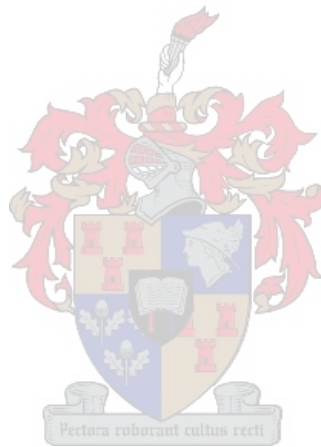


**The Political Role of the Diaspora Media in the Mediation of the Zimbabwean
Crisis:**

A Case study of *The Zimbabwean*- 2008 to 2010

By

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***Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Philosophy (Journalism) at Stellenbosch University***

Dept. of Journalism

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Declaration

I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining a qualification.

Signature: Trust Matsilele

Date: May 2013

Abstract

After a decade long multi-faceted political crisis, political parties in Zimbabwe signed the Global Political Agreement (GPA) of 2008 following the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) mediated talks culminating in the formation of an inclusive government. This study sought to investigate the political role, if any, played by the diasporic media in mediating the Zimbabwean crisis. This research focused on diasporic media using as a case study *The Zimbabwean* newspaper considering that during the research period it was circulating both in the country and diaspora communities in Western Europe, the USA and SADC countries. Diasporic media in Zimbabwe is a phenomenon associated with the rise of robust political opposition to the former ruling ZANU PF regime. Accordingly, such media operated outside the purview of the contemporary legislative and legal regime although the newspaper circulated in Zimbabwe. A number of anti establishment news media sprouted to challenge and offer resistance in the cyberspace and on shortwave and in print media. The Social Responsibility Theory was employed with the aim of establishing whether or not *The Zimbabwean* observed the journalistic ethics of reporting with truthfulness, accuracy, balance and objectivity. The Social Responsibility Theory's thrust is on de-sensationalising reportage, promotion of media ethics and self regulation.

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research established that *The Zimbabwean* newspaper played, to a larger extent, an active role in challenging the ZANU PF-led government and gave a platform to the oppositional Movement for Democratic Change. The conclusion arrived at in this study was that just like the state media, which promoted the government's propaganda, *The Zimbabwean* did the same for the opposition parties in Zimbabwe.

Opsomming

Politieke partye in Zimbabwe het ná 'n lang politieke krisis met vele fasette die Global Political Agreement (GPA) van 2008 geteken. Dit het gevolg op die Suid-Afrikaanse Ontwikkelingsgemeenskap (SAOG) se mediëring wat gelei het tot die vorm van 'n inklusiewe regering. Hierdie studie het probeer om die politieke rol, indien enigsins, van die diaspora-media in die mediëring van die Zimbabwiese krisis te ondersoek. Die navorsing het op diaspora-media gefokus deur 'n gevallestudie van die koerant *The Zimbabwean* te doen. Dié blad is gedurende die navorsingstyd in die land sowel as onder die Zimbabwiese diaspora in Europa, die VSA en SAOG-lande versprei. Diaspora-media in Zimbabwe is 'n fenomeen wat geassosieer word met die opkoms van 'n robuuste politieke opposisie teen die ZANU (PF)-regime. Dié media opereer dus buite die grense van die juridiese en wetgewende gesag van die land. 'n Verskeidenheid anti-establishment media het in die kuberruim, kortgolfradio en drukmedia ontwikkel wat beide uitgedaag en weerstand gebied het. Die Sosiale Verantwoordelikheidsteorie is gebruik om vas te stel of *The Zimbabwean* joernalistieke etiek nagekom het deur waarheidsgetrou en akkuraat, sowel as met balans en objektiwiteit, te rapporteer. Die teorie fokus om reportage te desensionaliseer en om media-etiek en selfregulering te bevorder. Die studie het kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe navorsingsmetodes gebruik. Die navorsing het vasgestel dat *The Zimbabwean* tot 'n groot mate 'n aktiewe rol gespeel het om die ZANU (PF)-regering uit te daag en 'n platform te bied aan die Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)-groepering. Die slotsom is dat, net soos die staatsmedia regering-propaganda bevorder het, *The Zimbabwean* dit vir die opposisiepartye in Zimbabwe gedoen het

Dedication

To my beloved twin brother Justice Matsilele

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Abbreviations

AIPPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BSA	Broadcasting Services Act
GNU	Government of National Unity
GPA	Global Political Agreement
LOMA	Law and Order Maintenance Act
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change Tsvangirai
MIC	Media and Information Commission
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
VOZ	Voice of Zimbabwe
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

This study investigated the political role played by Zimbabwe's diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the Global Political Agreement (GPA) era, September 2008 to December 2010. The study is limited to journalists operating outside the country with specific reference to *The Zimbabwean* newspaper based in the United Kingdom during the research period. The research aimed to investigate whether or not the diasporic media fulfilled the media's role of providing accurate, balanced, fair and objective news as prescribed by the Social Responsibility Theory.

Lahneman (2005:1) defines a diaspora as “[a] group that recognises its separateness based on common ethnicity or nationality, lives in a host country, and maintains some kind of attachment to its home country or homeland”. In Zimbabwe the term diasporic media has been used to refer to media that was established by journalists who left Zimbabwe due to media repression and closure of newspapers viewed to have been anti-ZANU PF and anti-Mugabe (Mukundu & Ngwenya, 2011:75). Over the last decade, Zimbabwe has witnessed a large-scale dislocation of its population to other countries (Pasura, 2008:1). Pasura further states that “in a country of thirteen million people, estimates suggest that between three to four million Zimbabweans live in the diaspora”. This population is the one that has constantly been referred to as the Zimbabwean diaspora.

This researcher is aware that sections of Zimbabweans in diaspora have claimed asylum which would warrant this researcher to use the term exiled media or exiled community but the

researcher is of the view that the term diaspora community is the most appropriate one as it encompasses every citizen regardless of relocation reasons. Kupe (2005:25) describes diaspora media as “mediated public spheres of the Zimbabwean diaspora” consisting of radio stations, online media and a weekly newspaper published in Britain and South Africa and distributed in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and the United Kingdom. Kupe (2008:144) argues that “since 2000 when the ruling ZANU PF government faced a serious threat to its power, the media has come under severe controls”. Kupe further notes that this ultimately contributed to diasporic media.

The exodus of Zimbabwe’s journalists to sympathetic countries led to the establishment of diasporic media (Moyo, 2010:23). Moyo adds that as scattered media practitioners re-launched their careers from different countries of refuge, they found new avenues of fighting the ZANU PF government for its anti-democratic tendencies. Zimbabwean journalists in the diaspora took advantage of new media technologies to cover the politics of the events unfolding in their home country, relying on journalists still resident in the country for stories (Lush & Kupe, 2005:10). Lush and Kupe further posit that “these journalists supplying stories wrote articles using pseudonyms and at most they used unnamed sources for their quotations”. The use of pseudonyms and anonymous sources has been criticised for undermining basic tenets of journalism (Lush & Kupe, 2005:10).

1.2 Rationale

This study sought to investigate the political role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper considering that during the research period it was the largest circulating independent weekly and also one of the newspapers whose continued operation from outside the country during the GPA era was contested (GPA, 2009:12). *The Zimbabwean* is a by-weekly newspaper established in 2005 and published in London and South Africa during the research period, being distributed to diaspora and Zimbabwe communities within the country (Kupe, 2005:25). From its inception, *The Zimbabwean* exploited a loophole in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and other laws enacted during the same period to clampdown on the independent media discussed below commencing with AIPPA.

AIPPA was enacted in 2003 by the Zimbabwean government along with the Public Order and Security Act meant to stifle dissenting voices (Mukasa, 2003:1; Meldrum, 2004:208). AIPPA was passed in March 2002 just before the country's contested presidential elections. The Act stipulated that journalists who falsified information deliberately would be imprisoned for up to a period of two years. AIPPA also required journalists and media houses operating within Zimbabwe to be registered with the Media and Information Commission (MIC) viewed as undemocratic and repressive as through its application newspapers were closed and journalists arrested (MISA, 2007:4). MISA postulates that in the first nine months of the enactment of this Act more than a dozen journalists were arrested and only one journalist (Andrew Meldrum) was brought to trial. Closely related to AIPPA law is the Public Order and Security Act (POSA).

POSA was passed in 2002 to replace a colonial legislation known as the Law of Order and Maintenance Act (LOMA). POSA created a wide range of criminal offences ranging from treason and behaving in an insulting manner in public settings. MISA (2007:11) notes that this Act has been applied to quell or stifle freedom of expression through public demonstrations. The police in Zimbabwe have used this Act to approve and disapprove public gatherings. Through this Act, in 2000 President Mugabe addressed 50 rallies while the MDC only managed to address eight after more than 83 of its rallies were prevented through the use of this Act (MISA, 2007:12). Another Act that needs attention here is the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform Act). The Criminal Law Act stipulates restrictions and limitations of citizens' rights to freedom of expression. This law shields the President from public scrutiny, making it similar to Section 16 of POSA (MISA, 2007:14). Next to be discussed is the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA).

The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) of 2001 was also passed during the same period. Under this provision, the Minister of Information was empowered to renew, amend, suspend and cancel licenses. This Act prohibited political parties from owning a radio or television station (MISA, 2007:16). Another law that was enacted during this period was the Interception of Communication Act. This Act empowers certain government departments after approval by the Minister of Information to conduct spy work to certain communication mediums for state protection and economic interests. The departments that can make such a request include but are

not limited to the Defense, Intelligence, National Security, the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA). After discussing media laws it is now important to discuss *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, the case study for this investigation.

One of the weaknesses of AIPPA is that it does not stop Zimbabweans from buying foreign-published newspapers targeted at the Zimbabwean communities. After its launch in 2005, *The Zimbabwean* became the largest circulating newspaper in Zimbabwe, increasing dramatically during 2007 from 20 000 copies a week to over 100 000 – demonstrating the desperate hunger for accurate information on the part of Zimbabweans (Mbanga, 2008:78). *The Zimbabwean* defined its motto as *The voice to the voiceless*. This publication operates an online publication that is uploaded on a daily basis (www.thezimbabwean.co.uk). Through the use of information communication technologies, *The Zimbabwean* is now also on other social platforms such as twitter and facebook where their followers are kept informed on developments. *The Zimbabwean* is of research interest considering that it has a reputation of being anti- ZANU PF and an agent of the West (Ranger, 2005:14).

1.3 Preliminary Study

To be able to better appreciate the rationale for this study, an understanding of the background to the history of the media in Zimbabwe is crucial, and this researcher provides some highlights of the history of the Zimbabwean media for contextual purposes.

Discussing the colonial media Mukasa (2003:2) notes that, during the colonial era two types of press institutions emerged, one such as *Moto*, supporting the liberation struggle, and the other, such as the *Financial Gazette*, supporting Ian Smith's colonial government. Rønning and Kupe (2000:138), in support of Mukasa, add that the colonial media together with other cultural institutions promoted colonial administration. Mukasa (2003:2) notes that “[a]longside the colonial press there emerged a nationalist press exemplified by the *Daily News*, church publications such as *Moto (Fire)* and *Umbowo (Witness)* which provided a platform of expression for nationalist leaders in the sixties and seventies.” *Moto* was published by the Catholic Church and *Umbowo* by the United Methodist Church. These publications gave a platform for the projection of nationalistic ideas by nationalist leaders in the 1960s and 1970s.

However, Thondlana (in Murithi & Mawadza, 2011:226) notes that the first newspapers to be published in Zimbabwe were the *Mashonaland Herald* and *Zambesian Times* that were handwritten.

The establishment and growth of the nationalist and church presses were a reaction to the injustice, racism, and exploitation that characterised settler colonialism. Kapungu (1974:59) notes that from 1963, the Ian Smith government enacted laws such as Official Secrets Act (OSA) and Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA)) that brought restrictions to freedom of expression. The Smith regime used these draconian laws (LOMA and OSA) to discredit the liberation struggle and guerilla fighters who fought for the independence of Zimbabwe from white domination (Mukasa, 2003:2). These laws (LOMA, OSA) are reported to have made it difficult for the press to operate freely during this period (Thondlana, 2011:227). Mukasa (2003:2) discussing the pre-independence era noted that “[t]he journalistic ethos of the times was to promote European cultural standards while denigrating African culture and political agitation as the nemesis of western civilization and Christianity”. Radio stations during the colonial era played a role as well.

The nationalist movements, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) had respectively operational radio stations based outside Rhodesia. Moisa, Zaffiro and Riddle (1990:11) assert that “[r]adio Tanzania granted airtime to both the *Voice of Zimbabwe* and the *Voice of the Revolution* from as early as 1963” while *Radio Mozambique* gave VOZ 30 minutes per day, between 8.00 pm and 8.30 pm on six shortwave bands and on medium wave and this extended to an hour as the struggle progressed. Moisa *et al* adds that the role of the liberation movements ZANU and ZAPU was to mobilise public opinion among Zimbabweans and support from friendly countries, organisations and individuals. They did this through relaying news bulletins on the struggle, war communiqués, speeches by nationalist leaders and revolutionary songs meant to mobilise masses against the colonial regime. The liberation movements also got support from the Organisation of African Union Liberation Committee, the OAU being an organisation comprised of independent African states established in Ethiopia in 1963 (Moisa *et al*, 1990:12).

ZAPU, from 1968 also intermittently broadcast over *Radio Moscow* transmitters from Luanda after 1977 (Moisa *et al*, 1990:12). While ZANU was granted access to external services in Addis Ababa and Tananarive from 1978, after the formation of the ZANU and ZAPU Patriotic Front in 1978, an attempt was made to consolidate all broadcasts. This failed, except in Tanzania where the Nyerere government would allow only Patriotic Front broadcasts and no other transmissions (Moisa *et al*, 1990:12-13). Mukasa (2003:3) notes that “[p]redictably, the nationalist and church press never became part of the mainstream media in colonial Zimbabwe because of constant harassment by a regime that had very little tolerance for dissenting viewpoints”. Following independence, the print and electronic media that in the past had attacked blacks and nationalist leaders was expected to reform and restructure to better the new dispensation (Mukasa, 2003:3). Next to be discussed is the diasporic media landscape during Independent Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe at independence inherited a diversified media with the only threat to media freedom being the existence of colonial relics such as the Law and Order Maintenance Act (1965) justified on account of state security threats from the South African apartheid regime and the civil war in Matabeleland (Chari,2009:7-8). Rønning and Kupe (2000:138) observe that “[a]t independence, the media then were linked either to the inheritance of an authoritarian colonial state or to a liberation movement with a political agenda that often implied a contradictory attitude to fundamental democratic values”. Rønning and Kupe add that just like in Zimbabwe, “[t]he democratic agenda of the liberation movements was to be found in the demands for majority rule, but the democratic implications of this demand were often contradicted by an authoritarian ideology which often comprised a mixture of Soviet-type Marxist ideology and Africanist one-party statism”. Contrary to its earlier assertion postulating that the press should be a free press responsible to the national interest and should in principle be mass-oriented, nationally accessible, and non-partisan in content, Rønning and Kupe (2000:138) argue that in post- independent Zimbabwe, the press became a ZANU PF mouthpiece.

Moyse (2011:44) notes that since 2000 the ZANU PF-led government has enacted pieces of legislation (discussed earlier) that sought to control media institutions and journalists viewed as anti-progressive and anti-ZANU PF. Most research (Moyo, 2009:3; Kupe, 2005:24; Ndlela, 2005:71; Mukasa, 2003:3) has focused on the period between 2000 and 2008. This leaves a gap

in literature from the period 2008-2010 considering that this period has been marked by huge political developments such as the establishment of the Government of National Unity (GNU), mandated to address issues of media and press freedoms. The period 2008 to 2010 is an important period in the history of Zimbabwe as it marked the first parliamentary defeat of ZANU PF in the parliamentary elections after 28 years of enjoying dominance in Zimbabwe's legislature. Describing the MDC-T victory, Masunungure (2009:76) notes that "[t]he results reflected a seismic movement, a silent revolution depicted in the massive swing of political support from the 45-year old ZANU PF to the nine-year old opposition movement". Next the researcher discusses the GPA and why it was of research interest.

1.4 The Global Political Agreement (GPA) Period (2008-2010)

The GPA is an agreement signed by Zimbabwe's three governing parties namely, two Movement for Democratic Change formations (MDC-T and MDC-M) led by Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara and Robert Mugabe of ZANU PF (CISOMM, 2010:3). The GPA brought a spirit of optimism that the media climate would change for the better (MISA, 2009:158). To the contrary, Raftopoulos (2010:705) notes that the GPA could be seen as a passive revolution "in which a ruling party facing an organic political and economic crisis has used the space to reconfigure and renegotiate the terms of its existence". Moyo (2011:17) notes that during this period, the government was expected to register external media institutions operating outside the country so they could start working from within Zimbabwe (GPA,2009:12).

It is important to note that scholars (Sachikonye, 2011:177; Gwemende, 2010:12; Tarisayi, 2008:17; Ranger, 2005:14; Kupe, 2004:144) are not in agreement about what the Zimbabwean crisis actually entails, and when it began. However, this study utilises Kupe's (2004:144) study which locates the genesis of the crisis to the year 2000. This researcher is however, aware of a view (Tarisayi, 2008: 17) that dates the Zimbabwean crisis to the late 1990s. Tarisayi (2008:17) argues that the crisis began due to the chaotic land reform, quasi fiscal policies by the government and political instability. ZANU PF on the other hand has maintained that the challenges (challenges is the term framed by ZANU PF to refer to what independent media

termed crisis) facing the country are largely due to sanctions imposed on the country by the Western European countries and the United States of America.

Contributing to the discourse of violence and sanctions, Muzondidya (2011:8) argues that ZANU PF culture of “centralised despotism”, the involvement of the military, and the fight to redress racial inequalities contributed to the nature and shape of post independence Zimbabwe. Muzondidya adds that “from the early 1970s onwards, the political-military nexus was strong in both ZANU and ZAPU” giving the military commanders a significant say in party politics. The involvement of the military, it is argued, brought the element of violence.

1.5 Central Research Question

The central research question is: What was the political role of ‘Diaspora media’ in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the GPA period?

1.6 Theoretical Point of Departure

This researcher identified Social Responsibility Theory as the most appropriate theoretical lens through which the coverage of the GPA era by *The Zimbabwean* newspaper can be understood. McQuail (2005:172) asserts that according to the Social Responsibility Theory the media has to fulfill roles of reporting in a truthful, accurate, fair, objective and relevant way in its coverage. The theoretical framework will be discussed in-depth in chapter three. Next to be discussed is the research design and methodology employed.

1.7 Research Design and Methodology

The research design employed in this investigation is a case study. Babbie and Mouton (2007:280) define a case study as an investigation of a single unit which might be an individual, community or family. Wimmer and Dominick (1991:150) and Kumar (2005:112) observe that a case study is an empirical inquiry that employs a number of sources when understudying a

phenomenon in a given context. A case study aims “to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognising its complexity and its context” (Punch, 1998:150).

A methodology is defined as a “way of thinking about and studying social reality” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998:3). In this study, the researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The combination of two or more data collection methods and reference to multiple sources of information to obtain data is referred to as triangulation (Du Plooy, 2009:40). Maxwell (2005:22) notes that “qualitative and quantitative methods are not simply two different ways of doing the same thing but have different strengths and weaknesses and are used to address different kinds of questions and goals”. Quantitative research refers to research conducted through experience; hence it is sometimes referred to as empirical research (Du Plooy, 2009:22). Qualitative research methodology refers to research that is more interpretative and that constructs qualitative aspects of communication experiences (Du Plooy, 2009:30). Research techniques used for the two methodologies employed are interviews and content analysis and they will be discussed in chapter four dealing with Design and Methodology.

1.8 Chapter Outline

The rest of the thesis will be presented in the following outline:

Chapter 2 – This chapter discusses a literature survey of studies conducted broadly on diaspora and diasporic media in Zimbabwe

Chapter 3 – This section gives special attention to the theoretical model viewed as the best in studying this study

Chapter 4 – This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed in the gathering of data for this study

Chapter 5 – This section presents findings of this study

Chapter 6 – This chapter analyses the findings of this study

Chapter 7 – Conclusion and Recommendations

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the motivation and the rationale of the study. The researcher explained the motivation behind studying the period 2008 to 2010. This chapter briefly referred to the research design and methodology. It also stated the central research question for this study. The next chapter deals with the literature review of the diaspora media in Zimbabwe.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is defined as “[t]he process of reading, analysing, evaluating, and summarising scholarly materials about a specific topic” (Fink, 2009:1). It is also referred to as the critical synthesis of previous research and the evaluation of the literature that leads logically to the research question (Fink, 2009:1). Elucidating this point, Fink further observes that “the results of a literature review may be compiled into a report or they may serve as part of a research article, thesis, or grant proposal”. Reviewing literature on a topic, if done properly, helps enhance a researcher in establishing what already exists on the topic to avoid repetition and plagiarism (Hart, 1998:26). Literature review also assists a researcher after reading a multiple of sources of a given topic to get “an overall picture of a generic environment similar to the environment being researched” (Dawidowicz, 2010:112).

This researcher conducted a research of related studies in libraries and online platforms but could not establish any study similar to this one except that some elements had relationships to this study as shall be seen in the ensuing paragraphs. A number of studies (Moyo, 2010:23; Gadzikwa & Jones, 2010:3; Moyo, 2010:23; Moyo, 2009:3; Mbanga, 2008:76; Kupe, 2005:24; Ndlela, 2005:71; Mukasa, 2003:3) have been undertaken on the diaspora communities and the role of diaspora media in Zimbabwe. Scholars (Kupe, 2005:25; Ndlela, 2005:71; Gadzikwa & Jones, 2010:3) have done extensive research on the role of diaspora media but not specifically on the political role of diaspora media. Wanning (1963:65) made an inquiry into the formation of a global diasporic Chinese media sphere and the relationship between commerce and cultural consumption of the Chinese media. Robinson (2002:2) has studied the role of diasporic new media in the construction of a national identity during the break-up of Yugoslavia. Newland (2004:3) has explored the impact of established diaspora on the reduction of poverty, and identifies ways in which policy interventions, especially from donors of official development

assistance might strengthen that impact. Moyo (2009:23) has done research in the same period this study is being conducted but, unlike Moyo, this study investigates the political role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper whilst, Moyo's research interest is on the use of short message service in the context of 2008 harmonised elections. This chapter discusses the political role played by the media broadly and Zimbabwe in particular. For the sake of clarity this researcher will next give working definitions of terms that are going to be employed frequently throughout this study such as diaspora, politics, political role, democracy and Zimbabwean crisis. The concept diaspora shall be defined first.

2.2 Diaspora Defined

This study utilises Lahneman's (2005:1) definition of diaspora as "[a] group that recognises its separateness based on common ethnicity or nationality, lives in a host country, and maintains some kind of attachment to its home country or homeland". Zimbabwe's diaspora refers to Zimbabweans who left their home country due to economic and political instability (Mukasa, 2003:3). Ndhlovu (2009:17) dispels a popular view in the West that attempts to describe African diaspora as homogeneous. Ndhlovu notes that Africans, by virtue of the skin colour, origins, and because they speak languages unfamiliar to the West, are not necessarily the same. Ndhlovu further observes that "[l]anguage and country of origin are the two major taxonomies often used to classify different groups of African communities in Australia". However, since this study focuses on Zimbabwe, it will limit itself to a targeted and identified Zimbabwean diaspora media populace. Kupe (2005:25) refers to Zimbabwe's diaspora media as "mediated public spheres of the Zimbabwean diaspora". The term politics is discussed next.

2.3 Politics Defined

Politics is defined as "a general concept, the practice of the art or science of directing and administrating states or other political units" (McLean & McMillan, 2009:417). McLean and McMillan further assert that there are contestations over what aspects of social life are considered 'political'. Heywood (2002:4) defines politics as "the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live". Heywood further elucidates

that “politics is inextricably linked to the phenomena of conflict and cooperation”. Conflict is defined as competition between opposing forces reflecting a diversity of opinions, preferences, needs or interests whilst cooperation is defined as “working together and achieving goals through collective action” (Heywood, 2002:4).

The term politics originated from the term polis meaning city states (Heywood, 2002:5). Polis has origins in Ancient Greek where society was divided into small city-states (polis) with each possessing its own administrative government with the largest being Athens (Heywood, 2002:5). Heywood further notes that in this light politics was then understood to refer to affairs of polis. This study seeks to understand the political role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis making it important for this study to seek to define the term political. The concept of the political role of the media in this study refers to the way the media relate to governance and state. Media is largely viewed as central to modern democracy (Moyo, 2005:110), a concept discussed next.

2.4 Democracy

Democracy is a term used to refer to a system of governance of rule by people. Heywood (2002:68) posits that as divisions and disagreement exist within all communities the people may be taken to mean the majority. In this case democracy comes to mean strict application of the principle of majority rule where the will of the majority or numerically stronger override the will of the minority (Jallow, 2004:30). It is imperative to note that a plethora of models of democracy exists, among them classical, protective, development and people’s democracy.

Heywood (2002:72) on these models explains that the classical model is based on Greece’s Athenian democracies where decisions were made by large numbers of people. This model was critiqued by Plato as flawed, arguing that masses do not possess the wisdom or experience to rule wisely. Protective democracy is seen more as a device to fight state encroachment with a particular aim to give citizens the widest possible scope to live their lives as they choose (Heywood; 2002:73). Development democracy is a means through which human beings could achieve freedom or autonomy in the sense of obedience to the law one subscribes to. This model requires a high level of economic equality. At the heart of this model is grassroots democracy

advocating for political power at the lowest level, a concept described by Alexis de Tocqueville as tyranny of the majority (Heywood, 2002:74). Heywood further posits that a people's democracy model was derived from orthodox communist regimes that sprang up on the Soviet model. This model refers to democratic models generated from Marxist tradition. Heywood (2002:77) notes that there are different rival views on liberal democracy though they will not be discussed here, and these are pluralistic, elitist, corporatist etc. Liberal democracy is defined as an "indirect and representative form of democracy". Heywood further postulates that liberal democracy "is based on competition and electoral choice". Zimbabwean literature of the decade from year 2000 has seen the concept of a country in a crisis taking a centre stage.

2.5 The Zimbabwean Crisis

The Zimbabwean crisis for this study refers to a situation during the period between 1999 and 2010. It is important to note that scholars (Sachikonye, 2011:177; Gwemende; 2010:12; Tarisayi, 2008:17; Ranger, 2005:14; Zeilig, 2002:1) are not in agreement about when the Zimbabwean crisis began. However, this study utilises Kupe's (2005:144) dating which locates the genesis of the crisis to the year 2000. This researcher is, however, aware of other viewpoints that date the genesis of the Zimbabwean crisis to the late 1990s (Gwemende, 2010:12; Tarisayi, 2008:17). Among others, the Zimbabwean crisis is characterised by the contested land reform programme, contested elections, sanctions or restrictive measures, rise and closure of independent media, rise of alternative diaspora media, political violence, and freefall of the country's economy, high unemployment levels and contested transitional government. Mare (2010:26) writing on the Zimbabwean crisis in the context of economic decline, observes that "Zimbabwe has been caged in an economic recession since 2000 characterised by record unemployment rates, inflation figures, foreign currency shortages, ballooning domestic and foreign debts and shortages of the local currency". It is this crisis that at its height in 2008 forced the country's political protagonists (ZANU PF and two MDC formations) to agree to form a coalition government that would seek to tackle economic, political and social collapse (CISOMM, 2010:3).

This study takes place in the context of a complex contested political transition in Zimbabwe as the period 2008 saw the country's two rival parties (MDC-T and ZANU PF) and the smaller

MDC forming an inclusive government. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986:6) define political transition as “the interval between one political regime and another”. Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity (GNU) came into being after the country's disputed Presidential elections of June 2008. O'Donnell and Schmitter further point out that transitions are by nature arduously contested and actors struggle to satisfy their immediate interests and those they purport to represent and fighting for enactment of rules and procedures of “whose configuration will determine likely winners and losers in future”. The media is one such terrain where contestations over future power configurations are fought. Hence, this research sought to establish the way in which *The Zimbabwean* newspaper represented this transitional period in Zimbabwe's contemporary politics. Next to be discussed are studies that have been conducted on the political role of the media and diaspora media.

2.6 Political role of the diasporic media

Independent[the researcher employed opening and closing inverted commas to demonstrate the contestation over what is regarded as independent] media in repressive regimes is argued to proactively play an oppositional role (Moyo, 2005:113). Moyo further observes that “where opposition political parties are weak or non-existent owing to state repression, the ‘independent’ press can occupy that role of opposition”. Moyo in support of the above argument observes that

“[i]n Zimbabwe, the ‘independent’ press have played this role, first by strongly opposing the one-party state during the late 80s and early 90s, and secondly, by acting as the ‘voice of the voiceless’ throughout the 90s”.

Moyo (2005:113) notes that in the Zimbabwean context, “*The Daily News* came at a time when opposition forces were in disarray, despite growing agitation for reform from the grassroots” adding that it can be argued that in many ways *The Daily News* assumed the role of coordinating those disparate voices. Moyo's submissions, even though dealing with Zimbabwe's internal dynamics, gives a useful background to the political role of media in Zimbabwe, a role that can be argued to have been carried over by the diaspora media when *The Daily News* was closed down.

The political role of diaspora media has received much scholarly attention (Skjerdal, 2011:1; Storck, 2011:4; Moyo, 2010:12; Coyne & Leesen, 2009:3; Yaqoob, 2009:1; Ndlela, 2007:68; Bernal, 2006:161; Moyo, 2005:114; Newland, 2004:3; Robinson, 2002:2; Fineman, 1995:58; Wanning, 1963:65). The media, in political contestation is used as a tool for outwitting political opponents. This role is increasingly becoming clear as political actors and media actors converge as argued by Yaqoob (2009:1) noting that,

“in the second half of the 20th century, newspapers gained direct or indirect association with political parties due to which different press barons developed who were unable to impose a uniform view of the society because they shared different political perspectives”.

Yaqoob further notes that this period also saw the involvement of media in politics as more media personalities entered into political life. On the role of social media in political life, Storck (2011:4) postulates that “[s]ome political pundits, academics and journalists have embraced social media as an undeniable force for good”. Storck adds that in the contemporary politics ‘democracy is just a tweet away’ or as the oft quoted Egyptian Google Executive Wael Ghonim famously said: “if you want to liberate a society, just give them internet”. Internet and social media is argued to be an effective weapon for the weak and disenfranchised, especially in countries with dictatorships (Storck, 2011:4). It is, however, important to note that this researcher is specifically focusing on traditional media such as print, online and electronic media and not social media that are largely anchored on citizen journalism.

Due to the country’s complex legislative regime and attempts to stifle dissenting voices, it has been argued that the independent and alternative diaspora media in Zimbabwe have deliberately made a decision to give a voice to the opposition and pro-democracy forces in the country (Moyo, 2005:114). The term pro-democracy in this context is used to refer to anti-ZANU PF social and political movements. ‘Independent’ media in this study is used loosely to refer to media viewed to be anti-government and under the ownership of people viewed to be anti-Mugabe and anti-ZANU PF, while alternative media is used to refer to diaspora media.

Qualifying the role played by “independent” and alternative media, Moyo (2005:114) notes that “[i]t has even been suggested that without *The Daily News*, the opposition forces in the country could not have made the strides they did since 1999”. Founding MDC Secretary-General, Professor Welshman Ncube, for example, has argued that the closure of *The Daily News* was a direct attack on the MDC and the opposition forces, noting that

“the attack on *The Daily News* is principally an attack on the MDC, for the simple reason that if you remove *The Daily News* as a source of news, you have literally made it impossible for the opposition’s voice to be heard by the mass of people” (Moyo, 2005:114).

In some instances the media plays the role of facilitating power relations through deliberate framing of news. Coyne and Leesen (2009:3), buttressing the political role of the media postulate that following the broadcast of the Montesinos-Kouri video dubbed as vladivideos that led to the downfall of Peru’s Alberto Fujimori regime and the end of Montesinos’s reign as 1-3 chief of the SIN, the media has come to be arguably known for playing a critical role in political processes. Moyo (2010:12), augmenting the above point, but writing on pre- and post-independence governments in Zimbabwe, posits that the ruling elite have always used broadcasting as a tool for political control and manipulation of the masses. Moyo adds that

“[i]n the name of ‘national interest’, ‘national security’, and ‘national sovereignty’, broadcasting, from Rhodesia to Zimbabwe, has been characterised by two salient features: first, its *legal* status as a state monopoly, and secondly, its location under the Ministry of Information which rendered it a *political* tool in the hands of the government of the day”.

Coyne and Leesen (2009:3) and Moyo’s (2010:12) assertions demonstrate the influence media has on political life.

The media plays a crucial role in political life through agenda-setting and image-making. Yaqoob (2009:1), supporting the above proposition, notes that “[i]n contemporary times, the media is considered as a primary organ of political life and is believed to be a medium with centralised control over image making”. Voltmer (2012:137) observes that over the past decades scholars and policymakers alike have become aware of the crucial role of the media in processes of democratisation and consolidation. Voltmer further critiquing the political role of the media notes that “like political institutions, the media in many new democracies often seem to lack the qualities that would qualify them for playing a key role in promoting accountability and inclusive politics”. On limitations of the media, Voltmer (2012:137) notes that the media are frequently criticised for “remaining too close to political power holders to be able to act as effective watch-dogs”. Voltmer adds that political reporting is regarded as too opinionated to provide balanced gate-keeping, while commercial pressures on news coverage often encourage and over-emphasise the trivial and popular at the expense of serious and sustained attention to international affairs and complex issues on the policy agenda.

Another political role of the media is facilitating national cohesion. Defending this argument, Ndlela (2007:68), writing on public service broadcasting, posits that “at the core of the public service broadcasting model was a cultural mission: to facilitate nation-building efforts, to build a common culture, to provide information, education and entertainment to the citizens”. Melber (2004:8), writing on the state of media in Southern Africa, cited Zimbabwe Information Minister Professor Jonathan Moyo who captures the role of the media in post-colonial Zimbabwe observing that

“it is important to us in information to realise the critical role of the media in keeping the story of the liberation struggle alive because the majority of the people in our countries are increasingly young people who are not familiar with the story of the liberation struggle”.

As Melber states, the role of the media in a post-liberation government in independent Africa are to guard the liberation legacy and ensure the narrative of anti-colonialism does not die.

Moyo (2010:23) has also done an analysis of the re-emergence of clandestine radio in post-independence Zimbabwe, and how it has become an important tool for disseminating alternative viewpoints in an environment where democratic communicative space is restricted. Moyo further argues that,

“by suppressing clandestine radio through jamming signals and intimidating listeners, the government has inadvertently raised people's curiosity and made these stations more visible and more popular than they otherwise would have been”.

Moyo's research provides a workable base for this study though not providing a conclusive one considering the different political dynamics existing during the period under investigation and the period researched by the cited scholars.

The political role of diasporic media in Zimbabwe's political life traces back to the liberation wartime. Moisa *et al* (1990:2), discussing diaspora media in pre-independence Zimbabwe, observe that the VOZ (*Voice of Zimbabwe*- a Zimbabwe African National Union radio station) played the role of informing and explaining to Zimbabweans their plight. Moisa *et al* further assert that “the oppression that Africans were subjected to was informed by colonial legacy and racism that became the backbone of Smith and his predecessor's agenda”. Mbanga (2008:79), on the post-2000 diaspora media, notes that “more than 100 different websites (including online-newspapers such as *ZimOnline* with its newsroom based in South Africa) are run by Zimbabweans in the diaspora”. Mbanga further observes that the role of these platforms is mainly to engage political conversations. Peel (2008:391) notes that the political role of the diaspora media has been that of providing critical analysis of the political developments unfolding in Zimbabwe. Kuhlmann (2010:13) notes that “through the internet, this group has built up transnational networks of political activism discussing the politics of the homeland and spanning Britain, South Africa, the USA and Zimbabwe”.

Political activism and advocacy is also another role arguably played by diaspora media (Batist, 2010:1). Batist further posits that some media houses and journalists in diaspora have defined

their role as that of news reporting and activism, a view that received scholarly attention from Skjerdal (2011:1) when writing on Ethiopian diaspora media. Zimbabwe's *Short Wave Radio* (SW Radio) is one such example where journalists, because of being part of the victims of the Zimbabwean crisis, have become both journalists and activists. Moyo (2007:81) conducted a research study that is closely related to this investigation when he studied the alternative media, diasporas and the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis. However, Moyo discusses the use of the new media, especially internet, to answer to the state repression of the mass media. The scholar further studies the value of these, often foreign-based, journalistic websites in relation to state repression as reflected in this article.

In some instances, media institutions operating in diaspora forgo journalistic ethics under the guise of 'fighting the struggle' and a repressive regime. On this issue, Skjerdal (2011:1) discusses how the Ethiopian websites relate to recognised journalistic ideals and how the editors view themselves in regard to journalistic professionalism. It is argued that the journalistic ideals of the diaspora media must be understood in the context of particular political conditions in homeland Ethiopia. These websites according to Skjerdal (2011:1) are "highly politicized" with the diaspora websites displaying "a marked critical attitude towards the Ethiopian government through an activist journalism approach", an allegation that is equally leveled against Zimbabwe's diaspora media that it equally plays the role of political activism targeted against the ZANU PF regime (Batist, 2010:1). Skjerdal (2011:1) also notes that "whilst undeniably an act of generosity towards 'distant strangers', actions such as these also represent a much more complex reality – they are an outcome of a complex set of relations and processes", in which the ethical choices of individuals become bound up with nationalist ideologies, geopolitical questions and, crucially, knowledge and understanding of distant events. Writing on the Zimbabwe context Kruger (in Mare, 2010:32) observes that challenges of media operations have seen even ethical bodies such as Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) playing an activist role "set up deliberately to oppose state regulation, than a channel for complaints". This, Mare (2010:32) argues, can be understood in an extremely polarised environment. Employing Mare's analysis, it can be understood, though not necessarily agreed, when diaspora media plays an activist role. Next to be discussed is the role of media in a democracy.

2.7 The Role of Media in a Democracy

Conceptually, it can be argued that Zimbabwe's transition and political transition in general refer to evolution from authoritarian/dictatorial rule to democratic rule, hence the need to discuss the role of media in democracy. The role of media in democracy and press freedom has received academic attention (Voltmer, 2012:137; Sesanti, 2011:70; Fourie, 2007:189; Day, 2006:37; McQuail, 2005:170; Moyo, 2005: 110; Melber,2004:8; Jallow, 2004: 30; Moyo, 2004:12; Diamond, 2002: 21; Saurombe, 2001:10; Rønning & Kupe, 2000:138; Jacobowicz, 1998:9; Siebert *et al*, 1963:100).

Moyo (2005:110) postulates that “[i]t has become widely accepted that the media are central to modern democracy as primary sources of information”. Moyo further elucidates that

“[t]his is because democracy as a political system requires an informed citizenry that is capable of participating effectively in public debate and in the overall political process where they have to make informed decisions”.

Consequently, the exchange and free flow of information and the ability of citizens to have equal access to sources of information as well as equal opportunities to participate in political debates have been considered key elements of democracy (Moyo, 2005:111). Moyo (2005b:57) notes that “as everywhere else, African journalists perform a major role in terms of citizenship, entertainment and democratic processes in their countries”. Voltmer (2012:3) posits that, “[w]ithout reliable information, it would be impossible for citizens to use their power effectively at election time, nor would they be aware of the problems and issues that need active consideration beyond voting”.

Research has increasingly drawn attention to the importance of an active and supportive citizenry in the process of democratic consolidation (Voltmer, 2012:2). Voltmer adds that “[t]he lack of a vibrant civil society in many new democracies has been linked to the persisting problems of corruption and ineffective governance in these countries”. The media are widely seen as a

'Fourth Estate' which locates the media as an institution providing a system of checks and balances to control political officials and prevent misuses of power (Voltmer, 2012:3). Assigning these democratic roles to the media is based on the expectations that the media act in the public interest and are accountable to the public. Taking part in the discourse of the role the media plays in a democracy *and also democratic transition* [researcher's emphasis] Fourie (2007:188) observes that the media has the following functions:

- to inform about political developments;
- to guide public opinion about political decisions;
- to express different views about political developments and decisions;
- to criticise political developments and decisions.

Fourie's submissions suggest the robust role the media should play in political life and democratic state. Democracy requires not only free, fair, and competitive elections, but also the freedoms that make them truly meaningful, alternative sources of information, and institutions to ensure that government policies depend on the votes and preferences of citizens (Diamond, 2002:21). However, measuring democracy through the barometer of electoral participation has in recent history proven to be insufficient. In different ways, and to varying degrees, polities across much of Africa, post-communist Eurasia, Asia, and Latin America combined democratic rules (holding elections consistently) with authoritarian governance (the use of brute force and state machinery) during the 1990s (Levitsky & Way, 2002:51). More recently, the tendency to classify regimes as democratic simply because they have multiparty elections with some degree of competition and uncertainty has been challenged (Diamond, 2002:23). It is imperative to note as argued by Voltmer (2012:2) that

“[t]he chances for successful watchdog journalism are even more restricted in new democracies where the functional interdependence between politicians and journalists is still overshadowed by the legacy of suppression and censorship during the old regime”.

Melber (2004:7) postulates that media analyses focusing on African realities today tend to emphasise the increasingly crucial, strategically and politically relevant role of the traditional media and of late also other electronic communication in democratisation processes towards more publicly pluralistic societies. Thus, as Saurombe (2001:10) argues “the media, especially public service broadcasters have a key role to play in development and in enhancing public dialogue”, a critical component of any democracy, a view that stems from Habermas’ (1989:303) concept of the public sphere. Habermas intimates that due to media’s role as agents for social control, they play emancipator role by enhancing public debate on pertinent issues that partly helps states in promotion of good governance.

Jallow (2004:30) postulates that “[g]ood governance is not only about majorities; it involves the protection of all, including minorities such as those in the opposition”. Jallow adds that “the right to free speech and dissent rests on the existence of an independent private media – both in print and on the radio, given literacy levels in Africa”. The establishment of independent civil society organisations and the creation of the democratic space for them to operate effectively must be nurtured to diffuse the over-centralisation of power and authority, empower the ordinary citizen and thereby reduce the risks of abuse of centralised authority (Jallow, 2004:30). However, in post-colonial Africa media have been employed to entrench liberation governments (Melber, 2004:8). Moyo (2004:18) notes that “[i]n the final analysis, the mass media in any country is an instrument of the dominant social forces in that particular country”. Moyo further posits that “[i]n independent Zimbabwe, the formerly oppressed masses have now become the dominant social force”. Moyo adds that “[t]he media should reflect their (formerly oppressed masses) wishes, and help them consolidate their political gains as a result of achieving national independence”.

Melber (2004:9) supporting Moyo’s argument notes that President Mugabe has noted that

“previously we said our main enemy is the financial sector but the enemy is the media who use the pen to lie about this country. Such reporters are terrorists and the position on how to deal with terrorists is to subject them to the laws of Zimbabwe.”

Kupe and Rønning (2000:138) observe that “[t]he African media carry contradictions which have roots in the colonial period, when newspapers and broadcasting mainly served the needs of the colonial administrators”. Kupe and Rønning add that “[t]hese media, together with other colonial social and cultural institutions, constituted a colonial public sphere”. Along these lines Moyo (2004:13) argues that

“[t]he mass media of communication were developed in African and other colonies primarily to serve the interests of the settlers by helping them keep in touch with the motherland. Thus the media developed in most of Africa primarily as tools of European imperialism.”

The period of European imperialism saw the emergence of anti-colonial media. This means, therefore, that the colonial media could not be representative enough but serve interests of the few governing elite. This philosophy of media representing the ruling elite is argued to have been inherited by the governing forces in independent Zimbabwe.

Due to the heterogeneous nature of societies under which media operates, Sesanti (2008:365) discussing the role of media in multicultural societies, posits that it (the media) should serve as the screens on which diverse images can be projected. Sesanti adds that “[t]he media should enrich public life by promoting the notion that public dialogue matters, and by providing spaces where people can both see parts of their experiences that they do not encounter in their day-to-day lives”, issues at the core of the role of the media in democracy. Fourie (2007:189) notes that in a democracy media content should reflect social plurality meaning the “acknowledgement of political, social, cultural and economic differences between people and groups in a society”. However, it seems Sesanti’s (2008:365) submissions in post-colonial Africa have been missed. Rønning and Kupe (2000:138) note that “[a]t independence, the media then were linked either to the inheritance of an authoritarian colonial state or to a liberation movement with a political agenda that often implied a contradictory attitude to fundamental democratic values”.

Demonstrating the challenges faced by the independent Zimbabwean government in adopting democracy and media freedom, Rønning and Kupe (2000:138) postulate that

“[o]n the one hand the movements professed and had fought for liberation and independence and egalitarian and democratic ideals, but on the other they had often done this on the basis of at least partly authoritarian Marxist ideologies uncritically inspired by Eastern Europe, China or North Korea. In few places was this contradiction clearer than in Zimbabwe.”

It is this contradiction the Zimbabwean government under the guise of national interest, national cohesion and sovereignty employs the state media for power retention and propaganda purposes, thereby neglecting the democratic role of the media, that of promoting media plurality. Fourie (2007:189) postulates that media pluralism means:

- the acknowledgement of social plurality
- the reflection thereof in diversity of media content
- the existence of different media: various newspapers, radio stations, television stations magazines, films and so on, catering for different groups within a society

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed a literature review of diaspora media communities. This researcher sought to bring to the fore studies conducted on the political role of diaspora communities and diaspora media. This researcher discussed terms such as politics, democracy, transition, and Zimbabwean crisis without which understanding of this chapter would have made little sense. This study gave a useful but not conclusive presentation on the Zimbabwean crisis from 2000 to 2010 with the aim of contextualising the study that focuses on the period 2008-2010. The next chapter addresses the theoretic framework employed for this study, the Social Responsibility Theory.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework for the study on the political role of the diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis with special reference to *The Zimbabwean* newspaper. This researcher commences by defining theory and normative theory before giving consideration to the Social Responsibility Theory which is the selected theoretical framework for this study.

3.2 Theory defined

Theory is defined as a “set of statements asserting relationships among classes of variables” (Bowers & Courtright, 1984:13). Baran and Davis (2011:11) observe that these could be “stories about how and why events occur”. The purpose of theory is to explain, comprehend and interpret phenomena, and put forward propositions suggesting why such phenomena occur in the manner they do (Fourie, 2007:103). The role of theory seeks to explain how and why events take place. It is imperative to note that there are different theories such as critical media theories, political economy and normative theories. However, a normative theory is the focus for this study.

3.3 Normative Theory

Heywood (2002:427) defines normative as “[t]he prescription of values and standards of conduct; what ‘should be’ rather than what ‘is’ ”. Williams (2003:17) observes that normative theories “shape expectations placed on the media by other social agents as well as their own audiences”. Williams’s observations demonstrate that society has an inherent view on how the media should operate. McQuail (2010:162) notes that normative theories “refer to the ideals of

right and responsibility that underlie these expectations of benefit from the media to individuals and society”. It is in attempting to understand the role played by the diaspora media through the Social Responsibility Theory lens that this study was conducted.

Employing the normative theory assisted this researcher in responding to the political role of the diaspora media in mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis. The Social Responsibility Theory was chosen as it raises issues of media operations, ethics, (de)regulation and sponsorship influence. Considering that successive ZANU PF governments have sought to (re)define the role of journalism in Zimbabwe and demand accountability from journalism practitioners, it is important to investigate how *The Zimbabwean* newspaper has responded especially during the Global Political Agreement period. Given the conditions under which the media operated in Zimbabwe during the research period, Social Responsibility Theory, which is discussed next, was considered the most suitable tool in examining and trying to understand the political role of the diaspora media considering a legal ambiguity under which they (diaspora media) operated during this research period

3.4 Social Responsibility Theory

The Social Responsibility Theory is an important theoretical framework through which the media in Zimbabwe’s complex politics of transition can be examined and understood considering that the legislative regime has been revised to either ‘promote’ objective reporting or ‘stifle dissent’ in the context of the terrain of power dynamics in the country’s contested transition (Ndlela, 2007: 80) . Both private and public media in Zimbabwe are viewed as sensational and also driven by the political economy structures that consequently shape editorial policy, undermining media ethics chiefly due to an arguably ‘repressive’ media legislative regime (Mbanga, 2008:76; Kupe, 2007:144; Moyo, 2007:1; Ranger, 2005:14), issues at the core of the Social Responsibility Theory.

The Zimbabwean crisis in the context discussed earlier, has affected media in a way that has (re)defined media ethics, law and ownership. Moyo (2005:113), elucidating this point as has been referred to in the previous chapter, notes that “[i]t has been suggested that in countries

where opposition political parties are weak or non-existent owing to state repression, the ‘independent’ press can occupy that role of opposition”. Moyo’s argument is useful especially in understanding the media dynamics during Zimbabwe’s complex crisis. In this context, the term ‘independent’ is understood to mean free from state interference or censorship. Of interest are issues of media ethics, law and ownership as they are addressed in the Social Responsibility Theory.

Compagnon (2011:131) postulates that “ZANU PF intended to discipline the media through creation of media council and promotion of smart ‘patriotic’ journalism”, the official excuse being the need to bring an element of ethics into Zimbabwean journalism. Responding to the repressive legislative regime, ZANU PF’s chairperson of Parliamentary Legal Committee, Eddison Zvobgo, described the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) , one of the media laws enacted to ‘stifle’ freedom of the press, as “the most calculated and determined assault on our constitutional liberties in 20 years ”, (Compagnon, 2011:131).

However, demonstrating divergence of views even within the ruling party, Chen Chimtengwende (Zimbabwe’s former Minister of Information) in support of AIPPA said the Ministry of Information had taken some strict measures in overseeing operations of the media, arguing “the independent media goes as far as deliberately telling lies which tarnish and sabotage the economy. To us what they are doing is tantamount to treason” (Curran & Jin Park, 2005:152). Consequently this repressive legislative regime affected operations of the private media, tilted news gathering and dissemination techniques leading to some senior journalists to relocate to friendly countries to continue practice. It is within this empirical vista that this researcher sought to analyse the role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper through the Social Responsibility theoretical framework.

The Social Responsibility Theory emerged in the post Second World War era following debates about the manipulation of the media (McQuail, 2005:170). It came into being following the Hutchins Commission. The Hutchins Commission conducted its survey between 1942 and 1947. The Hutchins Commission was constituted in the United States of America to look at issues of media ethics and respect of journalistic values (McQuail, 2005: 173). McQuail (2005:170) adds

that Social Responsibility Theory came into being as a response to widespread criticism leveled against the American newspaper press due to sensationalism, political imbalance and monopoly tendencies. The Commission, McQuail further adds, “coined the notion of Social Responsibility and named key journalistic standards that the press should seek to maintain”. Some of the standards named were the provision of full, truthful, comprehensive and intelligent account of the day’s events in a context which gives them meaning.

This is a period of the Second World War when countries, especially in Europe, used the media as a propaganda tool. Coming out of a war meant that government control and influence on journalism and media would be critical in ensuring national solidarity. This phase is defined as public service media phase when media policy was dominated by socio-political concerns. In this paradigmatic phase, lasting until 1990, the ideal of public service broadcasting was at its height, notably in Western Europe (Cuilenberg & McQuail, 2003: 181).

The issue of representation is one tenet of the Social Responsibility Theory. McQuail (2005:170) notes that the media “should serve as a forum for exchange of comment and criticism and carrier of public expression”. Hence, the Social Responsibility Theory calls for a true reflection of heterogeneous society in the media landscape. Due to ethical considerations, among other issues, media institutions were also pressured through proposed government regulatory systems to set up their own institutions meant to promote objective journalism at the same time countering government proposed regulatory frameworks. Development of professionalism in journalism through associations, press councils and drawing up of code of ethics (which is discussed below) emerged after the Commission’s findings that saw media as highly sensational and driven by commercial interests (McQuail, 2010:172). Journalistic code of ethics is discussed next.

3.4.1 Journalistic Code of Ethics

McQuail (2010:172) posits that “[a] journalist’s code of ethics refers to a set of principles of professional conduct that are adopted and controlled by journalists themselves”. This refers to self regulation of the media. It is important to state that the term ethics has often been confused with the term morals (Day, 2006:3). However, as Day explains “[m]oral is derived from the

Latin words *mos*, *moris*, meaning (among other things) way of life or conduct, while ethics is derived from the Greek *ethos*, meaning custom, usage, or character” . Day adds that ethics is “often thought of as a rational process of applying established principles when two moral obligations collide”. One of the recommendations of the Social Responsibility Theory was focus on promotion of journalistic ethics in practice. McQuail (2010:173) cites the following as the most frequently found ethics in journalism codes:

- Truthfulness of information
- Clarity of information
- Defence of the public’s rights
- Responsibilities in forming public opinion
- Standards of gathering and presenting information
- Respecting the integrity of sources

Closely related to the issue of journalistic code of ethics is the issue of an informed citizenry that has its root arguments in the Age of Enlightenment which is discussed next.

3.4.2 Age of Enlightenment

One of the theoretical pillars of the Social Responsibility Theory is that it questions the rationality of humankind as propagated by the libertarian theoreticians (Jacubowicz, 1998:9). The rationality of men was questioned following the genesis of ‘The Age of Enlightenment’. The age of enlightenment refers to an elite movement of the 18th century Europe that celebrated rationality of men and society (Mclean & McMillan, 2009:170). Mclean and McMillan define enlightenment as “emancipation of the human consciousness from an immature state of ignorance and error”. Supporting the above point Jakubowicz (1998:9) notes that “[t]he cornerstone of political order is a social conception of the good and a common understanding of the moral subjects”. Jacubowicz further points that news becomes an agent of community formation while the goal of reporting being active citizenship. However, citizens can only be active to the extent of their liberation from ignorance (Jacubowicz, 1998:9). The Social

Responsibility Theory places importance on an active citizenry. Journalists engage in a process of gathering and dissemination of information and it is this process that helps in creating an informed citizenry.

Proponents of Enlightenment, therefore, locate societal ignorance as a tool that can be (ab)used by those with economic power to drive the media and political agenda. Mclean and McMillan (2009:170) postulate that enlightenment is the most important movement of ideas that sought to mobilise the power of reason so as to reform society and advance knowledge. The Social Responsibility Theory recognises power relations in terms of media ownership and messages which have a bearing to dissemination.

The Social Responsibility Theory doubts that human beings are rational and can make decisions in the marketplace of ideas. Siebert *et al* (1963:100) posit that Social Responsibility Theory doubted the rationality of men arguing that “[u]nder the social responsibility theory, man is not viewed so much as irrational as lethargic. He/She is capable of using his/her reason, but he/she is loath to do so”. Siebert *et al* conclude that “[c]onsequently, he/she is easy prey to demagogues, advertising pitchmen, and others who would manipulate him/her for selfish ends”. Klaehn (2009: 43-44) notes that powerful elites interlock with dominant media and set the agenda on how lower tier media should report consequently establishing cultural hegemonic views. The Social Responsibility Theory holds the view that it is important for journalists to act in a responsible manner that demonstrates the diversity of the society and views, not only representing elite interests (Siebert *et al*, 1963:100). The need to have responsible journalism also coincided with the communication revolution discussed next.

3.4.3 Communication Revolution

Technology that had developed during wartime played a critical role in determining news and media outlets operations just after the Second World War (Idriss & Howard, 2006:1). This period saw the advent of television, satellite television and the introduction of digital media. The emerging media platforms posed challenges to regulation, hence the call for responsible journalism as an alternative to state intervention. One of the intervention mechanisms by

governments was promotion of public service media (Cuilenberg & McQuail, 2003:181). It is in this evolving media landscape that the media was called upon to be more responsible and observe journalistic ethics. This led to Siebert *et al* (1963:6) to postulate that the Social Responsibility Theory was grounded in communication revolution. This study takes place at a time when communication revolution has advanced beyond satellite television to cyber newspapers, cyber radios and cyber television making it nearly impossible for regulation instruments, hence the need to buttress the notion of social responsibility. The communication revolution also played a critical role in liberal rethinking, a concept discussed next.

3.4.4 Liberal Rethinking

As Day (2006:37) explains, “[t]he idea of social responsibility has developed as a counterpoint to libertarianism”. The Social Responsibility Theory model developed after revision of the libertarian model that had ‘failed’ to bring a marketplace of ideas but had promoted elite interests (Jakubowicz, 1998:9). Negrine (1994:25) posits that “social responsibility was born out of the shortcomings of the libertarian model which identified the freedom to publish with individual property rights of purchases and sale of newspapers”, without recognising that the legal framework of property rights protected property owners, including against accountability to news consumers. Hence, the libertarian model failed to appreciate that the multiplicity of media outlets did not necessarily translate to representation and diversity of all social publics. Due to the shortcomings presented by economic disparities in the society it remains the duty of a journalist not only to represent elite interests but even views of those without economic power thereby becoming socially ‘responsible’.

The advent of the Social Responsibility Theory model coincided with liberal re-thinking. The libertarian model had anticipated that by promoting self regulation and having multiplicity of media outlets that was going to promote a more responsible and balanced media. According to McQuail (2002:184), the emergence of Social Responsibility Theory was welcomed by the media as it viewed the nation-states to be moving towards government control due to its liberal re-thinking. This theory was also welcomed as it placed attention on self regulation rather than government regulation. Nerone (2002:184) postulates that Social Responsibility proposes that

the media take it upon themselves to elevate their standards, providing the citizens with the sort of raw material and disinterested guidance they need to govern themselves. This researcher discusses limitations of media as a marketplace next.

3.4.5 Limitations of Media as a Marketplace

Social Responsibility Theory was also propounded after realising challenges faced by small media units, largely due to economic imperative, hence, as Siebert *et al* (1963:4) note, “the press, as in the old authoritarian days, [was] falling into hands of a powerful few”. Siebert *et al* further point out that it was “[n]o longer easy for the press to be a free market place of ideas” due to media control. Consequently the Hutchins Commission asserted that “protection against the government is not now enough to guarantee that a man who has something to say shall have a chance to say it”. Siebert *et al* add that “[t]he owners and managers of the press determine which persons, which facts, which versions of these facts, shall reach the public”. Hence, the Social Responsibility Theory sought to redress imbalances and fallacies created by the plurality propositions of the libertarian model.

Besides aspects of limited government interference, Social Responsibility has been accepted by journalists because of its appealing name. McQuail (2002:184) posits that social responsibility has also been welcomed from journalists’ perspective as they viewed responsibility appeals at common sense level. Siebert *et al* (1963:5), point out that “the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible”, as a way of ensuring that diverse sides are given equal prominence as to allow audiences to make informed decisions and opinions about their society. This is referred to as fairness in journalistic standards. This aspect is viewed as one of the pillars of a democratic society, a concept discussed next.

3.4.6 Media and Democratic Society

Fourie (2007:194) notes that Social Responsibility Theory is based on the premise that media “should support democratic political principles” and that the media have “an obligation to create a forum for different viewpoints”. Fourie adds that the media’s independence should be

“emphasised in relation to their responsibility towards society” and that “the media should meet certain standards”. Emphasising the role of the media in supporting democracy, Day (2006:83) notes that “[d]emocracy depends on an informed citizenry, one that approaches the political and economic marketplace armed with the knowledge that inspires studious deliberation”. Day further posits that the media are primary conduits of information flow and if they fail to provide truthful, accurate and meaningful information they deprive citizenry of intellectual nourishment necessary for rational decision making. Siebert *et al* (1963:5) point out that for media to fulfill this role there should be regulatory bodies independent of the government which should advance a balanced and impartial news presentation.

The Social Responsibility Theory model articulates that the media should fulfill roles of Media ownership as a public trust, giving a truthful, accurate and fair account with objectivity and relevancy (McQuail, 2005:172). The concept of truth, objectivity, fairness and accuracy shall be discussed next in as far as they relate to the Social Responsibility Theory and the Zimbabwean media landscape.

3.4.7 Truth, objectivity, fairness and accuracy

Kruger (2004:12) notes that truth-telling is vital in journalism and goes hand in hand with two sub-themes of accuracy and fairness, concepts discussed here. Truth-telling has direct consequences to the news organisation’s credibility. Kruger (2004:77) postulates that the notion of truth has limitations, citing the former *Sunday Tribune* editor, Barney Mthombeni when he observes that “[t]here is no newspaper that does not have its own point of view, we speak from different angles and we see things differently”. The notion of seeing things differently may also refer to perceptions of news outlets’ ownership seen through editorial policy. Downing, McQuail, Schlelinger and Wartella (2004:22) note that the press obligation to truth is a standard part of its rhetoric but living up to the ideal is virtually impossible, even for those who idolise it. Truth is closely linked to objectivity, a concept discussed next.

Objectivity is also one of journalistic principles idolised but not easy to practice especially considering that journalists are social beings who are also affected by events affecting the rest of

the society though journalists like to portray themselves as “simply reflecting an image of society” (Kruger, 2004:76). However, it is agreed in journalism circles that “even if objectivity is unattainable, it remains an ideal to strive for” (Kruger, 2004:77). Objectivity addresses issues of bias, feelings, processing and dissemination of information. McQuail (2010:200) notes that “[o]bjectivity is a particular form of media practice and also a particular attitude to the task of information collection, processing and dissemination”.

McQuail (2010:174) postulates that “there is broad international consensus that standards of truth and objectivity should be central values of journalism”. McQuail adds that “[t]he predominant emphasis nearly everywhere is on standards of objective (neutral), independent and informative (factually correct) journalism”. Schudson (2001:1) posits that “[o]bjectivity is at once a moral ideal, a set of reporting and editing practices, and an observable pattern of news writing”. Schudson (2001:2) notes that “[t]he value of objectivity is upheld specifically against partisan journalism in which newspapers are the declared allies or agents of political parties and their reporting of news is an element of partisan struggle”. The concept of objectivity is closely linked to fairness, a concept to be discussed next.

Fairness means that journalists covering a story must remember there are usually two sides – and often more – to most issues, and that those differing viewpoints should be given roughly equal space in any news story” (Kruger, 2004:77). Retief (2010:83) posits that “[f]airness first and foremost has to do with proper balance and context”. This requires journalists to be neutral or independent. Heywood (2002:427) defines neutrality as “[t]he absence of partisanship or commitment; a refusal to ‘take sides’”. Simmons (1978:9) notes that the doctrine of fairness was the name given to the concept by the Federal Communications Commission as to promote the broadcast of controversial news information and also giving equal prominence to opposing views. Simmons (1978:9) observes that “discussion of public issues be presented on broadcast stations, and that each side of those issues be given fair coverage”. Day (2006:19) notes that fairness is an ethical judgment involving the clash of competing principles generally arising in rather untidy situations. Illustrating challenges posed by fairness, Retief (2010:83) argues that “[p]eople involved in the news do not really want fairness” insisting “they want ‘favour, exemption, and protection from public notice’ ”. Next to be discussed is the concept of accuracy.

Retief (2010:49) observes that “[a]ccuracy can be achieved only if relevant facts are put into the proper context”. Retief adds that there are several reasons why inaccurate reporting should be avoided as it can cause harm, affects rational decision making, and affects media integrity. Day (2006:84) notes that “facts should be verified, that is, they should be based on solid evidence”. Day further notes that “inaccurate, unsubstantiated, or uncorroborated information can undermine the credibility of any journalistic enterprise”. The importance of accuracy was stressed by Mondli Makhanya when he took over at the *Mail & Guardian* noting that “[e]very word, sentence and paragraph we publish will be absolutely true” (Kruger, 2004:58). Day (2006:86) argues that “[w]hile most reporters embrace accurate reporting as a first principle of ethical journalism, time and competitive pressures sometimes compromise the accuracy of news coverage”. Retief (2010:50) in support of Day surmises that “the concept of accuracy is a complex one. To report accurately is indeed much easier said than done”. Despite challenges on accurate reporting, Couldry in (Ward & Wasserman, 2008:67) notes that truth and accuracy are two basic virtues that are “non-negotiable”.

3.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter commenced by defining what it is entailed by normative theory of the media. The researcher went on to discuss social responsibility theory, its origins and chief purpose. The researcher also discussed media’s code of ethics closely embedded to the social responsibility theory . The next chapter deals with research design and methodology for this study.

Chapter Four

Research Design and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology employed in this study. The researcher commences with defining research in broad terms, then research design first and methodology for this study in an attempt to illustrate how this researcher answered the central research question:

What was the political role played by the diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the Global Political Agreement (GPA) period with *The Zimbabwean* newspaper being the case study?

The central research question will assist in answering the following questions that serve as interview questions: Refer to Addendum A. Addendum A has 11 questions, here are 8 questions also found in the addendum.

- Did *The Zimbabwean* newspaper play any political role in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the GPA era?
- What are the main political issues that *The Zimbabwean* profiled during the GPA?
- Was there a shift in the way *The Zimbabwean* reported on its stories post the signing of the GPA?
- How did *The Zimbabwean* represent the person of President Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai during the GPA and their respective parties?
- In the context of political violence, how did *The Zimbabwean* report during the GPA?

- In the context of the constitutional making process, what position did *The Zimbabwean* take and how did the newspaper report?
- In the context of sanctions, how did *The Zimbabwean* report?
- How did *The Zimbabwean* report on the land reform?

4.2 Research Defined

Research is defined as the discovery of answers to questions through the application of scientific and systematic procedures (Keyton, 2010: 7). This means that “research follows procedural traditions that have been tested, validated, confirmed, and accepted by social scientists of many disciplines over time” (Keyton, 2010:13). Keyton (2010:7) notes that “in its basic form, *research* is the process of asking questions and finding answers”. This researcher sought to establish how *The Zimbabwean* mediated Zimbabwe’s complex transition during the GPA.

The GPA, as has been discussed in previous chapters, refers to an agreement entered into by three political protagonists – Movement for Democratic Change formations, then led by Mutambara and Tsvangirai respectively, and ZANU PF, being led by Mugabe, on the 15th of September 2008 (International Crisis Group, 2011:i). Among other deliverables, the GPA addressed a new power sharing regime, called for an end to violence and sanctions, called for free and fair elections, promotion of a free press, and revitalising of the economy. The Government of National Unity (GNU) came as fulfilment of one of the many milestone deliverables of the GPA. Hence, when discussing the GPA the period of study is 2008 September to September 2010.

This researcher investigated whether or not the reportage by *The Zimbabwean* observed journalism ethics as outlined by the Social Responsibility Theory. It is through this process that this researcher sought to understand the political role of the diaspora media in mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis. This researcher employed a scientific approach in investigating the political role of diasporic media. Keyton (2010:13) identifies the following steps when conducting a scientific research.

- Research starts with a question
- The second step involves a researcher using questions to formulate hypothesis (a tentative proposition about relationships between two or more variables)
- The third step involves the researcher using reason and experience to think through hypothesis developed
- The fourth step involves the researcher designing and conducting observation, measurement or experiment
- The fifth step involves data analysis and interpretation in reference to the question

Next, the research design chosen for this study is discussed.

4.3 Research Design

Mouton (2009:55) defines the research design as the “plan or blue print” of the research while research methodology is the actual execution of the work as spelt out in that “plan”. This researcher employed a case study as research design. The case study for this research was *The Zimbabwean*. This newspaper was used as it was the leading newspaper in the Zimbabwean media landscape operating from the diaspora publishing in London and Johannesburg respectively during the research period (Mbangwa, 2008:78).

A case study involves the observation and in-depth analysis of a single system (Du Plooy, 2009: 180). Cassell and Symon (2004:323) define a case study as a detailed investigation containing data collected over a long period of time with the aim of providing an “analysis of the context and processes which illuminate the theoretical issues being studied”. Soy (1997) notes that the “case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research”. Soy adds that “case studies emphasises detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships”. Du Plooy (2009:180) notes that “designs are flexible and

often responsive to the demands and circumstances of the research problem”. Yin (1984:23) defines the case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

However, it is important to note concerns raised by Flyvbjerg (2006:219) when he observes that case studies have been misunderstood in that one “cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development”. Next the researcher discusses the research methodologies employed in this study.

4.4 Research Methodology

There are two main research methodologies used in scientific research, and these are qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research methodology is discussed first.

4.4.1 Qualitative Research

Qualitative research methodology refers to a research that is explanatory, interpretative and constructs qualitative aspects of communication experiences (Du Plooy, 2009:30). Keyton (2010:12) defines qualitative research as generally a research in which the researcher is the primary observer or data collector. Du Plooy (2009:30) notes that qualitative research “is sometimes called field research, critical research, interpretive research, naturalism, ethnography, anti-positivist, and constructionist”. Devine (in Marsh & Stoker, 2002:197) observes that qualitative methods are a generic term that refers to a range of techniques including observation, intensive individual interviews and focus group interviews which seek to understand practices of key informants and to locate them firmly in context. Patton (1990:13) posits that “[q]ualitative methods permit the evaluator to study selected issues in depth and in detail”. Patton adds that the qualitative research methodology allows a researcher to approach “fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis” contributing to the depth, openness, and detail of qualitative inquiry.

Qualitative research rejects the linear model of communication and the neglect of the human experience (Du Plooy, 2009:35). Qualitative research enables one to acquire in-depth information pertaining to a topic under investigation especially in inductive reasoning (Du Plooy, 2009:33; Rossouw, 2003:119). Mouton (2009:148), referring to qualitative research, also notes that it is also known as field or ethnography research because the researcher goes into the field to interview or observe research participant(s) to get a deeper understanding of what is being studied.

In this study, this researcher conducted field research as he conducted face-to-face interviews with interviewees. Keyton (2010:65) posits that qualitative research is useful when studying sensitive topics. This refers to the topic under investigation as diaspora media has been viewed as part and parcel of the regime change agenda by Mugabe's ZANU PF. This study is also sensitive to other players such as the Movement for Democratic Change formations (who have largely received positive coverage), media sponsors and editorial staff as the outcome, if it lands in sponsors' hands might determine financial dynamics, viability and sustainability of the newspaper. Depending on the outcome, if the research ends up in ZANU PF, it might be used against 'pro-democracy' forces and journalists who might have demonstrated in the interviews their explicit biases.

The qualitative research process is more concerned with quality. Findings are analysed in descriptive words. This researcher studied respondents' views and ideas through thematic headlines and codes. Thematic issues categorised as codes were main deliverables of the GPA among those issues were political violence, writing of a new constitution, calling for removal of sanctions and tackling the land issue (GPA, 2008:3-12). Another methodology employed is quantitative research, a concept discussed next.

4.4.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is largely observable or experimental and is based on measurement of quantity or amount (Du Plooy, 2009:22). Quantitative research deals with a large number of people making it easy to draw conclusions or generalisations (Mouton, 2009:152). This methodology is also called empirical, meaning that “researchers study that which can be perceived and classified or measured” (Du Plooy, 2009:15). This methodology is also called positivist as it applies “objective, universal laws when researching human communication” (Du Plooy, 2009:22).

Quantitative research methodology is based on the deductive approach which begins by looking at theory and then goes on to develop a hypothesis on that theory that relates to research, then goes on to test that theory (Greener, 2008:16). As already intimated above, quantitative research foregrounds positivism which postulates that only phenomena which can be known through our senses (smell, hearing, touch, taste, and sight) can produce ‘knowledge’ (Greener, 2008:16). Quantitative communication researchers believe that this kind of research can be ‘value free’. They also believe that their research is objective rather than subjective (normative) statements.

The quantitative approach is often associated with research designs such as surveys or experimental designs. It uses mostly questionnaires, structured observation and physical measurement as techniques to collect data (Mouton, 2009:155). In employing quantitative methodology, the researcher designed a questionnaire that was used as a standard for all five of the identified interviewees. This questionnaire contained one central research question with three sub questions. This researcher sought to ascertain consistence in responses and determining how *The Zimbabwean* represented the GPA era. The questionnaire employed is attached in the addendum. The researcher focused on numerical count of editorials and news stories covered in pursuit of promoting the GPA spirit.

This researcher studied twenty four bulletins of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, with one issue per month over a two-year period. An addition of five bulletins was also studied to ascertain consistency and these were three bulletins before the GPA and two bulletins after the research

period. This brought the number of bulletins studied to twenty nine. Stories were categorised according to themes created along existing political parties during the GPA. Data gathered from newspaper issues studied was analysed and descriptive statistics were displayed graphically in the section dealing with analysis (Henning, Gravett & Rensburg, 2005:102; Rossouw; 2003:118-119). After discussing both qualitative and quantitative methods, it is now relevant to discuss triangulation which entails employing of more than one research method when conducting scientific research.

4.5 Triangulation

The combination of two methods or more is regarded as triangulation (Neuman, 1997:151; Du Plooy, 2009:40). Neuman (1997:151) posits that triangulation entails using deferent types of measures or data collection methods. Du Plooy (2009:40) further notes that triangulation can also be regarded as the use of “two or more theories, types of sampling, investigators, sources of data and /or data-collection methods”. Each method has its own weaknesses and strengths; hence, combining methods assist in enhancing research being undertaken. Du Plooy further postulates that triangulation applies in the following

- Collection of data using different types of sampling
- The analysis of the same data from two or more theoretical and conceptual perspectives (theory triangulation)
- The conduct of observations or analysis of data using more than one investigator (investigator triangulation)

The purpose of triangulation is to test theoretical assumptions in more than one way and increase the credibility, validity and reliability of findings (Du Plooy, 2009:41). Du Plooy (2009:212) notes that the use of triangulation can assist in minimising errors caused by observers’ reactions.

Qualitative research was used as far as analysis of the content was concerned, while quantitative sought to make a numerical comparison and how such stories were covered. This researcher employed both methodologies as to confirm data. Jick (1979:602) notes that “more than one

method should be used in the validation process to ensure that the variance reflected that of the trait and not method". In employing the triangulation methodology - interviews, sampling and content analysis techniques were used; concepts discussed next commencing with interviews.

4.5.1 Interviews

The researcher used interviews in the process of data collection. Du Plooy (2009:196) asserts that "[a]n interview is a transitory relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee". Rossouw (2003:83) notes that the researcher obtains the information through "analysing, observing people's behaviour or conducting interviews and or conducting questionnaires". Interviews were employed as they assist in getting in-depth knowledge of the subject under study (Keyton, 2010:7). There are many interview techniques, and these include structured, semi-structured, standardised, face to face and unstructured. For this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to get clarity on facts and different viewpoints (Greer, 2008: 149).

Semi-structured interviews were employed as to acquire respondents' views, ideas and suggestions on the topic under study. A semi-structured interview "represents characteristics of both a structured questionnaire and characteristics of an in-depth interview" (Du Plooy, 2009: 198; Rossouw, 2003:148). Du Plooy further notes that the in-depth part of the interview allows the interviewer to understand how an interviewee constructs meanings while the structured part allows the interviewer to ask closed-ended questions. The unstructured part of the interview allows an interviewer to create an atmosphere of trust and encourages an interviewee to talk about a particular subject broadly (Du Plooy (2009:199). A Questionnaire with eleven questions was employed for each interview. Questionnaires are economical and they ensure anonymity as same questions are used for all subjects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:257).

Through the use of questionnaires and face-to-face interviews the researcher sought to understand views and opinions from respondents about the operations of *The Zimbabwean* during the period under investigation. The options granted to the interviewees in this research were in accordance with University of Stellenbosch ethical considerations factoring the research adhered to the proposal approved by the same University. Each of the four interviews (Millie

Phiri, Ndumiso Mlilo, Mthulisi Ncube and Mxolisi Ncube) interviewee signed off the consent forms before undertaking the interviewing process in line with requirements of the Stellenbosch University. After discussing interviews attention is next turned to sampling.

4.5.2 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a part of a group under study (Du Plooy, 2009:108; Rossouw, 2003:107). Neuman (1997:201) notes that sampling is a “process of systematically selecting cases for inclusion in a research project”. A sample is defined as a “subset, or portion, of population” studied by researchers to assist in making generalisations (Keyton, 2010:124). Hence, sampling involves a rigorous procedure when selecting units of analysis from a target or accessible population. Rossouw (2003:109) notes that “the aim of sampling is to select cases of the population which will provide us representative information about the population”.

Samples can be divided into two types and these are probability and non probability (Du Plooy, 2009:115; Neuman, 1997:204). On probability samples, Du Plooy (2009:115) notes that it assumes each unit has a probable chance of representing the target population. This kind of sampling is employed chiefly in quantitative methods where units are selected randomly. Patton (1990:169), in support of Du Plooy, posits that “[t]he logic and power of probability sampling depends on selecting a truly random and statistically representative sample that will permit confident generalization from the sample to a larger population”. This researcher employed probability sampling when selecting newspaper issues of *The Zimbabwean* published during the research period as to avoid a pre-determined outcome.

Non-probability sampling posits that “every unit in the target population does not have an equal and therefore probable chance of being selected as part of the sample, implying the sample will not necessarily have the same parameters as target population” (Du Plooy, 2009:122). Hence, in selecting units of study researchers’ use information-rich samples (Patton, 1990:169). This researcher employed non-probability sampling when selecting interviewees who freelanced for the publication during the research period. The researcher selected five journalists who consistently contributed for the newspaper as he believed, as Patton (1990:169) argues,

“information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of research”.

To ensure that representation is fair and credible, the researcher selected the following interviewees:

- Wilf Mbanga – Editor and Publisher of *The Zimbabwean* during the research period
- Ndumiso Mlilo – Journalist for *The Zimbabwean* during the research period
- Millie Phiri – Editorial Assistant of *The Zimbabwean* during the research period
- Mthulisi Ncube – journalist for *The Zimbabwean* during the research period
- Mxolisi Ncube – a journalist for *The Zimbabwean* during the research period

In investigating the political role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, this researcher employed the content analysis technique discussed next.

4.5.3 Content Analysis

The process of gathering and analysing information was also employed known as content analysis. Du Plooy (2009:213) defines content analysis as a “methodology applied to explore, describe and infer characteristics of message” in which is the preoccupation of this investigation on the political role of *The Zimbabwean* in mediating Zimbabwean crisis. Neuman (1997:273) defines content analysis as a “technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text”. Neuman further posits that content refers to “words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message” while text refers to “anything written, visual or spoken that serves as medium for communication”. McQuail (2005:363) defines content analysis as “the earliest, most central and still most widely practised method of research”. Holsti (1969:14) offers a broad definition of content analysis as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”.

In this study this researcher used content analysis in the analyses of mass-media content and transcripts of interviews. The researcher employed both the qualitative content analysis and

quantitative content analysis discussed in the ensuing paragraphs. Du Plooy (2009:219) postulates that qualitative content analysis deals with values, themes, styles and different meanings of messages while quantitative content analysis focuses on systematic procedures, follows processes that are without bias and emphasise that the content must be quantified (Du Plooy, 2009:214).

This researcher employed quantitative content analysis represented through graph and pie chart in the chapter dealing with analysis and qualitative content analysis that dealt with news values, themes and styles of writing employed by *The Zimbabwean*. Hence, for this study, content analysis refers to the analysis of news reports, editorials and responses of interviewees. In the execution of data analysis, this researcher focused on content analysis involving analysis of themes. In the execution of qualitative content analysis, the researcher analysed texts while on themes the researcher sought to make an analysis of topics and issues covered and how they were covered.

When applying quantitative content analysis this researcher investigated the frequency of themes identified for this study as argued by Du Plooy (2009:213). Du Plooy (2009:214) postulates that content analysis use the following units of analysis:

- Physical units, such as the medium of communication (eg radio);
- Syntactic units, such as paragraphs, sentences, phrases, clauses or words;
- Thematic units which are repeating patterns of propositions or ideas related to issues such as sex, violence, AIDS, equality, gender or stereotyping based on age, race and disability; and
- Propositional units, such as questions, answers, statements, assertions or arguments.

In the application of qualitative content analysis the researcher focused on analysis of *The Zimbabwean's* editorials and news stories. Krippendorff (1980:51) notes that "[m]uch content analysis research is motivated by the search for techniques to infer from symbolic data what would be too costly, no longer possible, or too obtrusive by the use of other techniques".

The task involved tabulating, transcribing and analysing the responses acquired during interviews and news reports from bulletin samples, a process referred to as coding. Neuman (1997:295) intimates coding as “systematically reorganizing raw data into a format that is machine readable”. In content analysis, Neuman further notes, researchers create and consistently apply rules for transferring information from one form to another, and in this case, themes were created. Themes were created through the use of contentious issues in the GPA and political parties. This researcher limited the study to latent categorisation that focuses on interpretation of underlying symbolic meaning (Rossouw, 2003:166). This researcher categorised responses found in the newspaper into themes such as political violence, land reform, constitutional reform and sanctions.

4. 6 Ethical issues

In this study, the researcher received signed consent from the interviewees in accordance with the ethical requirements of Stellenbosch University. All the interviewees were interviewed face-to-face and also received electronic questionnaires with the exception of Mbanga who was only interviewed through electronic mail. Mbanga’s unavailability was cautioned by the presence of Millie Phiri; the editorial assistant of *The Zimbabwean* during the research period as, just like Mbanga, she was responsible for writing editorial commentaries.

Zimbabwean journalists are apprehensive of anyone who invades their privacy especially someone who asks them about authenticity and credibility of their practice, this is caused by the effective use of ‘state repressive’ machinery. Also journalists are suspicious of being interviewed as they fear information might end up in the hands of their employers and consequently lose livelihood. As to address concerns of the interviews, the researcher noted that the thesis was meant for academic purposes and the researcher assured the interviews that this thesis would be treated as confidential.

4.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter commenced by broadly defining research and went on to discuss qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. The researcher also discussed triangulation, which is the combination of two research methodologies. A case study was also given prominence considering that it is the research design preferred for this investigation. Chapter four concluded by discussing ethical issues that were employed in this research. The next chapter deals with research findings for this investigation.

Chapter Five

Research Findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on findings on the political role of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the Global Political Agreement (GPA) period, 2008-2010. This study gives focus mainly to four identified themes – the constitution, violence, the land issue and sanctions. These themes, as noted earlier, were identified based on preliminary study of the broader media coverage of Zimbabwean issues during the research period. News reports, editorials and interviews with journalists who moonlighted for *The Zimbabwean* during the research period are employed. The findings will be given in the order the themes are presented above. The study also gives attention to the two main political parties in Zimbabwe, namely ZANU PF and MDC-T. News reports on the constitution are going to be discussed first.

In conducting this study in an endeavor to understand how *The Zimbabwean* played a political role during the transitional period, the first three pages and editorial comments were studied. The first three pages carry main stories of the newspaper while, the editorial comments reflect the newspaper's position on issues obtaining at a given time.

5.2 The Constitution

The Government of National Unity (GNU) was given the mandate under the auspices of the GPA to lead a process of writing a new constitution for the country (GPA, 2008:5). Article VI of the GPA (2008:5) notes that part of the reason behind a new constitution was to deepen “democratic values and principles and the protection of the equality of all citizens, particularly the enhancement of full citizenship and equality for women”.

The Zimbabwean reported the absence of democracy in the constitution-making process known as the Kariba Draft. *The Zimbabwean* (2009b:3) report headlined *Mugabe says dropping of Kariba is “nonsense”* noted that ZANU PF was resolute regarding its position on the Kariba Draft being the basis for the writing of the country’s new constitution. The report highlighted that President Mugabe was backing the Kariba Draft more because it placed considerable powers on the office of the president. The coverage of violence is discussed next.

5.3 Violence

The Zimbabwean newspaper carried reports (Bande, 2009b:1; Shoko, 2010c:1) that alleged that ZANU PF used violence against its opponents. *The Zimbabwean* (Bande, 2009b:1) report’s headline read: *Zanu thugs in gruesome murder*, appeared on the front page. The report was juxtaposed with a picture of a sixteen year-old Arnold Mosterd who had been murdered. It chronicled events leading to the murder and also revealed that Minister Dydimas Mutasa ordered the release of suspects.

The Zimbabwean (Shoko, 2010c:1) report brought to the fore the expectation of the GPA principals (President Mugabe, Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his deputy Mutambara) should proactively campaign in ending violence. The report singled out violence as being perpetrated by the military and ZANU PF activists quoting human rights groups. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*, 2010c:2) further noted that incidents of violence and intimidation in Murewa West were perpetrated by ZANU PF supporters. The newspaper went on to report that the “[p]olice have been reluctant to open dockets against Zanu PF perpetrators of violence referring cases to the ineffective Joint Operations and Implementation Committee”. The report also likened President Mugabe’s “violent nature” to the late Uganda autocratic leader Idi Amin. Findings on land issue are discussed next.

5.4 Land Reform

In covering the land issue *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*,2009b:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2010c:3) demonstrated drought that was experienced in Zimbabwe

from the time the land reform started in 1999/2000, *The Zimbabwean* linked food hunger and humanitarian crisis to the “chaotic” and “partisan” land reform exercise. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2) carried a report entitled *Secret Doc Reveals Land Grab Plans*, which partly stated: “The refusal by these former farm owners to vacate gazetted farms has disadvantaged 251 beneficiaries of the land grab who hold offer letters”.

In a report (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2) headlined *Evicted Farmer Camps on Roadside*, *The Zimbabwean* reported violent action in the land reform process. Another story (*The Zimbabwean*, 2010c:3), *Farm inputs come with strings attached* reported that the country’s 1.7 million people faced hunger largely due to crop failure. The coverage of sanctions issue is discussed next.

5.5 Sanctions

In its story headlined *No sanctions, so no sanctions busting*, *The Zimbabwean* (Ncube, 2010c:1) cited a comment by German Ambassador that read: “No EU-based company is prevented from doing business with any of the persons concerned. As we have said many times, the EU has never imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe”. The coverage of political parties, starting with ZANU PF is discussed next.

5.6 ZANU PF

The content of the reports (*The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:1) focused mainly on succession issues. In reporting ZANU PF’s “sponsored” political violence, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean* report, 2008a:2) carried reports alleging Mugabe’s use of armed forces. The report noted that, the “military junta now running the country this week came up with a strategy that puts conditions close to state of emergency in the country as it seeks to incapacitate the opposition, civil society and tighten its illegal grip on power”. *The Zimbabwean* (2008a:2) further reported that there was transfer of power from a democratically elected civilian government to the one run by the military. The report also made a statement to the effect that the main beneficiary of this “state of emergency” was ZANU PF and President Mugabe as its aim

was to “incapacitate the opposition [referring to the MDC-T led by Morgan Tsvangirai], and civil society”.

In the story *Mugabe Pardons Zanu-PF Thugs, while Williams, Mahlangu and Matinenga Rot in Jail*, *The Zimbabwean* (2008a:1) reported that Mugabe gave a blanket amnesty to ZANU PF perpetrators of violence. The report also noted that the move would see Mugabe freeing “hundreds of Zanu PF thugs who may have been convicted for state-sanctioned violence in the aftermath of the March 27 elections”. The coverage of the MDC-T is discussed next.

5.7 The coverage of MDC-T

The Zimbabwean (2009b:1; 2009b:3) carried stories presenting the MDC-T as a democratic party and its leader Morgan Tsvangirai as a democrat. *The Zimbabwean* (2009b:3) carried a story headlined: *Tsvangirai Promises Compensation for Victims*. Part of the report citing Tsvangirai reads: “We must have a response to victims of political violence. We should do something as a party, even if it means begging from donors, as some of the victims have nowhere to start after the ravages”. The editorial commentaries of *The Zimbabwean* are discussed next.

Editorial commentaries

5.7.1 The editorial commentaries on the constitution-making process

The commentaries (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8; *The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) of *The Zimbabwean* focused on the constitution-making process and the debates about the content of various constitution drafts. The political parties disagreed on the constitution in 2000 that saw the ZANU PF-led government suffering its first electoral defeat (Chiumbu, 2009:2). Leading to the 2008 polls, political parties agreed on a new framework for writing a constitution popularised as the Kariba Draft (NCA, 2009:1). After the signing of the GPA in September 2008, the MDC formations changed their stance on the Kariba Draft, consequently making the document to be labeled as a ZANU PF document (Refugee and Documentation Center, 2012:3).

In its commentaries *The Zimbabwean* criticised the Kariba Draft and called for a broad participation in the constitution-making process.

Rival parties in Zimbabwe agreed over the need for a new constitution for the country (GPA, 2008:6). According to the GPA (GPA, 2008:6) “it is the fundamental right and duty of the Zimbabwean people to make a constitution by themselves and for themselves”. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) newspaper in covering the constitution-making process brought to the fore that the Lancaster constitutional agreement had failed, further noting that the constitutional-making process undertaken by the Government of National Unity had equally failed to deliver a process required to bring about a legitimate document as the process was equally politicised.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b: 8) sensitised the country’s populace about ZANU PF’s intentions to use the Kariba Draft as the basis for the country’s constitution-making process, stating that “President Mugabe is insisting that a document negotiated in secret on a household on Lake Kariba two years ago be used as a basis for our future constitution”. *The Zimbabwean* went on to add that “[i]t is our view that the Kariba Draft is worse than the proposed constitution that was rejected in the referendum in 2000”. The editorial painted a picture demonstrating that the powers of the president would be increased under the Kariba Draft proposal.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) pointed out to the country’s populace that Mugabe was violating the country’s constitutional provision demonstrating the keen interest the newspaper took on the question of the constitution. The editorial further argued that with Mugabe attempting to appoint 22 ministers outside the provision of the constitution, it was a clear sign of his “utter contempt for the Constitution of Zimbabwe and power-sharing agreement backed by SADC leaders”. At the close of the prescribed GPA period, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) pointed out that the constitution-making process undertaken by the Zimbabwe government had failed due to, among other reasons, party-sponsored violence. *The Zimbabwean* further postulated that “no consultations took place because members of the Constitutional Parliamentary Committee (COPAC) that is leading the exercise failed to turn for

reasons best known to that clearly overwhelmed committee”. Next to be discussed is the violence issue.

5.7.2 The editorial commentaries on political violence

The March 2008 elections were followed by the June presidential election run-off that was marred with inter-party violence (Masunungure, 2009:81). Masunungure adds that “[t]he April to June 2008 election interregnum was a militarized moment”, in reference to the involvement of the security sector in a violent campaign. In fact, the violent campaign went beyond CIBD (Coercion, Intimidation, Beating, and Displacement) to include murder. Masunungure (2009:87) adds that “[b]y election day, more than 80 opposition supporters were dead, hundreds were missing, thousands were injured and hundreds of thousands were homeless”.

Masunungure (2009:83) also notes that to retain power, Mugabe “was reported to have told his ZANU PF Politburo in early April 2008 that in order to win the presidential election run-off, the party must establish a warlike and military style leadership to campaign for him”. The signing of the GPA brought an array of hope for Zimbabweans living in fear (MISA, 2009:158). Barely a year after the signing of the GPA, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) remarked that “[w]hile the police are busy arresting innocent civilians, they demonstrate their bias by turning a blind eye to on-going political violence perpetrated by Zanu PF supporters”.

The reported violence led the MDC-T to call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8). In support of the call for the TRC, *The Zimbabwean* noted that such a commission would assist in addressing Zimbabwe’s dark history as details of the number of people killed in the violence surrounding the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 were shocking. Referring back to the 2008 election violence, *The Zimbabwean* further described the killings as “a form of ethnic cleansing, the second in Mugabe’s tyrannical 30-year reign, the first being Gukurahundi”. Over 20 000 people are reported to have been killed during the Gukurahundi atrocities (Sisulu, 2007:8).

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) augmented its claims of ZANU PF perpetrating violence and its sustained position that little was being done to address violence by noting that “[i]ndependent observers such as Human Rights Watch have correctly pointed out that the ‘power sharing’ government has largely failed to end rights abuses or to institute fundamental reforms”. In the same comment, *The Zimbabwean* argued that if ZANU PF was sincere about genuine reforms, the party should have ceased promoting abuses such as “use of security forces and the judiciary to harass, abduct, torture and kill those considered to be opponents, violent invasions of commercial farms” among others.

At the height of consultations on the constitution-making process, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) newspaper noted that ZANU PF ‘thugs’ were at it again, harassing and intimidating fellow citizens from participating in the process. *The Zimbabwean* further posited that the list of incidents of violence was growing by the day and in short this meant that the country was regressing to the post-2008 March violence. In the same comment *The Zimbabwean* stated that four homes in Mudzi district were burnt in a week in political violence.

Just after the independence celebrations in 2010, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) took a swipe at Mugabe, accusing him of being a hypocrite for allegedly making statements that did not match actions on the ground. *The Zimbabwean* further noted that after Mugabe’s independence speech “[e]very Zimbabwean would have been delighted to hear Mugabe asking us to stop violence as a political weapon”, adding that “[t]he only problem is that these fine sounding words are not matched by deeds, either by Mugabe himself, his bands of armed thugs, the police or the judiciary”.

In executing violence, ZANU PF has been accused of manipulating security personnel (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8). The GPA (2008:9) notes that to end such unprofessional conduct

“there is need of inclusion in the training curriculum of members of the uniformed forces of the subjects on human rights, international

humanitarian law and statute law so that there is greater understanding and full appreciation of their roles and duties in a multi-party democratic system”.

Warning the nation about the involvement of the military in political matters, *The Zimbabwean* further noted that the military forces were playing a political agenda in an attempt to reverse gains of the March 2008 polls and also to stall the democratic project. *The Zimbabwean* stated that the police were being used by ZANU PF as the party’s political commissars. The newspaper added that the military played this role through coercion by seniors in the security service. *The Zimbabwean* further called these senior cops “Zanu-PF die-hards” who were beyond redemption.

Motivating its claims on the polarised nature of the armed forces, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) argued that some uniformed forces were now exposing their political affiliations openly. The newspaper also linked the heavy involvement of the military in constitutional affairs. After the commencement of the constitutional outreach, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) observed that “a day after the outreach began, an estimated 200 uniformed soldiers marched in the Chikangwe and Chiedza suburbs of Karoi in Mashonaland West province chanting Zanu PF slogans”.

Early in 2010, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) noted that Mugabe could easily disarm “these ZANU PF thugs as he is the Commander-in-chief”. *The Zimbabwean* further observed that

“[a] further demonstration of his duplicity on Sunday was evidenced by the parading of child soldiers fully kitted out in miniature camouflage uniforms carrying imitation rifles. What a disgusting display. As we have said before, guns are for one thing only to kill.”

Next to be discussed is the land issue.

5.7.3 The editorial commentaries of the land reform

The Zimbabwean newspaper bulletins sampled did not carry any editorial comment on the land reform programme. Next is the sanctions issue.

5.7.4 The editorial commentaries of sanctions

On sanctions the GPA (2008:4) document observed that

“international isolation has over the years created a negative international perception of Zimbabwe and thereby resulting in the further isolation of the country by non-availing of lines of credit to Zimbabwe by some sections of the international community”.

In its editorial entitled *Restrictive measures must stay*, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) noting Tsvangirai had called for the lifting of sanctions at a conference in Davos, observed that the move was “ill-advised”, adding that “[t]he time had not yet come for these measures [sanctions] to be lifted”.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) watered down the effects of restrictive measures or sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe, stating that these measures “in essence are nothing more than travel and banking restrictions aimed at preventing the thievocracy from stashing away their ill-gotten gains”. The same editorial observed that “Zanu PF needs to realise that it is wasting breath in continuing to insist that the MDC campaigns for the removal of the targeted measures against its corrupt and abusive hierarchy”. Next are the editorial comments of political parties, commencing with ZANU PF.

5.7.5 The Editorial commentaries on ZANU PF

Soon after the swearing in of Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) observed that ZANU PF was not going to change its approach on governance even under the new dispensation. *The Zimbabwean* reiterated its position on the political-military nexus between ZANU PF and military elites, saying that “[t]he much be-medaled military chiefs who, bulging out of their brocaded uniforms, attend every Zanu PF funeral, wedding or birthday, were conspicuous by their absence from the swearing in ceremony”.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) newspaper portrayed a ZANU PF in conflict with the aspirations of the GPA “manipulating state institutions for political gain, failing to own up on its failed governance policies among others”. *The Zimbabwean* sensitised the nation to ZANU PF’s alleged desire to hold on to power at all costs. Motivating its claims on manipulation of state institutions, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) pointed to a need for “an inclusive national policy, with set parameters and clearly defined yardstick, that determines who qualifies to be a national hero”. This editorial further pointed out that “there are a number of people buried at Heroes Acre who have dubious credentials as heroes”.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) went as far as endorsing the continued sustenance of sanctions because, in its view, the liberation party (ZANU PF) had remained resolute on its bad democratic tendencies. In the same editorial the newspaper stated that ZANU PF had been punished with targeted measures for among others, extra judicial killings, abductions and kidnappings.

At the lapse of the prescribed GPA era, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) justifying its claim of an unreformed ZANU PF, observed that the police chief (Augustine Chihuri) was a “political commissar who moonlights as a policeman”. The editorial further stated that the uniformed forces had committed treason by blocking the MDC-T leader, Morgan

Tsvangirai, from taking over the reins, further noting that this act was a “serious breach of the law”. The editorial commentaries on the MDC are discussed next.

5.7.6 The Editorial commentaries on MDC-T

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) portrayed the MDC-T as a victim of ZANU PF’s political maneuvering. Demonstrating the MDC’s victimhood, *The Zimbabwean* opined on the incident involving an alleged member of the MDC-T killed due to suspected political affiliation. In *The Zimbabwean* bulletin, it was opined that “[t]he boy’s crime was to demand wages for the work he had done for the official. But he could not be murdered for that. So he was branded an MDC supporter – and thereby became fair game for murderous thugs.”

The comment referred to above, captures a story of a sixteen-year-old boy, Arnold Mosterd, who was allegedly killed by ZANU PF supporters. The boy, according to this comment, was killed after being labeled an MDC-T supporter when in actual fact his crime was demanding his wages from a local ZANU PF chairman, Harry Munetsi. The comment on the alleged killing was juxtaposed with the picture of Mosterd. The comment chronicled events leading to the murder and also revealed that Minister Dydimas Mutasa ordered the release of suspects. Mutasa at the time was the Minister of State in the President’s office.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) demonstrating how the MDC-T had suffered from “dirty” politics played by ZANU PF, cited the politics behind resistance to the appointment of Roy Bennett as Minister of Agriculture. Describing the reason why ZANU PF would not allow Bennett to be sworn in as Minister *The Zimbabwean* noted in its opinion that, “[a]s we all know, Zanu has a lot to hide. The last thing they can afford is one of the victims of its vicious land grab scheme being in a position to expose exactly who has benefited from the process”.

Arguing that the MDC-T was a victim of ZANU PF violence across the country, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) pointed out that “[i]n almost every issue of

The Zimbabwean we carry stories from various parts of the country of violence perpetrated by Zanu PF members on MDC-T supporters and human rights defenders”.

On one occasion *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) took a critical stance on the MDC-T when the party was viewed to be acceding to demands by ZANU PF. On the issue of sanctions, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) noted that “[t]he MDC would be mad to agree to call for the lifting of visa and financial restrictions against Zanu fat cats before the swearing in of Bennett and settling of outstanding issues”. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) demonstrating the possibilities of transition to democratic norms through the MDC-T vehicle, encouraged other party Members of Parliament (MPs) to “seize the opportunity” and fight for the repealing of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), proper registration of voters, and the reform of Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

In one editorial, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) urged that the MDC-T “[h]aving taken the bold step of disengaging from Zanu PF must ensure that it is not coerced into returning before all the outstanding issues are resolved”. Findings on interviews conducted with five journalists from *The Zimbabwean* are presented next.

5.8 Interviews

This researcher employed the interview research technique with journalists who worked for *The Zimbabwean* during the research period. It is imperative to note that with reference to two interviewees (Mxolisi Ncube and Mthulisi Ncube) the researcher used full names to avoid confusion due to the use of a similar surname. Wilf Mbanga, editor of *The Zimbabwean* was also interviewed in 2011, he pointed out that his views were those projected in the editorial commentaries of the newspaper.

5.8.1 Interviews on the Constitution

On the constitutional issue the interviewees (Millie Phiri, 2011; Ndumiso Mlilo, 2011; Mxolisi Ncube, 2012; Mthulisi Ncube, 2012) expressed their views also. Phiri (2012) expressed doubts that the constitution-making process would yield a democratic document that would usher in democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe. She postulated that violence was used during the consultative process across the country and that citizens were being “coached and coerced” on what they were expected to state to the thematic committees gathering views. Phiri also noted that the current Zimbabwean constitution was not bad, but that challenges were being encountered in implementation.

Mxolisi Ncube (2012) noted that the current Lancaster House conference was not only illegitimate but had vested a lot of powers on the executive, a scenario that needed attention and rectification across the political divide. However, Mxolisi Ncube pointed out that even though violence was being employed as a coercive tool by ZANU PF.

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) echoed the views expressed by Phiri (2011), pointing out that Zimbabwe was a perfect example of a country where the ZANU PF leadership undermined its own laws for political gain. Though Mlilo (2011) agreed with Phiri (2011) and Mxolisi Ncube (2012), his view was that it was imperative for the generality of the population to participate in the process whether the document to come out would be better or worse than the Lancaster House constitution. How to deal with the outcome would be a decision Zimbabweans will have to make (Mlilo, 2011).

Phiri (2011), Mthulisi Ncube (2012) and Mlilo (2011) shared the view that the Kariba Draft was a wrong basis for writing a new constitution. Phiri (2012) went on to say that “anything that is advocated for by ZANU PF and President Mugabe should be taken with suspicion” considering that they only advocated for what protected their interests. Though Mxolisi Ncube (2012) disagreed with the other three on the Kariba Draft, he pointed out that ZANU PF only stood for its thin elite interests and not the general populace. Mxolisi Ncube (2012) argued that ZANU PF

was not the only one solely responsible for the Kariba Draft but also the two MDC formations – a reality ignored by some sections of the media. Next is the issue of political violence.

5.8.2 Interview on political violence

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) pointed out that the approach of *The Zimbabwean* on the issue of violence in relation to ZANU PF was meant to profile the liberation party's bad human rights record, thereby justifying the continued existence of sanctions. Mthulisi Ncube (2012) was of the view that "most of the stories I covered during the GPA period involved violence meted to MDC-T activists by ZANU PF people".

Mxolisi Ncube (2012) agreed with Mthulisi Ncube's (2012) statement, observing that "When one speaks of violence from 2008 post-March elections, one sees the images of ZANU PF supporters unleashing violence on MDC-T with a very minute revenge from the MDC-T". Mthulisi Ncube (2012) noted that the way politically-motivated violence was given prominence in their reporting was too extreme, as it was sometimes magnified beyond its actual occurrence.

Phiri (2011) contended that "*The Zimbabwean* reported as much as it could on violence. However, this was presented from the perspective of the MDC-T and civic society and less from ZANU PF point of view." Phiri argued that "this could have been a result of the reluctance of ZANU PF officials to talk to journalists from the newspaper". On violence, Mlilo (2011) noted that *The Zimbabwean*, unlike any other newspaper, provided detailed reports on how ZANU PF was executing its violence across the country. Mlilo further noted that journalists deliberately decided not to cover intra-party violence in the MDC-T formation as this would be viewed as counter-democratic. In support of Mlilo's (2012) sentiments on violence, Mxolisi Ncube (2012) noted that the intra-party violence in the MDC-T was "by far less significant in comparison to the genocide perpetrated by ZANU PF".

Phiri (2012) noted that journalists who moonlighted for *The Zimbabwean* knew what would and would not sell through reading *The Zimbabwean* editorial. Hence, they deliberately shunned covering violence within the MDC-T formation, knowing the newspaper was not going to

publish such stories. Phiri noted that “this was not a written law but rather self-censorship adopted by journalists as the struggle was to use the little resources at their disposal to file more stories as to make ends meet”. On the issue of the military, Mthulisi Ncube (2012) noted that due to colonial legacy the military was unfortunately tied to the ZANU PF and had failed to professionalise in the post-independent Zimbabwe. He added that because of historical ties, the military during the GPA period had continued to declare their support for ZANU PF in contempt of the country’s constitution. Phiri (2012) noted that Zimbabwe’s military force was highly politicised, making it an extension of ZANU PF structures, and military leaders reducing themselves to party commissars.

Mlilo (2011) agreeing with Phiri (2011) and Mthulisi Ncube (2012) noted that ZANU PF was abusing the military forces for selfish party gain while compromising professional standards. Mlilo added that the military during Mugabe’s leadership had become actively involved in deciding issues of power transfer and power retention in the country’s politics. Mxolisi Ncube (2012) noted that the issue of the military was a sensitive one that he was not comfortable commenting on. Next is the land reform issue.

5.8.3 Interviews on land reform

Phiri (2012), Mlilo (2011), Mxolisi Ncube (2012) and Mthulisi Ncube (2012) shared the view that there was a need to redress land imbalances in Zimbabwe. Even though there was agreement, the same journalists differed as far as executing the land reform was concerned. Phiri (2012) noted that there was no other way the land reform could have been executed other than the violent nature as white commercial farmers were “ridiculously charging figures meant to scare the government”. Mlilo (2011) was of the view that a land audit was supposed to have been carried out before the “chaotic land seizures” took place.

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) acknowledged the “racialised land system” but added that it was better than the current state of affairs where the majority had land which they could not utilise. He added that since the “chaotic land reform started, Zimbabwe has been in droughts year after

year” with the country “now importing maize from countries such as Zambia whose agriculture sector is dominated by the same white farmers driven away from Zimbabwe”.

Phiri (2011) disagreed with Mxolisi Ncube’s assertion, noting that “land is cultural; land is part of what makes an African person African, regardless of the levels of productivity”. Justification to regain land through violence was dismissed by Mxolisi Ncube (2012) pointing out that “it was un-African to loot land for few politically connected elites”. He further argued that “land reform had only benefited ZANU PF elites while the majorities were left to fight for unproductive land in the arid region like Masvingo, which is not palatable for farming”. The findings on interviews conducted regarding sanctions are discussed next.

5.8.4 Interviews on sanctions

Mxolisi Ncube (2012) observed that “there are no sanctions but restrictive measures targeting a certain section of ZANU PF leadership accused of human rights violations”. He added that ZANU PF had used the term “sanctions” as a propaganda tool meant to justify its failure to institute sound economic policies and justify its violence on political opponents. While acknowledging the existence of sanctions, Mlilo (2011) questioned whether or not it was enough reason to justify ZANU PF’s failed economic policies noting that “if sanctions are that effective why is it that ZANU PF children still go and study at Universities in Europe and expensive Universities in South Africa?” Mlilo added that even during Ian Smith’s colonial government, sanctions were imposed but did little to affect the economic lives of the general populace.

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) held the view that sanctions did exist, arguing that “there is nothing like targeted measures. Those sanctions are failing to achieve their goal as they have made Mugabe more brutal”. Though acknowledging the presence of sanctions, Mthulisi Ncube (2012) argued they had not fulfilled the purpose which was to stop Mugabe’s violence. Phiri (2012), in agreement with Mthulisi Ncube (2012), pointed out that sanctions, instead, had worked to Mugabe’s favour as most Zimbabweans believed they were the cause of economic meltdown. Next is the issue of political parties’ coverage.

5.8.5 Interviews on ZANU PF

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) pointed out that “most of the stories covered during the GPA involving ZANU PF had to do with violence meted to MDC-T activists by ZANU PF supporters”. He added that “when one speaks of violence from 2008 post March elections, one sees the images of ZANU PF supporters unleashing violence on MDCs with a very minute revenge from the MDC”. Phiri (2012) noted that ZANU PF was fairly represented in the newspaper as stories written were either substantiated with pictures or given the right to respond even though ZANU PF officials refused to comment.

Mxolisi Ncube (2012) pointed out that journalists deliberately fabricated stories for *The Zimbabwean* as they knew such stories would easily sell. Although Mthulisi Ncube (2012) denied having done it himself, he pointed out that he knew of his colleagues who in their stories used anonymous sources to discredit ZANU PF. Mlilo (2011) to the contrary, observed that “*The Zimbabwean* to the best of its ability covered stories involving ZANU PF in an impartial way” adding that due to ZANU PF’s violent nature, journalists were bound to follow much on such stories, consequently making the other side insignificant.

All four journalists pointed out that ZANU PF had run out of ideas as far as reviving Zimbabwe’s bad image and economic turmoil, and said it was time the ZANU PF government stepped down and allowed a new party to take over and try new ideas. Phiri (2012) and Mthulisi Ncube (2012) were of the view that Zimbabwe’s only alternative from economic crisis was the MDC-T and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai considering their good alliances with Western European countries and the United States of America.

Phiri (2012) pointed out that the ZANU PF leader President Mugabe was a dictator who was trapped by his desire for power. Phiri added that Mugabe had inherited a country envied by the entire continent but ruined it due to legalised thievery, corruption and bad economic policies. Mxolisi Ncube (2012), echoing Phiri’s view, noted that Mugabe had overstayed in power and had also lost all elections since 2000 and hence was supposed to make way for a new leader. Mlilo (2011) pointed out that Mugabe’s popularity in the 1980s waned in the first decade

following the Gukurahundi massacres that left estimate figure of twenty thousand people dead. Mlilo noted that since then Mugabe had used brute force, coercive tactics and killing of opponents. The findings on interviews conducted regarding the MDC-T are discussed.

5.8.6 Interviews on MDC-T

Both Mthulisi Ncube (2012) and Mxolisi Ncube (2012), journalists for *The Zimbabwean* newspaper posited that they viewed Morgan Tsvangirai as a democrat. Mlilo (2012) noted that the MDC-T was also presented as a party that sought to correct the evils of a ZANU PF dictatorial regime, by courageously contesting a brutal, murderous regime. Its leaders were presented in sampled articles as virtuous and the best potential for democracy in Zimbabwe (Mxolisi Ncube, 2012b). According to Phiri (2011) “the MDC-T leader was presented as an advocate for change who holds the key to unlock Zimbabwe’s freedom from ZANU PF authoritarian rule. The paper expected a lot from him.” However, Phiri also argues that Tsvangirai had been portrayed as weak due to his constant consultation with the SADC on every matter. Mlilo (2012), to the contrary, noted that Tsvangirai and the MDC-T were not “true democrats”, but they presented the best opportunity for Zimbabwe’s transition to democracy.

5.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed findings of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper during the GPA period. Findings were discussed according to thematic categorisation. The researcher in the findings presented the news reports and editorial commentaries coverage. Findings from interviewees were also presented. The next chapter deals with data analysis on *The Zimbabwean* (news reports and editorial comments) and interviews conducted with journalists who moonlighted for the publication during the research period.

Chapter Six

Data Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents analysis of data presented in Chapter Five. To analyse findings, the Social Responsibility theoretical lens is utilised. A brief definition of the theoretical departure is given considering that Chapter Four has an in-depth discussion of the employed theoretical framework. In examining how *The Zimbabwean* newspaper mediated the crisis, the researcher focused on the following themes: the constitution, violence, land, sanctions and coverage of political parties' namely ZANU PF and MDC-T.

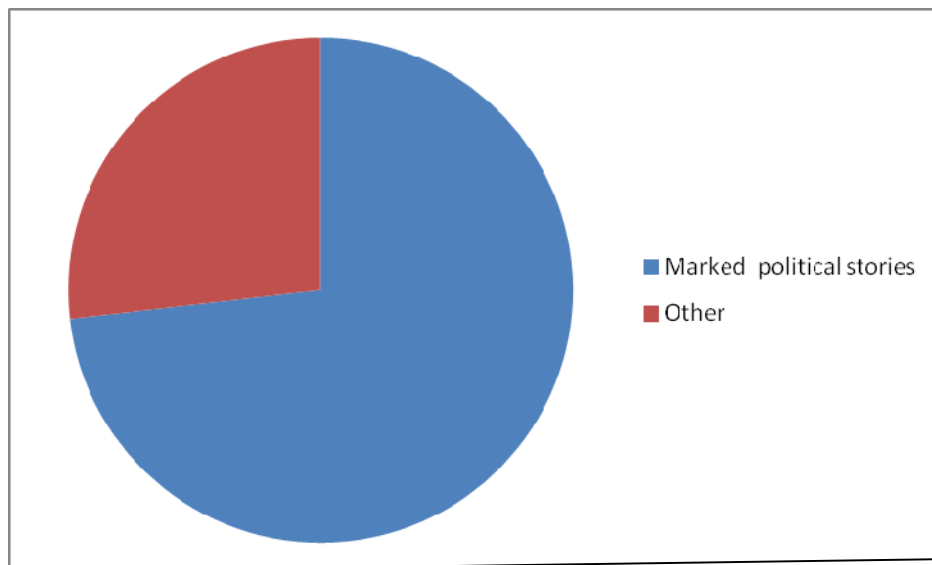
The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative content analysis. In application of the quantitative content analysis the researcher did a head count of articles per theme and for qualitative content analysis the researcher looked at the nature in which these topics were covered. A pie chart and a bar graph were utilised in demonstrating the coverage by *The Zimbabwean* during the research period.

In an attempt to understand how *The Zimbabwean* played any political role, if at all, during the transitional period, data analysis was conducted based on data captured during interviews with journalists who freelanced for the publication during the research period. The researcher sought to understand whether or not the views and beliefs of these journalists could have influenced their reporting. As indicated above, an in-depth discussion on the theoretical framework employed in this study was given in Chapter Four. However, a brief summary of the Social Responsibility Theory is discussed briefly next.

6.2 Theoretical Framework

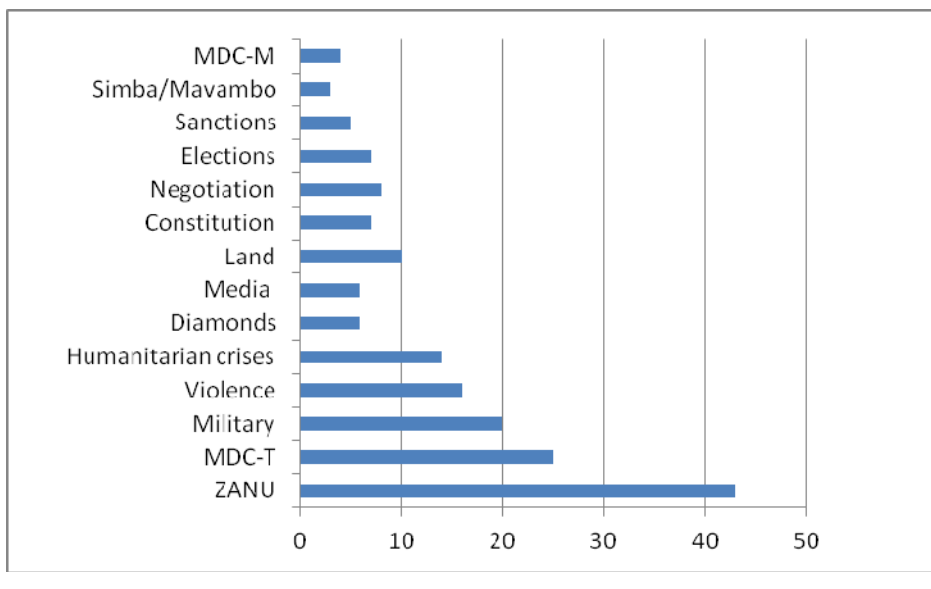
The Social Responsibility Theory addresses issues of media ethics, ownership, regulation and control (McQuail, 2005:170; Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1963:4). The Social Responsibility Theory of the media emphasises the importance of respecting the media's code of ethics that among others calls for truthful and responsible journalism. The Social Responsibility Theory also addresses issues of media (de)regulation, control and ownership, fairness, objectivity and balance, aspects that were employed to test the journalistic practice of *The Zimbabwean*. Hence, in this study, the researcher attempted to understand whether or not, and the extent to which *The Zimbabwean* newspaper adhered to the normative expectations of the media as espoused by the theoretical model chosen. The next section begins with a graphical presentation of the coverage of political issues during the GPA era by *The Zimbabwean*, considering that this is the main focus of the study. The graph and pie chart serves as a description on how The Zimbabwean covered political issues during the GPA. Thereafter, analysis will be given.

6.3 Pie Chart 1



Pie chart 1 above illustrates that a quarter of stories (painted red accent) carried out by the newspaper could not be categorised in either of sub-themes identified while the blue colour represents political coverage. There were also other stories not necessarily political, which were covered during the period of analysis. Next presentation is the Bar Graph 1 representing political themes covered during the research period.

6.4 Bar Graph 1



Bar Graph 1 above illustrates representation of various political themes during the period 2008 – 2010 (GPA era). On political parties coverage, 41 stories were committed to ZANU PF, MDC-T 25, MDC-M 4, Mavambo 3. The MDC-T received a favourable portrayal by the newspaper as shall be reflected on the presentation below. Other themes that received considerable representation were the constitution, the land issue, violence and sanctions. To commence the analysis, the coverage of the constitution-making process during the GPA period is discussed.

6.5 Analysis of the reportage on the constitution-making process

The issue of the constitution-making process is at the centre of Zimbabwe's politics of transition, so the discourse is characterised by a multiplicity of narratives. A closer look at *The Zimbabwean* shows that the newspaper selectively focused on the Kariba Draft alone and labeled it a ZANU PF document. In some instances *The Zimbabwean* sought to portray the rejected 2000 Chidyausiku Constitution as better than the Kariba Draft in an attempt to show that the Kariba Draft was not the best option for Zimbabwe. To buttress this argument news reports, editorial comments and interviews shall be utilised.

6.5.1 News Reports

In the country's 28 years of independence, Zimbabwe's constitutional discourse was one of the most contested issues hence; it was made one of the major deliverables in Zimbabwe's contested GNU (GPA, 2008:6). Prior to the signing of the GPA, Zimbabwe's governing parties agreed to the framework that would guide the writing of the new constitution popularised as the Kariba Draft (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2008:11). However, in the coverage of the constitution-making process, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:3) did not only castigate the agreed-upon draft, but used the document as a springboard to attack ZANU PF. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:3) carried a news report headlined: "Mugabe says dropping of Kariba is nonsense". Part of the news report noted that ZANU PF was resolute on its position on the Kariba Draft being the basis for the writing of the country's new constitution.

The news report supported the view that President Mugabe was backing the Kariba Draft more because it placed considerable powers on the office of the President as demonstrated by a series of reports entitled "Kariba Draft – the facts as ZANU drags its feet", "Kariba draft is less democratic than the rejected 2000 constitution", "This is what the Kariba draft says about the presidency" (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2). The coverage by *The Zimbabwean* lacked balance and fairness as the publication deliberately omitted some agreements of the Kariba Draft preferring to label it as a ZANU PF document. To the contrary, the Kariba Draft was a collective constitutional framework agreed upon by the two MDC formations and ZANU PF in 2007. *The*

Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean* report, 2009b:3) in a news report noted that “[c]ivic organisations and the MDC have criticised the Kariba draft because it leaves largely untouched the sweeping powers that Mugabe continues to enjoy even after the formation of a power-sharing government”. The above citation helps to demonstrate how *The Zimbabwean* in its reportage portrayed the Kariba Draft as a brainchild of ZANU PF and how the liberational party sought to entrench Mugabe’s rule through the Kariba Draft.

This approach goes against the normative expectations of the Social responsibility Theory that among others calls for balance, accuracy and truthful account (McQuail, 2005:170). Next to be discussed is *The Zimbabwean* editorial comment on the constitutional issue.

6.5.2 Editorial Comments

Breed (in Sesanti, 2011:7) notes that “the editorial comment represents the policy and beliefs of a publication on a particular issue”. It is on the basis of studying *The Zimbabwean*’s editorials (referred to below) that this researcher concluded that the newspaper took a biased stance against ZANU PF that did not meet journalistic expectations of balance and fairness as espoused by the Social Responsibility Theory (McQuail, 2005:170).

Through its editorial commentary *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean* Comment, 2009b: 8) sought to mobilise citizens to fight the Kariba Draft and positions promoted by ZANU PF. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean* Comment, 2009b: 8) in its editorial sensitised the country’s populace about ZANU PF’s intentions to make the Kariba Draft the basis for the country’s constitution-making process. This position reflects failure to be objective by *The Zimbabwean* newspaper as the Kariba Draft is a product of three political parties in the government.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean* Comment, 2009b:8) in its editorial opined that “[i]t is our considered view that the Kariba Draft is worse than the proposed constitution that was rejected in a referendum in 2000 – worse because it gives the president unbridled powers”. The editorial comment was augmented by a headline “No, no, no to Kariba Draft”. According to the editorial interpretation of *The Zimbabwean*, ZANU PF wanted to employ the Kariba Draft as part of its

power retention and consolidation project. Though the newspaper is entitled to independent opinion, this should not compromise normative expectations of the media such as truthfulness, fairness, balance, accuracy and objectivity. A closer look on how the constitutional issue was covered demonstrates that *The Zimbabwean* was prepared to give a biased account by labeling the Kariba Draft a ZANU PF document even if it was agreed by the two MDC formations and ZANU PF. Next we turn to an analysis of the interviews on the issue of the constitution.

6.5.3 Interviews

Phiri (2011), Ncube (2012b) and Mlilo (2012) shared the view that the Kariba Draft was a wrong basis for writing a new constitution. Though these journalists are entitled to their own views, interviews conducted helped demonstrate that views of *The Zimbabwean* journalists influenced the tone and nature of reportage of the publication. The unanimous view of the three journalists (Phiri (2011), Ncube 2012b & Mlilo 2012) demonstrates not only deep-rooted biases confirmed in newspaper bulletins but also shows how these journalists' hypothesis could have in a way influenced reportage on reporting about the constitution-making process.

Data Analysis Summary of the News Reports, Commentaries and Interviews on the constitution-making process

The Social Responsibility Theory calls for a media that is objective, responsible and that observes journalistic ethics such as balance, accuracy and fairness (McQuail, 2005:170; Siebert *et al*; 1963:4). A critical look at how *The Zimbabwean's* (news reports and editorial comments) coverage of the constitutional question demonstrates that the newspaper went beyond presenting an accurate report (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:8) to becoming an advocate of the anti-Kariba Draft constitution-making process, an allegation levelled against exiled and diasporic media (Kuhlmann, 2010:13; Peel, 2008:391; Batist, 2010:1) . Hence, one can conclude that through the theoretical lens of Social Responsibility model *The Zimbabwean* failed to play its normative role. Next to be discussed is the Land issue.

6.6 Analysis of the coverage on the land reform programme during the GPA

The prominence of the land reform in Zimbabwe's contested politics since 2000 remains extremely controversial. Debates range from whether it is necessary, strategic issues and its implications to multi party politics, the economy and the people's livelihoods. There is evidence to show that this is a historically emotive issue that played on race and identity and polarised both domestic and international opinion on both partisan and racial lines. A study of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper shows the newspaper took a biased stance (as will be shown below) on the land reform and selectively focused on the failures and violent nature in which land was taken from white commercial farmers. The publication failed to give background to the land discourse in Zimbabwe, consequently presenting an incomplete land discourse. To help bolster the above analysis the researcher employed news reports, editorial comments and interviews.

6.6.1 News Reports

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:1) carried a news report entitled: "Secret Doc Reveals Land Grab Plans". The news report gave a picture of "chaotic" actions on the land issue. The language employed indicates the violent nurture of land repossession while not factoring that the land was initially owned by black Zimbabweans before settler government dispossessed Zimbabweans of their land. *The Zimbabwean* sustained the anti-land reform stance throughout the research period (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2010c: 2). However, *The Zimbabwean* failed to acknowledge positive developments of the land reform that are highlighted in studies and empirical research (Scoones *et al*, 2010: v) that dispels allegations of land reform having been entirely chaotic and having benefited ZANU PF elites only. The Social Responsibility Theory calls for a balanced and accurate presentation of news reports (Siebert *et al*, 1963:4). A closer look at the coverage by *The Zimbabwean* during the research period demonstrates the newspaper's failure to present both sides that camouflaged the land reform discourse in Zimbabwe's contested transition. The editorial commentaries are discussed next.

6.6.2 Editorial Comment

The Zimbabwean newspaper did not carry any editorial comment during the research period on the land issue. Next to be discussed is the analysis of interviews with reporters of *The Zimbabwean* during the research period.

6.6.3 Interviews

Phiri (2012), Mlilo (2011), Mxolisi Ncube (2012) and Mthulisi Ncube (2012) shared the view that there was a need to redress land imbalances in Zimbabwe. Even though there was agreement, the same journalists were in contrast as far as executing the land reform was concerned. Phiri (2012) noted that there was no other way the land reform could have been executed other than the violent nature, as white commercial farmers were “ridiculously charging figures meant to scare the government”. Mlilo (2011) was of the view that a land audit was supposed to have been carried out before the “chaotic land seizures” took place. Mxolisi Ncube (2012) acknowledged the “racialised land system” but added that it was better than the current state of affairs where the majority have land which they cannot utilise. As far as coverage of the land reform is concerned, *The Zimbabwean* did not fulfill the normative expectations of the Social Responsibility Theory as only one negative side was presented. The Social Responsibility Theory promotes giving equal prominence to two or more opposing views. This biased view was in line with a stance taken by the international media of demonising and discrediting the land reform programme (Scoones *et al*, 2010:7).

Summary on the News Reports, Editorial Comment and Interviews on the land issue

The Zimbabwean gave a biased account of the land reform labeling it as chaotic, catastrophic and having been used for selfish gains as it benefited ZANU PF elites (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:1; *The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2010c:2) . *The Zimbabwean*'s silence on its editorial comment to opine anything on land reform may be viewed as a deliberate attempt to reduce the land issue to a non-issue in Zimbabwe's contested politics. The newspaper's failure to cite empirical research (Scoones *et al*, 2010:7) on land reform could be indicative of the

publication's philosophy expressed in its news reports (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:2; *The Zimbabwean*, 2010c: 2) that the land reform exercise was not only chaotic but was conducted in a polarised way. Hence, through the Social Responsibility Theoretical lens *The Zimbabwean* can be said to have failed to give an accurate, balanced and fair account of the land reform process in Zimbabwe. Political violence is discussed next.

6.7 Analysis of the reportage of political violence during the GPA

Violence has been at the centre of the Zimbabwean politics, before and post independence. However, post-2000 with increased intensity in political competition state perpetrated violence, inter-party and intra-party violence seemed to intensify along partisan lines. A study of *The Zimbabwean* shows that the publication took a biased approach against ZANU PF when reporting on violence. The publication sought to label ZANU PF as the victimiser and MDC as the victim. *The Zimbabwean* deliberately ignored violence alluded to the MDC in its coverage making its coverage on violence biased and consequently failing to meet expectations of the Social Responsibility Theory of fairness, accuracy, balance and objectivity. The issue of violence shall be analysed in the sequence of news reports, followed by editorial comments and ending by analysing the interviews.

6.7.1 News Reports

Masunungure (2009:83) notes that President Mugabe “was reported to have told his ZANU PF Politburo in early April 2008 that in order to win the presidential election run-off, the party must establish a warlike and military style leadership to campaign for him”. *The Zimbabwean* carried a news report (*The Zimbabwean*, 2009b:1) that sought to present the military and service sector and Generals in particular as anti-democratic and anti-reform by protecting murder probes. *The Zimbabwean* newspaper (*The Zimbabwean* report, 2009:1) carried a story entitled: “Chihuri stops all murder probes”. The story argued that the police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri was prepared to shield perpetrators of rights violations from the law. Next to be discussed are editorial commentaries on violence.

6.7.2 Editorial comments

Barely a year after the signing of the GPA, *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) opined an editorial on violence commenting that “[w]hile the police are busy arresting innocent civilians, they demonstrate their bias by turning a blind eye to on-going political violence – perpetrated by Zanu PF supporters”. The above citation suggests that *The Zimbabwean* held the view that overtly the state participated in violent acts incurred across the country through inaction on perpetrators of violence. The reported violence led the MDC-T to call for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) in support of the call for the TRC noted that such a commission would assist in addressing Zimbabwe’s dark history as details of the number of people killed in the violence surrounding the parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008 were shocking. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) augmented its claims of ZANU PF perpetrating violence and its sustained position that little was being done to address violence by noting that “[i]ndependent observers such as Human Rights Watch have correctly pointed out that the “power sharing” government has largely failed to end rights abuses or to institute fundamental reforms”. In the same commentary, *The Zimbabwean* argued that if ZANU PF was genuine about reformation, the party should cease promoting abuses such as “use of security forces and the judiciary to harass, abduct, torture and kill those considered to be opponents, violent invasions of commercial farms” among others. Next to be discussed is the analysis of interviews conducted with journalists who freelanced for *The Zimbabwean*.

6.7.3 Interviews on violence

Journalists, just like many professionals in Zimbabwe, suffered legal and extra judicial prosecution during the country’s contested transition. The victimhood of journalists in a way influenced perceptions on how sectors like the military were viewed and reported on as they were characterised as part and parcel of ZANU PF structures. This view was supported by Phiri (2012) in an interview when she remarked that “Military forces have been at the core of stalling reforms in Zimbabwe” as they had also benefited from Mugabe’s rule and patronage system. Observations by Phiri (2012) were supported by Mlilo (2012) and Mxolisi Ncube (2012), noting that the military was part and parcel of ZANU PF and state-sponsored violence. Journalists

(Phiri, 2011; Mxolisi Ncube, 2012; Mthulisi Ncube, Mlilo, 2012) argued that it was difficult to interview any ZANU PF representative as they considered *The Zimbabwean* newspaper a dissident publication. Hence, any attempt to contact ZANU PF for comment would risk journalists' lives consequently leaving allegations against the Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri of shielding perpetrators of violence unfairly represented as they were one sided. Hence, according to the Social Responsibility Theory as far as coverage on violence is concerned, *The Zimbabwean* presented a biased and one-sided view.

Summary on the News Reports, Editorial Comment and Interviews on violence

On the issue of violence *The Zimbabwean* failed to give an objective representation on events unfolding on the ground of interparty and intraparty violence (Sachikonye, 2011:62) while, deliberately deciding to focus on violence perpetrated by ZANU PF against MDC activists. Sachikonye (2011:66) put forward that intra-party violence within the MDC that persisted to post-2008 election was at the core of the party's split in 2005. However, this aspect of intra-party violence is not seen in the coverage of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper demonstrating the newspaper's bias of portraying the MDC as a victim only, and ZANU PF as ultimate perpetrators of violence in Zimbabwe (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) . A critical look through Social Responsibility lens demonstrates that *The Zimbabwean* failed to holistically present the question of violence as it subjectively singled out and magnified violence perpetrated by ZANU PF. Next to be discussed is the issue of sanctions.

6.8 Analysis of the coverage on sanctions during the GPA

Sanctions were imposed by Western governments on the basis of what they saw as gross human rights violations. Debates on sanctions focused on whether they existed, their effects on either the public or the targeted individuals who appeared on the Western sanctions list. An analysis of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper demonstrates the newspaper took a biased role on the sanctions question. *The Zimbabwean* in its coverage either supported sanctions or denied their existence preferring to use the term "restrictive measures". Ndhlovu (2005:223) prefers to call this "discourse contestation" when addressing issues of discourse construction and discourse

manipulation. To buttress the coverage of violence news reports, editorials and interviews are going to be employed.

6.8.1 News Reports

The issue of sanctions has been (mis)represented by governing coalition partners (MDC formations and ZANU PF) as part of the broader campaign strategy for the anticipated elections. Makasa (2012:49) adds that sanctions have either been supported or attacked by Zimbabwe's coalition partners depending on the leverage they brought to a selected political formation. The sanctions' issue was the least represented in the newspaper according to head count of stories on themes identified for this study. *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, according to sampled stories, muted the issue of sanctions making it a non-existent issue. The newspaper also termed the sanctions "restrictive measures".

Chingono (2010:193) exposing the issue of sanctions being part and parcel of regime change agenda notes that, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) of 2001, adopted by the United States Congress, explicitly states that its adoption was meant to "support the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to effect peaceful, democratic change". *The Zimbabwean* (Ncube, 2010c:1) carried a story under the title: "No sanctions, so no sanctions busting". Part of the article citing a comment by German Ambassador reads: "No EU-based company is prevented from doing business with any of the persons concerned. As we have said many times, the EU has never imposed economic sanctions on Zimbabwe". Next to be discussed are the editorial comments of *The Zimbabwean* during the research period.

6.8.2 Editorial Comments

Mbanga (2011) noted that the editorial comment of *The Zimbabwean* is the official position of the newspaper and is in sync with his personal beliefs. Hence, employing Mukasa's (2012) thesis, one can safely conclude that *The Zimbabwean* has played into, joined and augmented the stance propagated by the MDC formations on the question of sanctions prior to the GPA signing, making the newspaper part and parcel of the anti-ZANU PF and anti-Mugabe propaganda instruments. Makasa (2012: 50) dismisses the sanctions-economic collapse narrative, noting that

“it is rather too simplistic to blame Zimbabwe’s economic meltdown on external meddling not least because the government has, over the past decade, made a number of economic and political policy errors that largely account for the present state of Zimbabwe’s economy and political crisis”.

However, it is equally patently flawed to totally disengage the issue of sanctions when discussing the collapse of Zimbabwe economy regardless of the magnitude and extent of contribution. On the contribution of sanctions to economic collapse, Mukasa (2012:50-51) argues that “the USA and EU’s blockade of Zimbabwe from accessing international capital markets, primarily because of their firm decision power in world economics, has severely damaged a once promising economy in Southern Africa”.

This issue of sanctions contribution in worsening the already crumbling Zimbabwe economy was not given prominence in *The Zimbabwean* newspaper, a clear sign of the newspaper’s bias. Next to be discussed are interviews.

6.8.3 Interviews

On sanctions, Mthulisi Ncube (2012) observed that “there are no sanctions but restrictive measures targeting a certain section of ZANU PF leadership accused of human rights violations”. He added that ZANU PF had used the term “sanctions” as a propaganda tool meant to justify its failure to institute sound economic policies and justify its violence on political opponents. Mlilo (2011) questioned if it was enough reason to justify ZANU PF’s failed economic policies. Milo added that even during Ian Smith’s colonial government, sanctions were imposed but did little to affect economic lives of the general populace.

Mthulisi Ncube (2012) held the view that sanctions did exist, arguing that “there are sanctions, there is nothing like targeted measures. Those sanctions are failing to achieve the goal as they have made Mugabe more brutal.” Though acknowledging the presence of sanctions, Mxolisi Ncube argued that they had not fulfilled the purpose – which was to stop Mugabe’s violence.

Phiri (2012) in agreement with Mxolisi Ncube pointed out that sanctions, instead, had worked to Mugabe's favour as most Zimbabweans believe they are the cause of economic meltdown. The coverage of political parties is analysed next.

6.9 Analysis of the coverage on political parties during the GPA

Under the coverage of the political parties, the researcher sought to find which parties enjoyed positive or negative coverage with a specific focus to balance and fairness in news coverage. A close look at the quantity of coverage, nature of coverage as reflected in the content demonstrated that *The Zimbabwean* took a partisan position when profiling political parties during the contested transitional period. The publication pro-actively supported the MDC formation led by Morgan Tsvangirai while, attacking ZANU PF and muting the voice of other political formations in Zimbabwe. This researcher through reading news reports and editorial comments coupled with interviews with journalists who worked for the newspaper during the research period concluded that *The Zimbabwean* failed to perform its duties accurately, with balance and fairness and objectively as espoused by the Social Responsibility Theory. To help buttress the above analysis news reports, editorial commentaries and interviews are going to be employed.

6.9.1 News Reports

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:2) carried a report headlined: "Military Junta Plans Curfews". The article sought to portray the use of the military for entrenching ZANU PF and President Mugabe's rule. The article partly read "[t]he military junta now running the country this week came up with strategy that puts conditions close to a state of emergency in the country as it seeks to incapacitate the opposition, civil society and tighten its illegal grip on power". The cited part demonstrates the failure to observe the journalistic ethics of truthfulness as Zimbabwe has since independence been governed by a civilian government. This ultimately reduced this news report to an opinion piece rather than a news report as a news report should be objective, balanced, accurate and truthful. Such kind of reportage by *The Zimbabwean* renders the paper to

be branded as propaganda material as it fails to meet expectations of the Social Responsibility Theory that calls for responsible journalism.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:1) carried a news report with a headline: “Mujuru under House Arrest as Mugabe Panics” and *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean*, 2010c: 2) titled “Mugabe Rewards Loyalists” news reports demonstrate the approach of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper in as far as addressing ZANU PF is concerned. The above three news reports sought to portray ZANU PF as a party in disarray that uses violence to retain power and also having internal power struggles. On the story “Mugabe Pardons Zanu-PF Thugs, while Williams, Mahlangu and Matinenga Rot in Jail”, (*The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:3), *The Zimbabwean* suggests that Mugabe condones violence first in the headline and also in the first paragraph. The report demonstrates a level of bias of the writer and the newspaper as the writer attacks the person of the president when he says “with indecent haste as he inaugurated himself...” The first sentence comes out more as an opinion rather than a fact – it was featured as a news report and not opinion or editorial comment. This report demonstrates the level of subjectivity entertained by the newspaper. The cited part suggests the indecency of the president in as far as the period between winning elections and inauguration is concerned.

The Zimbabwean report (*The Zimbabwean*, 2008a:1) titled: “Mujuru under House Arrest as Mugabe Panics” and 12-18 August 2010 titled: “Mugabe Rewards Loyalists” demonstrates the newspaper’s level biasness. The newspaper did not cite any verifiable source throughout the news report or any section of the dossier other than allegations and assumptions. There was also no confirmation of Mujuru’s arrest either from the police commissioner general, Augustine Chihuri, or anyone in the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP). The Social Responsibility stresses the importance of observing media ethics such as reporting with fairness and balance aspects missing in the above cited reports. Next editorial commentaries are discussed.

6.9.2 Editorial comment

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean* Comment, 2009b:8) portrayed the MDC-T as soft and being a victim of ZANU PF’s political maneuvering (*The Zimbabwean* Comment, 2009b:8). *The*

Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) describing the victimhood of the MDC-T, wrote an editorial noting “A well-known Zanu PF official has ordered the murder of a 16-year-old boy and his henchmen have carried out in the most gruesome fashion” adding that “he was branded an MDC supporter and thereby became fair game for murderous thugs”.

The Zimbabwean (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) demonstrating how the MDC-T had suffered from “dirty” politics played by ZANU PF, cited the politics behind the appointment of Roy Bennett as Minister of Agriculture. Pointing out why ZANU PF would not allow Bennett to be sworn in as minister. *The Zimbabwean* noted: “[a]s we all know, Zanu has a lot to hide. The last thing they can afford is one of the victims of its vicious land grab scheme being in a position to expose exactly who has benefited from the process.”

The newspaper (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) also made an explicit revelation of the fact that MDC was a victim of ZANU PF violence across the country. *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) noted that “[i]n almost every issue of *The Zimbabwean* we carry stories from various parts of the country of violence perpetrated by Zanu PF members on MDC supporters and human rights defenders”. The newspaper on some occasions (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8; *The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2010c:8) took a critical stance on the MDC-T when the party was viewed to be acceding to demands by ZANU PF. On the issue of sanctions *The Zimbabwean* (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) noted that “[t]he MDC would be mad to agree to call for the lifting of visa and financial restrictions against Zanu fat cats before the swearing in of Bennett and settling of outstanding issues”.

The Zimbabwean presented the MDC as the only alternative that could bring media freedoms and democratic rights. *The Zimbabwean Comment* (*The Zimbabwean* 2010c:8) demonstrating the possibilities of transition to democratic norms through the MDC-T vehicle encouraged other party Members of Parliament (MPs) to “seize the opportunity” and fight for the repealing of AIPPA, proper registration of voters, and the reform of Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

The newspaper (*The Zimbabwean Comment*, 2009b:8) went as far as encouraging the MDC-T to remain vigilant in the democratic fight waged against ZANU PF, with its editorial urging that the

MDC must stand firm: “[h]aving taken the bold step of disengaging from Zanu PF, the MDC must ensure that it is not coerced into returning before all the outstanding issues are resolved”. Next to be discussed are interviews.

6.9.3 Interviews

Mxolisi Ncube (2012) pointed out that “most of the stories covered during the GPA involving ZANU PF had to do with violence meted to MDC activists by ZANU PF supporters”. He added that “When one speaks of violence from 2008 post March elections, one sees the images of ZANU PF supporters unleashing violence on MDC with a very minute revenge from the MDC”. Phiri noted that ZANU PF was fairly represented in the newspaper as stories written were either substantiated with pictures or given the right to respond even though ZANU PF officials refused commenting.

Mthulisi Ncube (2012), pointed out that journalists deliberately fabricated stories for *The Zimbabwean* as they knew such stories would easily sell. Although Mthulisi Ncube denied to have done it himself, he pointed out that he knew of his colleagues who in each of their stories used anonymous sources and pseudonyms. Mlilo (2011), to the contrary, observed that “*The Zimbabwean* to the best of its ability covered stories involving ZANU PF in an impartial way”, adding that due to ZANU PF violent nature, journalists were bound to follow much on such stories consequently making the other side insignificant.

Both Mxolisi Ncube (2012) and Mthulisi Ncube (2012), confirmed to this researcher that they viewed Morgan Tsvangirai as a democrat. The MDC-T was also presented as a party that sought to correct the evils of a ZANU PF dictatorial regime, by courageously contesting a brutal, murderous regime. Its leaders were presented in sampled articles as virtuous and the best potential for democracy in Zimbabwe. If it is said that *The Zimbabwean* newspaper took a critical position to keep political leaders accountable, the newspaper cannot pass such a test with its treatment of the MDC. It partially and partisanly lowered its critical bar of accountability in its reportage of the MDC, presenting the party as victims in a situation where they were supposed to be the legitimate government.

According to Phiri (2011) “the MDC-T leader was presented as an advocate for change who holds the key to unlock Zimbabwe’s freedom from ZANU PF authoritarian rule. The newspaper expected a lot from him”. Phiri’s (2011) statement on the newspaper’s expectations helps to illustrate how *The Zimbabwean* also became part and parcel of the MDC-T political agenda and propaganda. However, Phiri (2012) argues that Tsvangirai had been portrayed as weak due to his constant consultation with SADC on every matter. Phiri’s (2012) statement however, could not be substantiated anywhere as the newspapers sampled only carried stories of Mugabe being at the helm of stalling progress. Phiri’s (2012) perception of Tsvangirai’s weakness could not therefore be substantiated on the basis of the newspaper bulletins sampled. This assumption can only be understood as her opinion.

Siebert *et al* (1963:96), assert that freedom of expression is a moral right with an aspect of duty about it, further noting the importance of individual duty to her/his thoughts and ideas. Hence, it is this moral right bestowed upon journalists that expects them to perform their duties with more responsibility.

The Zimbabwean can be said to have taken a critical stance when reporting on ZANU PF while proactively supporting the MDC formation led by Morgan Tsvangirai. The Social Responsibility Theory calls for the media to observe journalistic ethics such as balance, truthfulness, fairness, objectivity (McQuail, 2005:170). Hence, *The Zimbabwean* according to the Social Responsibility Theory could be said to have failed to play its normative role of reporting objectively, without bias and observing journalistic ethics – fairness, balance, accuracy and truthful (McQuail, 2010:173).

6.10 Chapter Summary

A closer look on how *The Zimbabwean* newspaper represented contentious issues during the country’s contested transition demonstrates that *The Zimbabwean* played a propagandist role for the MDC-T party. Even though ZANU PF got extensive coverage it was entirely negative; hence, it can be argued that the newspaper was more of an anti-ZANU PF publication than

anything. The newspaper failed to objectively cover the GPA period as it maintained its biased stance of pro-MDC and anti-ZANU PF. So it can be concluded that through employing of the Social Responsibility model *The Zimbabwean* can be said to have failed to play its normative role. The next section deals with conclusion and recommendation.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion and Recommendations

7.1 Introduction

This study focused on establishing the political role of the diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the Global Political Agreement period (2008-2010). *The Zimbabwean* newspaper was used as the case to conduct the research. This researcher sought to investigate if the newspaper adhered to the journalistic code of ethics by employing the Social Responsibility theoretical lens.

In conducting this investigation, the researcher studied newspaper reports, editorial commentaries and conducted interviews with journalists who moonlighted for the newspaper during the research period. This study is informed partly by Moyo's (2005:113) observation that independent media in repressive regimes is argued to proactively play an oppositional role. Moyo further observes that "where opposition political parties are weak or non-existent owing to state repression, the 'independent' press can occupy that role of opposition". This researcher sought to investigate whether or not *The Zimbabwean* newspaper confirmed Moyo's analysis or managed to stick to journalistic ethics as espoused by the Social Responsibility Theory.

It is within this contextual milieu that four major political issues in Zimbabwe's contested transition were identified, namely violence, sanctions, the constitution and land reform programme. These issues were selected on the basis of having received extensive coverage pursuant to the preliminary research conducted. These themes were also selected on the basis of them being central issues that needed to be addressed by Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity. The data selected from *The Zimbabwean* newspaper was published after March 31, 2008 until December 31, 2010.

7.2 Concluding summary on Literature Review

This study's main focus was on the political role of diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the GPA era. Hence, literature that was utilised reviewed the political role of the media in democracy and political role of diaspora media. The literature reviewed covered the political role of the media broadly and also dealt with the political role of the diaspora media in Zimbabwe especially during the contested transition.

7.3 Concluding summary on the Theoretical Framework

The Social Responsibility theoretical model was used as an analytical tool in understanding the political role of the diaspora media in Zimbabwe's contested transition. The definition of this theoretical lens was given in chapter dealing with theoretical framework. From the Social Responsibility theory, this study sought to establish the extent to which *The Zimbabwean* newspaper with its journalists embraced journalistic tenets as espoused by the theoretical model of the Social Responsibility. The Social Responsibility Theory addresses issues of media ethics, ownership, regulation and control (McQuail, 2005:170; Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1963:4). The Social Responsibility Theory also emphasises the importance of respecting the media's code of ethics that among others calls for truthful and responsible journalism. Hence, in this study the researcher attempted to understand whether or not, and the extent to which *The Zimbabwean* newspaper adhered to the normative expectations of the media as espoused by the theoretical model chosen.

7.4 Concluding summary on the Research Methodology

This study employed the triangulation method, that of employing both qualitative and quantitative methodology. For qualitative methodology, content analysis and semi-structured interviews were conducted. In the execution of the quantitative methodology, a head count of bulletins was conducted. The researcher did a numerical count of news reports and editorial

commentaries. Through employing the research techniques of content analysis and semi-structured interviews, this researcher established uniformity between news reports and interviews. The findings of this research concluded that there was generally harmony between views expressed by journalists and coverage by the publication. Next to be discussed is the conclusion.

7.5 Conclusion on the positions of *The Zimbabwean* on identified themes

This section contains conclusions on the positions taken by *The Zimbabwean* using the Social Responsibility Theory. The identified themes are the constitution, violence, the land issue and sanctions. Coverage of the key political parties in the GPA (ZANU PF and MDC-T) was also analysed.

Editorial Comments and News Reports

7.5.1 Conclusion on the constitution-making process

This study concluded that from the theoretical Social Responsibility model, *The Zimbabwean* newspaper failed to give an objective view of the constitution-making process. It can be argued that the newspaper played a propagandist role labeling the constitution-making drive as chiefly a skewed exercise that sought to retain ZANU PF dominance through the Kariba Draft. Both the news reports and editorial commentaries framed the constitution-making process as an exercise manipulated by ZANU PF.

7.5.2 Conclusion on political violence

On the issue of violence, *The Zimbabwean* newspaper projected violence as state-sponsored and state-backed. The newspaper's reports and editorial commentaries gave a picture of violence as coming from ZANU PF with perpetrators being shielded by the Police Commissioner Augustine Chihuri. *The Zimbabwean* muted its voice on violence perpetrated by the MDC factions. This researcher concluded that the newspaper played the role of demonising ZANU PF while painting MDC led by Tsvangirai as victims. Hence, from a theoretical Social Responsibility model it can

be concluded that *The Zimbabwean* failed to give an accurate and balanced account of violence in Zimbabwe's political contestations.

7.5.3 Conclusion on the land reform

Regarding the coverage of the land issue in both the editorial commentaries and news reports the researcher concluded that *The Zimbabwean* sought to frame this issue as chaotic, and an issue that was used as a vote-catching gimmick by ZANU PF. *The Zimbabwean's* failure to cite empirical research conducted on the land reform could be viewed as bias as the research conducted dispels notion of the land reform as entirely chaotic and as having benefited only the ZANU PF elite. Hence, from a Social Responsibility model it can be argued that *The Zimbabwean* failed to play its normative role as it only gave a one-sided view that was sympathetic to the MDC-T.

7.5.4 Conclusion on sanctions

Regarding the issue of sanctions, this study concluded that *The Zimbabwean* according to the news reports and editorial comments failed to give a fair and balanced view on sanctions. *The Zimbabwean* newspaper reduced sanctions and framed them as restrictive measures. Hence, from a Social Responsibility framework it can be argued that *The Zimbabwean* failed to play its role.

Political parties

7.5.5 Conclusion on the coverage of ZANU PF

On the issue of coverage of ZANU PF, the researcher concluded that *The Zimbabwean* newspaper gave a one-sided perspective as it only reported on the "evils" perpetrated by the party and failed to give the other side.

7.5.6 Conclusion on the coverage of the MDC-T

On the issue of the coverage of the MDC-T in its editorial comments and news reports, the researcher concluded that *The Zimbabwean* played a propagandist role as it muted the MDC-T

violence and presenting the party as the only option toward attaining democracy. On the few occasions when *The Zimbabwean* criticised the MDC-T, such criticism was meant to harden the stance the party was taking in its engagement with ZANU PF. From a Social Responsibility model it can be concluded that *The Zimbabwean* failed to play its normative role.

7.6 Conclusion on Interviews with journalists

On interviews, this study concluded that *The Zimbabwean* journalists' views, to a greater extent, influenced the reportage by the publication. All journalists interviewed were of the view that ZANU PF and Mugabe were "evil" and committed atrocities. They also expressed concern over how the land reform exercise had been manipulated for political gain. Journalists also defended their failure to interview ZANU PF as a structural challenge imposed by President Mugabe's dictatorship. From a Social Responsibility Theory, it can be concluded that the journalists who moonlighted for *The Zimbabwean* deliberately wrote news reports in a way they knew would see their reports published.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

In the analysis of *The Zimbabwean* newspaper this researcher concluded that the media outlet played an advocacy role. *The Zimbabwean* could be said to have acted as an anti-Mugabe political machinery more than acting as an alternative to the already compromised and partisan state aligned media institutions.

The blatant support the newspaper rendered to the Movement for Democratic Change led by Morgan Tsvangirai and turning a blind eye to some intraparty violence, interparty violence and corruption and anti-democratic tendencies embedded within the Tsvangirai led party are of concern not only for this study but any study on Zimbabwe's decade of contested legitimacy. This cast qualms on the credibility of media institutions operating outside the country, especially in contested transitions.

However, it should be noted that *The Zimbabwean* played a crucial role that otherwise would not have been played – that of giving the other view other than that of the incumbent regime. Against this unfriendly and hostile media environment, the newspaper filled the gap that was left with the closure of *The Daily News*, *Tribune* and *Mirror* at the height of state-sanctioned media repression. This role played by *The Zimbabwean* is certainly very important considering that a few months after being established it became the most sought-after newspaper in the country causing the state media to dwindle in readership.

While, the international media focused on President Mugabe's repressive legislative regime in the country, this study has managed to also demonstrate the failure of alternative diasporic media in giving an objective, balanced, fair, and truthful representation of the Zimbabwean crisis. In some instances the diaspora media has gone to the extremes in coloring the Zimbabwean crisis as to receive international sympathy for the oppositional pro-democracy forces.

7.8 Relevance of the study

The study on the political role of diaspora media in mediation of the Zimbabwe crisis is relevant considering that in the past decade the Zimbabwe government has enacted legal and extra-legal legislative regime as to ensure objectivity and fairness in media reportage. It is against this background that it would be important to make an assessment on how the Zimbabwean media operating outside the confines of the country's laws operated and establish if the Zimbabwe government had relatively good grounds of enacting a series of legislative framework.

A number of studies that have been carried out in the past decade have focused more on the legislative regime that was enacted to stifle dissent while leaving the critical evaluation of the diaspora media without much research. It is generally considered that all diaspora media are promoting democracy, hence, this study helped to confirm or dispel those foregone conclusions.

7.9 Recommendations

It is imperative to note that just like other studies; this research had its own limitations. Three of the journalists interviewed were still freelancing for *The Zimbabwean* at the time this research was conducted. This researcher is of the view that their attachment to *The Zimbabwean* could have influenced their input even though assurances were made.

7.9.1 Recommendations on theoretical model

This researcher conducted an investigation employing the Social Responsibility model. The objective was to understand whether or not *The Zimbabwean*'s journalists observed journalistic tenets as espoused by the Social Responsibility Theory. However, research on the influence of ownership and funding of diaspora media especially on reportage could be of interest for further study. ZANU PF has argued that the diaspora media is funded by those fighting for regime change and with a neo-imperialism agenda. Taking this into cognizance, further research on *The Zimbabwean* and other diasporic media, utilising the political economy theory on the media could enrich the focus of this study.

7.9.2 Recommendations on enlarged period

While, this study has focused on the political role of the diaspora media in the mediation of the crisis from 2008 to 2010 it is the view of this researcher that the investigation was not exhaustive. A similar study could be conducted focusing on a ten-year period (2000-2010). This period is useful factoring that it is generally regarded in political and media scholarship as Zimbabwe's decade of crisis. This period is also useful as it has witnessed more political involvement in media operations than any other period in Zimbabwe's 30 year period of independence. The period 2000-2010 has seen the rise of a vibrant opposition political party (MDC), the closure of independent media, enactment of repressive legislative regime, arrests and torture of journalists, sprouting of diaspora journalism and the enactment of GNU.

7.10 Summary

This study attempted to understand the political role of the diaspora media in the mediation of the Zimbabwe crisis during the country's contested transitional GPA period, 2008-2010. This investigation began by giving a historical background of Zimbabwe's media and political history. A section dealing with literature review attempted to bring to the fore other related studies that have been carried out. Chapter three addressed the theoretical framework employed. Chapter four discussed the research design and methodology used while, chapter five dealt with findings of the research. Chapter six dealt with data analysis and made a conclusion that *The Zimbabwean* newspaper failed to meet expectations of the Social Responsibility Theory. Chapter seven discussed the conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

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Addendum A: Interview questions

Did *The Zimbabwean* newspaper play any political role in the mediation of the Zimbabwean crisis during the GPA era?

What are the main political issues that *The Zimbabwean* profile during the GPA?

In your view, how did the GPA affect the media terrain during the period 2008-2010? –

Was there a shift in the way *The Zimbabwean* reported on its stories post the signing of the GPA?

In the context of political violence, how did *The Zimbabwean* report on violence during GPA signing era?

In the context of the constitutional making process, what position did *The Zimbabwean* take and how did it (*The Zimbabwean*) report?

In the context of sanctions, how did *The Zimbabwean* report?

In the context of land reform exercise, how did *The Zimbabwean* report?

How did *The Zimbabwean* report on ZANU PF and MDC-T during the GPA?

What are your personal views regarding the following issues: Sanctions, Political Violence, Land Reform, Constitution-making, ZANU PF and MDC-T?

Did your views influence how you reported?