to join others in an all inclusive government to save the Zimbabweans. Rev. Gerald Mubaiwa said the president should go ahead with the formation of the government with or without MDC.</p>
25/01/09	Zanu PF	2.8mins	Y	<p>President Mugabe has left for Pretoria for the summit to be held the next day. Reporter outlines the delegation, also mentions that delays have been due to the dragging of feet by MDC-T formation. Mutambara & Tsvangirai expected to attend the summit.</p>
26/01/09	MDC	2mins	N	<p>MDC activists back in court in their routine remand for insurgency, banditry, sabotage, terrorism and malicious damage to property.</p>
27/01/09				
28/01/09	All 3 + EU	5.5mins	Y	<p>Public feels European Union sanctions not fair as they came at a time that the 3political parties are working on an all inclusive government. Maxwell Hove political analyst says the extensions of the sanctions are aimed at maintaining tension and crisis so the original plan works of having Mugabe removed from power for regime change. Herald reporter and analyst Caesar Zvayi says move by EU was more than smart sanctions on business but also move to show MDC that if they join the inclusive government of national unit they will also go under sanctions.</p>
28/01/09	Zanu PF	2.1mins	Y	<p>21st movement preparations marking Mugabe's birthday underway. President of National Fundraising Committee Patrick Zhuwao, who is President Mugabe's nephew says he has been working tirelessly to ensure the event is successful.</p>
29/01/09	All	4.9mins	Y	<p>Negotiators from the 3parties have been meeting at the SA embassy as mandated by SADC. There is sufficient will from all. Nicholas Goche says they are doing the tasks given to them by SADC.</p>
29/01/09	All	5.05mins	Y	<p>Representatives of political parties have called upon the 3 parties to come together to abide with the SADC decision. President of Zimbabwe Development Party (ZDP) Mr Kisnut Mukwazhi says MDC-T holding council meeting at this time is a good thing. His sentiments are then echoed by Zanu-Ndonga Tagonda Gutuza who pointed out that MDC-T must not back track. Mutare Chimanimani senator Cde Monica Mutsvangwa says SADC resolutions and time frame only positive aimed at development aimed at reviving country's economy.</p>
30/01/09				
31/01/09	All	5.2mins	Y	<p>Zimbabweans call for the total commitment from the 3political parties in the implementation of the September 15 amendment Bill. Harare people interviewed welcome commitment from MDC-T formation. Members of the Wars Collaborators happy with the</p>

01/02/09	Zanu PF		Y	Move and urged that parties put aside differences and work for the good of the nation. Zanu PF National Secretary for Youth Affairs Cde Absalom Sikhosana urged youth to take advantage of the ongoing programs to economically enhance themselves. Youth should lead by example in upholding party values. Dougmore Chimukoko Youth league chairman said the workshop was good and that there is the existence of youth that are strong for Zanu Pf defence and sovereignty of the country.
02/02/09	None			
		4.65mins		

Key

MDC-T Movement for Democratic Change party led by Morgan Tsvangirai

MDC/MDC-M Movement for Democratic Change party led by Professor Arthur Mutambara.

Y- Yes News item had a video clip

N- No News item had no video clip