



MIDLANDS STATE UNIVERSITY

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DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURE, AND CULTURAL STUDIES

**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE ZIMBABWEAN POLITICAL NEW DISPENSATION IN
SELECTED NEW MEDIA FROM NOVEMBER 2017 TO APRIL 2023**

By

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**A dissertation submitted to the department of Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies,
Midlands State University, in partial fulfillment of requirements for a Bachelor of Arts
English and Communication Honors Degree.**

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have read this research document, approved it for submission and marking as it conforms to the **Languages, Literature and Cultural Studies Department** requirements.

Supervisor's signature.....**Date**.....

DECLARATION

I declare that **Representations of the Zimbabwe Political New Dispensation in Selected New Media from November 2017 to April 2023** is my own work and has not been submitted before to any other Degree or examination in any other University. I declare that all references used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged as complete references in the references list.

Mathew M.T Magwarada

(R194656M)

Signature.....

Date.....

DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this dissertation to all academics and non academics that find fascination and have the zeal to understand more about the coercive power of images.

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Writing this dissertation required a difficult ascent. It would have been a challenging endeavor if it weren't for the kind and uplifting help I received from God and people who surrounded me. But thanks to all the help and encouragement, the experience was exciting and fascinating. I must thus convey my gratitude to the following in this regard:

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ABSTRACT

Although the concept of media representation is not new, the development of new media technologies has changed and improved the way that people and events are portrayed on internet platforms. The goal of this qualitative study was to examine how the New Dispensation in Zimbabwean politics was portrayed in a few different new media platforms. The state-run (The Herald) and private (Zimbabwe Daily and NewsDay) online news outlets, as well as their Facebook pages, were among the new media technologies chosen. This study examined both real photographs and caricatures that were utilized in the new media to portray Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation. In order to uncover the images' underlying meanings, the Social Semiotic Theory and Agenda Setting Theory were applied to the analysis of the photographs. Interviews were also useful for getting information. Therefore, the primary thrust of the dissertation was on how new media technologies use pictures to create different portrayals of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. It was consequently concluded that because both the state and private internet news outlets have a particular ideology they strive to transmit through their representations, both are prejudiced in how they portray the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. Additionally, the study found that there is no such thing as negative publicity, indicating that honest and authentic opinions can be found in those framed representations.

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Area of Study

The way people transmit information and the effects that information has on its audience are both profoundly impacted by advances in information and technology. Through diverse types of representation, new media technologies alter people's perspectives of the world. This study attempted to comprehend how images are utilized to produce representations in the media, which places it within the area of Languages and Communication. With an emphasis on Zimbabwe's New Dispensation from November 2017 to April 2023, its main objective was to investigate how governments are portrayed using pictures in new media technologies. To portray anything is to represent it while conveying meaning through language. Representation ties meaning and language to culture since it is the use of language to meaningfully portray the world to others. According to Hall (2020), as representation entails the use of words, signs, and images that stand for things, it is an essential step in the process of generating meaning among members of a society. In the context of connecting people, new media refers to enhanced digital media technology. New media, as defined by Wardrip and Montfort (2003), are information and communication technologies and applications like mobile phones, the internet, and the World Wide Web's high-quality publishing and information-sharing capabilities. In new media, representation can take many different forms, including audio, video, text, and visuals.

People use new media platforms for political discussions since authoritarian countries lack media censorship, allowing them to remain anonymous and avoid detention. The representations made between November 2017, when the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe took office, and April 2023, the month of Zimbabwe's independence in a year of the national elections, are evaluated in this research. This study focuses on new media websites, including communication, social networking, and news websites. The main goal of this qualitative study is to examine how both the government and the opposition use memes and caricatures to visually represent the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation through new media. The study concentrates on the positive and negative aspects of new media as well as how it helps dictatorial nations raise political consciousness. The findings are drawn from a semiotic analysis of realistic and caricatured image representations, as well as from in-depth interviews with the creators and

viewers of the images. The primary idea is that new media technologies are employed to deceive people through representation, each of which carries a different ideology.

1.2 Background of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate how images are used by both official and opposition media to represent the New Dispensation of Zimbabwe in the new media. Colonial governments have promoted themselves and their preferred ideologies through the media ever since colonial times. The colonial administration in Zimbabwe used the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation (RBC) to spread its principles among the populace and to present a favorable image of itself. One of the severe pieces of law the Rhodesian government employed to combat media restriction was the Broadcasting Act of 1957. The Zimbabwean African National Union People's Front (ZANU PF) has controlled the country's government and media since Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. Canaan Sodindo Banana was elected the first Colonial President of Zimbabwe after the Lancaster House Agreement. He resigned as president in 1987, and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe took over as the head of state. Cde Emerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa overthrew Mugabe in a de facto coup in 2017. Since Zimbabwe's independence till the present, the media has had a significant impact on how the country's citizens see its leadership.

The term "New Dispensation" is used to describe Mnangagwa's rule, which began on November 17, 2017, and claims to be distinct from Mugabe's prior dictatorship in terms of its values and goals in growing the country, although sharing the same political party. The failure of alternative political parties to win the nation's democratic elections, in spite of several campaigns criticizing the flaws of the ruling party, has given rise to media accusations of election manipulation against the incumbent party. The media has split between pro-government and pro-opposition factions. These polarizations give rise to distinct representational forms.

The government in Zimbabwe largely controls the media. Through the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Cooperation (ZBC), the Ministry of Information and Publicity, and coercive laws, the state regulates the media, mainly print and broadcast media. To combat this, the vast majority of journalists and the general public now express their ideas through New Media or digital media. To portray itself favorably in the media, the Zimbabwean government imposed draconian media laws akin to those used by the colonial power. For instance, colonial governments exploited the Broadcasting Act (1957) to establish a state monopoly in broadcasting following independence

up until the Supreme Court rejected it in 2001 (Moyo, 2003). The Zimbabwean government continued to enact restrictive regulations, preventing the Broadcasting Act of 2001 from liberalizing the media sector (Maputseni, 2006).

Even though the environment for print media had always been deregulated and pluralistic, even during the colonial period, both public and private media in the post-independence era operated with extreme caution because the media environment remained a minefield due to restrictive laws carried over from the colonial period. Zimbabwe has laws that regulate the media, such as the Criminal Defamation Act, Official Secrets Act, and Public Order and Security Act (enacted in 2002 to replace the Law and Order Maintenance Act) (Manganga, 2012). The new black government, like its colonial forerunner, employed shady and extralegal strategies, such as the "promotion" of subpar editors and the intimidation of journalists. For instance, veteran reporter Willie Musarurwa was let go from his position as editor of *The Sunday Mail* in 1985 due to his unwavering commitment to courageous and truthful reporting (Moyo, 2003). According to Chari (2011), some privately owned newspapers in Zimbabwe were forced to close as a result of the passage of strict media restrictions such the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA, 2002), which was reportedly passed to tame an increasingly militant and 'unprofessional' press. As a result, many journalists emigrated to nearby nations like South Africa and Botswana as well as to nations in Europe like the United Kingdom and the United States. Some of them launched Zimbabwe-specific news websites and online magazines to make a living. The majority of these magazines were essentially online versions of long-gone newspapers. The majority of them therefore resembled the *Daily News* and the *Daily News on Sunday*, both of which were shut down on September 11, 2003. Nyarota (2008) claims that the *Daily News* was replaced by Wilf Mbabga's *The Zimbabwean*, *The Zimbabwean.com*, Abel Mutsakani's *Zimonline.com*, Mduduzi Mathuthu's *NewZimbabwe.com*, Sandra Nyaira's *Zimbabwejournalists.com*, and Makusha Mugabe's *Changezimbabwe.com*.

Political rivalries have long divided Zimbabwe, with Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opponents and supporters of the ruling ZANU-PF party on opposite sides. The former president Robert Mugabe, who favored a one-party state, may be to blame for this divide. Marima (2019) claims that Mugabe propagated the idea of singularity while serving as the leader of the nationalist liberation struggle. Throughout Mugabe's rule, a number of opposition media outlets

grew to attack and disparage the government. Despite the complexity of Zimbabwe's acute political and economic crisis since 2000, Ranger (2005) and Phister & Raftopoulos (2004) assert that, the general consensus is that the state failed to uphold the rule of law and respect for human rights while being heavily pressed by civil society, opposition parties, and the media to adopt democratic reforms. Zimbabwe has had a phenomenal explosion in the number of news websites and online publications since the turn of the millennium.

New communication avenues were made available by the new media, particularly for political opposition parties. Mugabe perceived the Internet as a challenge to his authority because he was aware of its potency. According to Marima (2019), the Ministry of Cyber-security, Mitigation, and Threat Detection was established in 2017 to keep an eye on online interactions because the prevailing government's opinion under Mugabe's rule was that social media was a tool of dissent aimed to topple the state. In contrast, the political rivalry between ZANU PF and the Citizens for Coalition Change (CCC), which is led by Nelson Chamisa who took over as MDC leader after Morgan Tsvangirai's death, has come to define the New Dispensation. Both conventional and digital media are used by these political parties to resolve their differences. Moyo (2009) asserts that the government and those who oppose it have engaged in ideological combat not only through conventional media like radio, television, and newspapers but also through digital media like the Internet.

The development of new media has increased people's ability to communicate and freely express themselves. It has dismantled the obstacles put up by strict laws that forbid the media from commenting freely. This study examines how the state and its critics use digital or new media to influence how the general public views the Zimbabwean government. As a result, the *"Representations of the Zimbabwean Political New Dispensation in selected New Media from November 2017 to April 2023"*

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The Zimbabwean political New Dispensation formed in response to growing discontent with Mugabe's autocratic and tyrannical regime appeared at a period when information and technology tools had greatly advanced. People anticipated that the new rule would be drastically different from the old one. Some people believe that this is simply new wine in antique bottles. Every government, no matter how good it is, is subject to criticism. This has not been spared the

Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. There have been massive political battles between opposition and official media in Zimbabwe. New Media technologies are free political discussion channels where anyone can freely speak on a country's politics without fear of being imprisoned. However, New Media depictions are inevitably biased because each media message seeks to glorify one ideology whilst disparaging another. Draconian government restrictions that restrict free expression and press control result in a flood of negative pictures of governments on social media, while the government uses social media to exonerate itself. Every research study attempts to solve a problem; the topic addressed by this research is how the New Media is abused in various portrayals of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation and the audience's reactions to it.

1.4 Research Aims and Objectives

- Examine selected New Media Sites/Digital Media sites dominantly used to represent the Zimbabwean New Dispensation.
- Understanding Zimbabwe's New Dispensation in the New Media.
- Various representations of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation in the New Media

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the dominant New Media sites used to form representations of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation?
- How people understand the Zimbabwean New Dispensation through the new media?
- What are the various representations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation in the New Media?

1.7 Significance of the Study

This research has theoretical and practical significances for Language and Literature studies, as well as media and communication studies. The outcomes of this study are intended to contribute to and broaden the field of representation and semiotics. It also enhances theoretical understanding and expertise in media theories such as agenda setting. Students will benefit from this research in practice. This study teaches them about representational meaning and semiotics, which are relevant to their lives and studies. This research gives supplemental material to teachers, notably in the fields of representational meaning and semiotics. The researchers are inspired to pursue additional research on New Media, representational meaning, and semiotics as

a result of this work. It is also important for policymakers because it educates them on the impacts of media representation and encourages them to develop legislation to mitigate these effects. In general, this study gives information about political and government portrayals in digital media.

1.7 Research Methodology

1.7.1 Research Design

The social constructivist perspective serves as the foundation for this qualitative study. Social constructivists contend that people seek the understanding of their surroundings. In order to understand how citizens interact with digital technologies and how Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation is represented, this research looks at how new media technologies are used. A systematic scientific examination known as qualitative research tries to produce a thorough, mostly narrative description of a social or cultural phenomenon in order to advance the researcher's understanding of it. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), categorizing data and finding patterns (relationships) between categories are key steps in the inductive process of qualitative research. In order to understand the effects of new media technologies, this study's analysis is a combination of desk research using photographs that were downloaded and fieldwork, which involved conducting interviews with people. In this study, the researcher examines images posted on new media technologies to reflect the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe from November 2017 to April 2023. These photos are examined using the social semiotics theory.

1.7.2 Target Population

The people and objects that meet a study's criteria for data gathering are considered the target population. The target population, according to Coughlan et al. (2007), is made up of all respondents who satisfy the given set of requirements. Downloading photos from new media platforms, each of which presents a different viewpoint on Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation, was how the information for this study was gathered. All media professionals and specialists who are aware of the production process for media material are the study's target audience. Users and audiences of new media, who engage with digital technologies by sharing and discussing various representations of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation, are another group that was targeted.

1.7.3 Sampling Technique

It is not feasible to gather information from every person and evaluate the images, ideologies, and effects of new media technologies on people. Covering every developing media technology would be impossible. Additionally, not all images with representations may be investigated. Finally, it is practically impossible to get the perspectives of all new media users as well as media professionals. Samples were chosen in order to address this difficulty. Sampling is the process of choosing a subset of a population to represent the full population in order to gather data about an interesting event. The sample for this study consists of media users, practitioners, and professionals.

This investigation used the non-probability sampling techniques. Non-probability sampling involves selecting participants based on non-random factors; not every participant has an equal chance of being selected. Non-probability sampling techniques are frequently utilized in qualitative research (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The snow bow sampling method was used in this study's interviews with media experts and professionals. It involves previously interviewed individuals recommending other information-rich sources. By employing this approach, it became possible to get over the problem of a lack of participation, which arises from the fact that many media professionals and experts may be reluctant to express their opinions for fear of being viewed as political.

Purposive sampling was also used in this investigation. This kind of sampling entails choosing a sample that will be most beneficial to the study's goals. Carefully selected new media technologies are used to express the New Dispensation, with a focus on those that are valuable and meaningful. Additionally, the researcher selects images from a range of new media platforms that are significant to the investigation and relevant.

1.7.4 Research Approach

The analysis of images from the government and its opponents that depict the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe informs this research. It is vital to assess representational representations, identify their ideologies, and gauge their influence on people as a result. The researcher conducted an impartial representational and semiotic analysis of the images using the social semiotic approach.

1.7.5 Social Semiotics Approach

The social semiotic method is used in this study to analyze the photos in question. Meaning production and meaning producers are the main subjects of the study of social semiotics. It looks into the means people create and employ to express their worldview and alter the dynamics of power they have with others. All kinds of representation and communication are seen from the perspective of social semiotics as meaning-making systems that are linked to social and cultural systems (Kress, 2003). People use social and culturally molded resources when acting in social contexts to create meaning (Kress 2010).

Additionally, Robert Hodge, Gunther Kress, and Theo van Leeuwen developed Social Semiotics as a multimodal sign-making theory in their writings (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2002; van Leeuwen, 2005; Kress, 2010). It has its roots in functional linguistics, particularly in Michael Halliday's 1978 work. According to Halliday's theory, a language develops as a result of social interactions; its resources are influenced by the functions that language has picked up to meet the demands of human communication. In their book "Social Semiotics" (1988), Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress expanded on Halliday's method of moving from language to sign-making. They claimed that societies create and shape all semiotic resources in order to carry out particular social functions and reveal the values, discourse systems, structures, and power dynamics of a social group. However, they mostly concentrated on words and images in 'print' media (such as magazines and billboards), discussing examples from diverse social contexts using various forms. In their book "Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design" (van Leeuwen, 2008), Kress and van Leeuwen created a social semiotic approach to the visual and analyzed the visual as a mode. This method is ideal for the study because the primary focus is on images, which have abstract meanings that call for semiotic interpretation. The shared meaning in a society based on signs is the foundation of the social semiotic analysis. This study contends that representations of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation are developed in such a way that people in Zimbabwean society may grasp them due to common meaning values.

1.7.6 Data Presentation and Analysis

The nature of this research is analytical. Images and interviews were used to collect data for the study. The data is organized thematically. The social semiotic technique is used to analyze these photographs. The ideology of these images is contrasted with the responses of the interviews,

allowing the researcher to draw conclusions regarding the influence of new media technology depictions of governments on individuals by employing representation theory and agenda-setting theory.

1.7.8 Ethical Considerations

In research, ethical considerations are a set of guidelines that direct study designs and methods. There are guidelines that researchers must adhere to when gathering data from individuals (Pietilä et al., 2020). Research validity, academic integrity, and the rights of study participants are all improved by ethical considerations. This study is supported by a number of ethical considerations, which take into account research subjects' willingness to participate. All participants were made aware of the study's objectives, advantages, and risks before consenting to participate. The researcher maintained participant confidentiality by respecting the requests of those who wanted to protect their anonymity. All interviews were ethically performed. To avoid plagiarism, the researchers and sources of material used in this study will be properly credited.

1.8 Literature Review

1.8.1 Representations in the Media

The mainstream media can never present a complete and unbiased picture; instead, it uses language and imagery to present representations of reality due to a number of complex factors, such as time and space constraints, perceived newsworthiness, prevalent societal norms, audience considerations, media outlets' political views, etc. According to van Leeuwen (2008), many media discourse researchers have been particularly interested in how media texts portray particular individuals or groups of social actors. By using name and visual techniques, some facets of identity can be subtly accentuated. Gill and Gill (2007) assert that the unequal distribution of rights and worldviews creates a stratified world based on gender, color, ethnicity, class, age, disability, sexual orientation, and geography. These variances are mostly mirrored in mainstream media discourse and govern how representations are constituted. This study focuses on how different political perspectives result in different portrayals of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation through images in the new media.

While creating representations, the media connects with its audience through a multitude of ways. Through its diverse depictions of the world, media communication instills ideals in its

audience. Berendsen's (2015) "Media representation of feminism" explores a variety of modern themes influencing people's daily lives, including racism, culture, gender, education, and politics. This study uses similar methods to examine how the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is represented in the new media.

Wood (1994) looked into the gender stereotypes that are present in the media. He thinks that one major way the media distorts reality is by under-representing women. Similar to this, Basow (1992) asserts that there are three times as many white men as women during prime time television, which under-represents women. Researchers on masculinity Eisler and Blalock (1991) claim that boys are regularly portrayed in children's media as aggressive, domineering, and involved in fun activities for which they receive praise from others for their "masculine" accomplishments. The majority of men on prime-time television, according to McCauley et al (1988), are autonomous, aggressive, and in positions of power. Men are disproportionately portrayed as being serious, self-assured, intelligent, powerful, and holding high-status jobs in television programming for all age groups. As conventional masculine characteristics have been redrawn to be harder and more apart from others, male tenderness has vanished (Bayer, 1986). As a result, this study contributes to the study of representation by examining political images in new media as opposed to concentrating on representation through videos that are shown on television, an old media.

In his study of new media, Castells (2000) argues that information and communication technology have influenced not only modern civilizations but also some of the most well-known social organizations in the world. In society and scientific practice, people's expectations regarding the sources, accessibility, and uses of information across all media are changing, (Lievrouw, 2010). Political representation, in particular, is impacted by the media. Political leaders are communicating with citizens and potential supporters more and more through contemporary communication technology. Examples include Barack Obama's presidential campaigns (Borins, 2009), Gordon Brown's 2010 election campaign in the United Kingdom, the German parliamentary elections in 2009, and the various political communication initiatives of European Parliament members, commissioners, and others (Anderson, 2010; Tumasjan, Sprenger, Sandner, & Welpe, 2011).

In the 2012 thesis, Tarasova explores Russian adaptations of Simon Anholt's Nation Branding theory in "The Image of Russia" (Anholt, 2007). The empirical study looks at the country's representation in English-language media from both international and Russian sources. The comparison and contrast of Russian and English media was the aim of the study. Tarasova (2012) cites prior research that showed domestic media outlets were more dependable and promoted a more positive image of their country of origin during comparable events in other nations, despite attempts to manage the branding process and change the country's image. Local media supports the government when significant events, like the World Cup or other national sporting competitions, are held in a nation, as opposed to international media, which paints a negative picture of the nation (Latham, 2009; Hoppe, 2010). This study contributes to the body of knowledge by examining how Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation is portrayed on the New Media platforms of both opposition and state media.

Through the use of critical discourse analysis, Martnez's (2014) thesis adds to the study of media representation by examining twelve English-language pieces from Russian and worldwide media sources. The selection of the pieces was made in response to the unofficial Pussy Riot protest that took place in the Moscow Cathedral in February 2012 and the accompanying social upheavals. The study's main goal was to compare the ways in which media outlets from different regions reported on the same news and events. As a result, the administration is portrayed in various ways by the media. This study aims to fill in information gaps about how the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is clearly portrayed in contemporary media on related happenings.

Zhang (2017) examined the media coverage of Chinese President Xi Jinping's first three years in office in *The New York Times*. The *New York Times* covered the Chinese President in a number of contexts, with China-US relations, domestic campaigns, and methods gaining more media attention than human rights, according to the statistics. This study fills a knowledge vacuum on the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe's new media, both government and opposition.

Nkomo (2016) looks into how the media portrayed political leadership and governance in South Africa between December 2007 and January 2013, which was President Jacob Zuma's first term as the ANC's leader and later as the country's president (starting in May 2009). The research concentrated on documenting the schemes of the political elite. A crucial lens for assessing,

delving into, and engaging with post-apartheid political leadership is provided by Zuma's time as president of South Africa and head of his party, the ANC. This study closes a knowledge vacuum about the Mnangagwa era by offering a crucial viewpoint for assessing and evaluating the post-Mugabe era.

The media employs a range of representational tactics to distort reality and the perspectives of its audience. Media depictions shape people's perspectives of politics, society, and the economy. Many academics have investigated popular media portrayals. This study tries to analyze and comprehend how the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is represented in new media by evaluating photos in particular.

1.8.2 Representations of the Zimbabwean Government in the Media

The state media and its rivals have consistently represented the Zimbabwean government in traditional and digital media. The media has continually produced numerous representations of the administration, influencing the public's impressions, from the Mugabe era to the current Mnangagwa era. It is important to note that traditional and digital media are both used by Western media to portray the Zimbabwean government. An example of how new media portrays the Zimbabwean government is the shocking Al Jazeera documentary of 2023 about corrupt officials in Zimbabwe and abroad who plundered Zimbabwean wealth. Officials of the Zimbabwean government and other well-known people have been suspected of participating in the illegal smuggling of gold from the nation. Since people share the Aljazeera documentary in groups after downloading it from YouTube, it is now available on almost all new media platforms. According to Askew (2006), the media today predominantly constructs representations of Africa for the rest of the world. According to Willems (2017), Zimbabwe has played a big part in British print and broadcast media since the year 2000. The Zimbabwean government has been outspoken in its condemnation of foreign images of the country, notably British media coverage. This study adds on to the body of knowledge of representation by specifically focusing on the image depictions of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation in the new media.

Political correctness, which is synonymous with disinformation, has severely harmed Zimbabwean media. Opposing political media sources have purposefully deceived the audience by distributing misleading information. Estimates of the number of people who attended political

rallies as the terms "bumper" and "paltry" became popular in the run-up to Zimbabwe's general elections on July 31, 2018, are a clear example of this (Chinaka, 2018). Even more so, when it comes to covering political issues, especially as elections approach, the private and state media are always at odds. The pro-MDC-Alliance private media generated the impression that MDC-A rallies were always larger than Zanu-PF gatherings by referring to the former as "bumper" and the latter as "paltry" (Madanhire, 2018). This study adds on to the debate about the political contestations in the media by exploring how the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is portrayed through images in the new media by both private and public media.

When it comes to how the Zimbabwean government is generally portrayed in the media, there is a stark division. According to Madanhire (2018), when Zanu PF leaders Terence Mukupe and Josiah Hungwe asserted that Zanu PF did not launch a coup to accept the election results that did not benefit them, the public media did the exact reverse, attacking Chamisa while ignoring Mukupe and Hungwe. The MDC-A's president, Nelson Chamisa, however, said at rallies that he would not recognize the results of the election if he did not win. As a result, Zimbabwe's media is split between the government and the opposition, each of which tries to discredit the other. The audience's reality is impacted by their representations. This study adds to this body of information by demonstrating how the visuals used to portray Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation are separated into pro-government and pro-opposition camps.

Political figures in Zimbabwe and abroad have started to use social media to positively portray themselves. Johnson (2018) asserts that Twitter was a popular platform for President Donald Trump to interact with the public. Ndlovu and Tshuma (2021) claim that President Mnangagwa of Zimbabwe set up Twitter and Facebook profiles soon after taking office in an effort to interact with the public. The price of goods and services increased quickly after the 2018 elections in Zimbabwe, and fuel and other necessities were in short supply, making Mnangagwa's administration challenging to start. Manjoro (2018) asserts that information and news regarding the economic crisis were widely disseminated on social media. As a result, Mnangagwa's presidency was negatively portrayed through new media outlets.

The private media in Zimbabwe frequently presents the government in a negative light. According to Matingo (2018), certain journalists in Zimbabwe were still the targets of political attacks leading up to the polls on July 30 that were primarily extrajudicial in nature. At a press

conference held at Defence House in Harare that same month, Colonel Overson Mugwisi, director of public relations for the Zimbabwe Defence Forces, for instance, singled out journalists Siphosami Malunga, Richard Chidza, Snodia Mawupeni, and Blessing Mashaya for "bad and mischievous reporting" (Newsday July 14, 2018). The comment, according to the tale, was made in an effort to frighten reporters and keep them from reporting on issues in the military. This bears witness to the government's portrayal as totalitarian and tyrannical.

The New Dispensation is well aware of these representations and urges its adherents to use new media to favorably portray their government as well. President Mnangagwa allegedly instructed the Youth League to engage opponents online and defend the party on December 14, 2018, during the annual conference of Zimbabwe's ruling party, Zanu-PF. Numerous academics have studied how the Zimbabwean government is portrayed in the media as well as how this affects people's opinions of the administration there. The goal of this study is to advance prior research and close a knowledge gap about representations of the Zimbabwean government through new media. It stands out because it looks into how new media interprets the current political climate. Its focus on visual representations alone is another unique characteristic. These comprise real photographs and caricatures that have been examined utilizing various new media technology platforms.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study's guiding theories are representation and the agenda setting theory. The primary function of theory, according to Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2011), is to direct the researcher. According to Khan and Law (2006), the best way to describe a theory is as an effort to create a thorough explanation for an occurrence. The two theories that will be used in this research are excellent at building strong cases and addressing every necessary perspective. The social semiotic approach's interpretation of the images' ambiguous meaning is made clearer by the notion of representation. The agenda-setting hypothesis increases the visibility of the latent ideologies concealed in the frames of the images under scrutiny. Each of these theories will therefore be essential in illuminating the applicability, achieving the goals, and resolving the research-related issues of this study.

1.9.1 The Concept of Representation

A representation is how something or someone is presented in writing, speaking, or other forms of media. In addition to the specific meanings that images and texts convey, representation also refers to the process through which those meanings are created. Beltrán (2018) defines representation as the meanings attached to mediated images and narratives like those seen in motion pictures, television shows, and music videos. The word has two meanings, according to the Oxford English Dictionary. The first is that anything is represented by being described, conjured up in the mind through storytelling or fiction, and then presented visually to our senses, as in the statement. To denote, represent, or act in place of is the second definition of representation. Social representation (SR) is described by Doise et al. (1993), Jodelet (1989), and Rateau et al. (2012) as the manner in which a particular event or object is portrayed in a population. This study examined how visual representations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation appearing through new media.

Stuart Hall defined the definition of representation that served as the foundation for this investigation. According to Hall (2020), representation is a critical component of the process by which meaning is generated and disseminated among members of a culture since it involves the use of words, signs, and images that represent objects. He developed reflective, intentional, and constructionist theories of meaning formation through representation. Language, according to the reflective hypothesis, does not simply reflect meanings found in the universe of things, people, and events. According to the intentional hypothesis, language only reveals what the speaker, writer, or artist want to convey, i.e., his or her intended meaning. The constructionist position also questions whether language creates meaning and how it is utilized. The constructivist approach is used in this work, which attempts to explain the meanings established by the different pictures used to characterize Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation.

1.9.2 Agenda Setting, Framing, and Priming

McCombs and Shaw's Agenda-Setting Theory from 1972 properly expresses the idea of agenda-setting, framing, and priming in the media. Setting the agenda refers to how the media elevates public awareness and attention to important issues. The agenda-setting research is founded on two assumptions:

1. The press and the media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it;

2. Media concentration on a few issues and subjects leads the public to perceive those issues as more important than other issues.

How information is conveyed to viewers through the media is referred to as media framing. The term "framing" was first used by Goffman to refer to a communication technique, which he defined as "a schema of interpretation" that helps people locate, recognize, name, and categorize events or life experiences (Goffman, 1974). The new definition of framing by Robert Entman (Entman, 1993) states that it involves drawing attention to particular aspects of the seen world in order to support a particular issue diagnosis, causal interpretation, moral assessment, and/or recommended course of action. The media's use of images to express the Zimbabwean New Dispensation is shaped and planned to emphasize a particular idea, which affects the audience and is crucial to our study.

Entman thinks that by relating agenda-setting, priming, and prejudice to media framing, readers will be able to understand how and why media framing takes place. Agenda setting, which emphasizes the issues that demand the government's attention, is the main objective of framing. The purpose and intended outcome of strategic actors' framing operations is priming (Entman, 1993). Even when prejudice is not ubiquitous, agenda-setting still happens. Combining agenda framing with priming has the potential to lead to widespread prejudice. Bias is defined by Entman (1993) as repeating tendencies in the design of mediated communication that favor the impact of one side in disagreements over the application of political power. This study will largely employ the Agenda Setting theory, with a particular emphasis on framing, to investigate how images in new media shape reality. The study looks at how the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is portrayed in both actual and caricatured imagery.

1.10 Limitations

From its beginning through April 2023, the study focuses on the roles of representations of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation in new media. The research concentrated on a variety of news media technology websites in order to cover a wide range of topics and provoke various reactions. Furthermore, the use of interviews reduces the risk of a biased research outcome because the perspectives of others will be considered.

1.11 Scope

This study focuses on the representation of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation in the new media. Since representation is broad, this study looks at representation through images particularly on the Facebook pages and official websites of Zimbabwe Daily, The Herald and NewsDay. The researcher selected images published between November 2017 and April 2023. The research gathers data from interviewing media professionals such as journalists; media experts such as media lecturers and the users of the media.

1.12 Delimitations

Direct interaction with famous journalists, editors, and media lecturers with experience in new media technologies can be challenging in some situations due to their work responsibilities and confidentiality, but researchers must nevertheless conduct interviews, even with officials of the same importance. Furthermore, the snowball and purpose sampling approaches, both of which are non-probability sampling strategies, will encourage bias because the researcher selects specific fields and persons who can supply relevant data for research.

1.13 Dissertation Layout

This research is composed of five chapters. In the first chapter, the reader is given a general understanding of the research's scope, which serves as an introduction to the study. This contains the background of the study, an explanation of the problem, the objectives of the study, and the significance of the study. The second chapter will explore the first objective of the study, which is to examine the New Media Sites/Digital Media sites dominantly used to represent the Zimbabwean New Dispensation. The third chapter addresses the second objective which is to understand what the New Dispensation is through the new media. The fourth chapter of this research is hinged on the third objective of this study which is to examine representations of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation in the New Media. The fifth chapter of this research serves as a concluding chapter. It summarizes the entire research.

CHAPTER 2: An Overview of Selected New Media sites

2.1 Introduction

Globally, the relationship between the state and the people has been radically altered by online media. The Zanu PF administration in Zimbabwe enacted restrictive regulations at the turn of the millennium, which caused the media space to be constrained and led to the proliferation of online newspapers and websites that are based outside of Zimbabwe. These internet publications have developed into forums for challenging the government's media monopoly, guaranteeing that opposing viewpoints will have a voice. However, speculation rather than unbiased research is still needed to determine the true effects of these "new public spheres" on Zimbabwean society in general and the democratization discourse. This chapter is based on a detailed assessment of the chosen new media platforms that serve as the New Dispensation's political mouthpiece in Zimbabwe. The chapter begins with describing the idea of new media and some of its properties in detail in order to provide clarity. This chapter's second section explores how new media, representation, and visual culture are related. The third section lists the chosen new media websites or platforms that were used to create representations of the political new media in Zimbabwe. This chapter's goal is to introduce the chosen new media outlets that will be utilized to examine the many ways in which the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation has been represented.

2.2 The Concept of New Media

When it comes to defining new media, there are many opposing viewpoints because different academics have different points of view. However, one commonality is that when we talk about new media, we are talking about digital tools that make communication easier. Podcasts, digital music, and newspaper articles are all examples of new media. New media refers to any internet-based form of communication, including websites, emails, mobile devices, and streaming software. Various technologies are referred to as new media. Examples of new media include blogs, podcasts, video games, virtual worlds, Wiki encyclopedias, other mobile devices, interactive televisions, websites, and email (Nicoleta, 2008). Others think that because they encourage the creation of online communities and social networks, blogs and virtual worlds should be categorized as social media. Despite the variety, several researchers found two characteristics that were included in the majority of definitions. These include giving information

to an infinite number of recipients in methods that can be customized based on criteria for approved categories and giving transmitters and receivers unequal control over information (Lister, 2009).

The phrase "new media" has also been in use since the 1960s, according to McQuail (2010), and refers to a broad range of applied communication technologies. Burton (2011), citing McQuail (2000), identified four key characteristics of "new media": participatory media, like internet chat rooms; interpersonal communication media, like email; interactive play media, like computer games; information search media, like internet search engines. Wigston (2009) claims that the emergence of new media technologies over the last 20 years has dramatically changed the media environment that many of us have been accustomed to, and he also claims that the internet has changed the way the majority of us work and live when assessing the impact of the internet two decades after its inception.

According to Bennett (2013) and Wardrip-Fruin & Montfort (2003), new media also includes developing Internet and streaming technologies, wireless networks, mobile phones, wireless networks, and the World Wide Web's high-quality publishing and information-sharing capabilities. Van Dijk (2006) defined new media as communication technologies that use digital code and are both integrated and interactive. As a result, for a medium to be categorized as new media, integration, interaction, and digitalization must all be present. The term "new" establishes the parameters within which new media should be interpreted in relation to more traditional forms of mass-mediated communication, according to Silverstone (1999). The word "new" explicitly refers to innovations in recent years, notably in the field of digital technology. The term "new" can also apply to cutting-edge software and hardware that allows for original, creative methods of carrying out new activities. The internet and other digital technologies give us new abilities including the capacity to create, communicate, and spread ideas, opinions, and interests, and they have a big impact on us as people. Some definitions of new media are limited to computer technology and the creation of digital content, while others place a stronger emphasis on the cultural contexts and settings in which these technologies are employed (Dewdney, 2006).

Furthermore, Scolari (2009) advocated the usage of the term "digital communication" to denote the particular sector of mass communication that makes use of digital technologies. Given the

lack of a more comprehensive definition of information and communication technologies and applications for the twenty-first century, he claims that we should use the term "digital media" to describe those ICTs that can combine various applications, functions, and content productions while also enabling high user interactivity. Digital media, which include Web 2.0, 3.0, mobile communications, computer-enabled consumer devices, and social media, can be viewed as communication channels in the current media environment (Hendler, 2009). In the contemporary media environment, "digital media" refers to the environment powered by digital technology that makes networking, multimedia, and collaborative and interactive communications possible (Scolari, 2009). New media technologies include social media, virtual worlds, and other web-based content like podcasts, websites, online newspapers, online advertisements, and YouTube videos. New media differs from traditional media in that it may be distributed, displayed, and stored across telecommunications networks.

The word "new media" has many different definitions. This study is based on Van Dijk's (2006) claim that new media are communication technologies that are interactive, interconnected, and use digital code in order to minimize misunderstandings. This indicates that for a medium to be categorized as new media, integration, interactivity, and digitalization must all be present. This study concurs with Scolari (2009) that because new media employs digital technologies, it can also be referred to as digital media. According to this study's proposed definition of new media, the term refers to all integrated, interactive digital communication technologies that enable efficient human interaction in the digital sphere.

2.2.1 Characteristics of New Media

This research clarifies the notion of new media by outlining some of its key qualities because it has been established that there is no precise definition of this term due to differing opinions among experts. The basic objective of new media, which is to facilitate effective communication, is facilitated by a variety of qualities. New media technologies have the impact of transmitting different ideologies to their users through establishing and facilitating communication. The traits of new media set it apart from conventional communication channels. They also improve knowledge of new media. This study is based on Friedman and Friedman's (2008) list of various characteristics of new media. These include communication, collaboration, community,

creativity and convergence. In explaining these characteristics, for illustrative purposes includes some types of new media.

The ability to communicate is one of the qualities of new media. Information is transmitted between or among people through a channel during communication. In one way or another, new media technologies are focused on communication. Blogs can be seen as a substitute for or addition to traditional publishing, but they can also replace personal WebPages. Additionally, bloggers take part in more than just one-way posting. Many people will reference and link to the writings of other bloggers; when this cross-referencing occurs frequently enough, "conversational blogging" (Efimova and de Moor, 2005) results. The three types of communication supported by new media are unidirectional, collaborative, and networked. Both synchronous and asynchronous communication move quite quickly in our highly networked era. The term "viral" is used to denote a quick rate of transmission throughout a networked society, such as viral movies or rather viral messaging (Al-Rawi, 2019). When videos or any other content goes viral on social media platforms, it indicates that it has become so well-known that many people can access it. When focusing on Zimbabwe in particular, pro-government new media websites may spread a favorable message about the New Dispensation, thus promoting the government to a wide audience. This may also be the case with anti-government social media platforms, which may likewise spread unfavorable information about the government and incite audience rage. As the framed information shapes people's representations, these communication qualities of new media help define an agenda in the audience. As a result, communication is a crucial feature of new media because it makes it possible to spread ideals to a broad audience.

Another aspect of new media is collaboration. Working together to generate or create anything is known as collaboration. The use of new media tools to collaborate online is widespread, if not universal. The process of working together on a project or job while utilizing digital media tools is referred to as collaboration in new media. Social media websites, video conferencing programs, and cloud-based file sharing services are a few examples of these resources. Teams can work more successfully and efficiently by collaborating in new media since it enables real-time sharing of resources and ideas. Online special interest groups frequently share documents, according to Deuze (2006), and more recently, Google Docs has made it possible for several users to collaborate on the same page. Facebook and other social networking tools have a

collaborative component, while Skype makes conference calls and chats possible. Journalists also work together to influence ideology in the new media. Collaborative journalism is one activity that results from collaboration in new media and aids in the creation of varied representations. Sharing power among journalists, viewers and readers, collaborators from the community, scientists, and other groups is what collaborative journalism entails (Alfter, 2016). Providing information that centers on and takes into account everyone's wants and voices is another aspect of it. For example, a journalist in Europe may collaborate with a journalist in Zimbabwe to publish a story about the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. This story will be a result of collaboration and just like any other news story, it will be laden with certain ideologies (positive or negative) in the representing the government in question.

The development of a community is another feature of new media. A community is a collection of individuals who have something in common, such as a location, trait, identity, or hobby. On new media platforms, people are typically connected because of shared characteristics that allow for the development of a community. This feature of contemporary media technologies is largely to blame for the perception that the world is now smaller than it once was. Global in scope, new media communities are democratic and welcoming. The leveling of the playing field is essentially made possible by new media technologies (Johnson and Ensslin, 2007). Interactivity between community members is made possible by this sense of belonging. People who, for instance, hold similar political or religious beliefs can join online communities where they can exchange material that is particularly pertinent to them. These communities each have their own goals and worldviews.

The audience engagement capabilities of new media are well acknowledged. This is referred to as interaction. The feedback system in place for new media is the most advanced when compared to other media types. Our ability to control and influence media has significantly increased thanks to digital media. These various possibilities, according to Sundar and Limperos (2013), are frequently referred to as the interactive potential of new media. Since it provides opportunities for connections to be made between people, inside organizations, and between people and organizations, interactivity is seen as one of the primary 'value added' characteristics of new media. Web journalism is the product of new media's interactive motivation. According to Christin (2017), web journalism is a worldwide medium that is not constrained by time or

geography. The new media is a platform that connects the entire world since news about any incident that occurs anywhere can be reached by anyone else within a short period of time. Online communication offers the chance to converse, learn, share, and purchase and sell. As a result, one of the traits of new media is the development of online communities and the encouragement of interaction.

Another aspect of new media is creativity. The capacity to invent and bring into being something fresh and worthwhile is creativity. User-generated content is a crucial component of modern media. Users of modern media are no longer just the message's passive recipients. The audience of today produces and edits movies, blogs, posts evaluations of products, and contributes content in a variety of other ways (Ketter and Avraham, 2012). The audience itself also contributes to the representations that are found in new media, and they are given the chance to do so by either generating new information or responding to the opinions of journalists. It is crucial to mention at this point that, like any administration, the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is represented on new media websites not only through journalistic accounts but also through those of the audience, as new media provides users the freedom to express their opinions. As a result, people who use digital media also edit, modify, and create it in addition to reading, listening, seeing, and playing it.

Convergence is yet another category of new media. Jenkins (2004) defines media convergence as the blending of formerly separate media to produce new forms of communication expression. Internet, mobile devices, digital animation, and high-definition television are examples of such technology. There are various sorts of convergence, including cultural and technological convergence. The multipurpose nature of gadgets like cell phones is one example of convergence. The emergence of new content formats is made possible by media convergence, which alters traditional businesses. It also poses difficulties for legislation and regulation. Media convergence combines communication, computing, and content through technology. Examples of media convergence include smart-phones, online radio, e-books, and news websites and apps.

Moreover, online platforms have a greater advantage over other media and that is multimedia facilities. Whenever stories are supported by cartoons, moving pictures, sound and music, it is called multimedia. The word convergence means coming towards each other and meet at a point. So media convergence is, computer and telecommunication technologies used in the multimedia

systems for the transfer and exchange of information, data, graphics and sound. This is one of the most important characteristics of new media. Most if not all new media messages carry various semiotic modes. This means they are usually a combination of images, sound and color which as a bit different from traditional media.

2.2.2 New Media, Representation and the Visual Culture

It has been proven that new media technologies are sophisticated communication tools that also quickly reach a large number of individuals. The communications in the new media have a multimodal nature and are particularly effective in spreading ideologies because of creativity and convergence. In the new media, representations are embedded in a variety of semiotic modes, including text, sound, and images, among others. The component of culture that is expressed through visual imagery is known as the visual culture. It is entwined with everything that a person observes in his or her daily life, including advertisements, exteriors of buildings, interiors of structures, visuals in films, paintings, pictures, and clothing (Mitchell, 2002). The amount of photographs currently being shared on social media is truly astounding because to the convergent capabilities of digital technologies and the growth of Web 2.0 applications, services, and platforms. According to various sources, around 20 hours of video are uploaded to Youtube's servers every minute, 60 million photos are shared daily on Instagram (Facebook's photo-sharing service), and 5 million pictures are reportedly uploaded to Flickr every day (Strangelove 2010). These changes, according to Cross (2013), portend a quick rise in social media platforms that place more of an emphasis on visual content than text. These pictures make up visual culture and they have many different meanings.

Furthermore, according to sociologist Agger (2010), "over-sharing" in the digital age is a problem because it blurs the lines between public and private life and represents a loss of established norms of normality, decency, and what is considered to be acceptable in social life. This is because the urge to constantly share still or moving images and status location updates of the most mundane and routine aspects of our lives. The use of visual images, spectacle, and performance has grown in importance and altered the interaction between audiences and texts in today's new media technologies, which are current communication channels that establish communities where everyone can see and be seen. Thus, new media forms representations which

transmit certain ideologies to its audience and these representations are formulated through the visual culture.

Furthermore, because new media creates a sense of community among users, they begin to learn from one another and are more likely to pay attention to what their peers have to say. In order to explain how learning could take place in a social context and how individuals can learn from one another, Bandura (1977) created the Social Learning Theory (SLT). This study contends that audiences are forced to support the portrayals of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation they encounter in new media if their peers or community members do the same. The visual culture is a potent instrument for representation because images create notions that are fairly permanent in the audience's minds.

2.3 Selected New Media Sites

There are numerous new media sites used to represent or portray the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. These new media sites are divided along those that support the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation and those that oppose it. Using purposive sampling, this research selected two main new media sites deemed effective in representing the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. The two selected new media sites are online news media and social media.

2.3.1 Online News Media

Online newspapers are a step up from traditional newspapers, but they are in no way interchangeable. Traditional newspapers are printed, whereas online newspapers are digital, making this one of the most noticeable contrasts. When new material becomes available, online newspapers can be updated, and readers can comment on the stories to provide the newspaper firms with immediate feedback. Globally, online newspapers are evolving into essential informational resources. In praising online newspapers in Zimbabwe, Chari (2014) said that popularity of the online newspaper in Zimbabwe has arisen by accident rather than intent. At the turn of the century, the Zanu PF government enacted restrictive regulations that limited media space, which contributed to the proliferation of internet news portals maintained by expatriate journalists. The popularity of the online newspapers was greatly influenced by the economic crisis, which was typified by hyperinflation, the concurrent erosion of disposable incomes, and an increase in the number of persons residing abroad.

The Herald news online platform, NewsDay online platform, and Zimbabwean Daily news online platform have been chosen as the online news media outlets to be examined. A Zimbabwean online daily called The Zimbabwean Daily publishes news on business, sports, entertainment, and politics. According to Ndlovu and Sibanda (2022), there is an online publication published in Zimbabwe and the UK that fiercely criticizes the government and frequently portrays politicians in caricature. The newspaper, which is owned by 3MG Media, began independent publication in 2004. It places a lot of emphasis on political and current affairs in Zimbabwe. This online newspaper features sections on politics, entertainment, media, sports, daily life, and business, among other topics. Several well-known Zimbabweans, including Senator Obert Gutu, Member of Parliament Eddie Cross, and businessman Mutumwa Mawere, are on its roster of bloggers and frequent columnists. It is the fifteenth-ranked website in Zimbabwe according to Alexa rankings, and the print media occasionally uses its stories. This study uses caricatured graphics to illustrate the New Dispensation in Zimbabwean politics, which Zimbabwe Daily News posts online..

Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare, is home to the daily newspaper The Herald, which is owned by the government. The newspaper first appeared in the nineteenth century. Keppel-Jones (1983) claims that William Fairbridge debuted its predecessor on June 27, 1891 for the South African Argus group. Its name was the Mashonaland Herald and Zambesian Times, and it was a biweekly newssheet that was handwritten and duplicated in the cyclostyle method. In order to operate its publications in what was then Southern Rhodesia, the Argus group eventually established a subsidiary called the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company, according to Nyarota, G. (2006). Following its unilateral declaration of independence on November 11, 1965, the white minority Rhodesian Front government began censoring The Rhodesia Herald. The newspaper's response allowed readers to judge the level of censorship by leaving blank areas where stories had been deleted. According to Rusike, after independence Using a US\$20 million grant from Nigeria, Zimbabwe's government acquired The Herald and other newspapers from the Argus group in 1981, and the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust was created to run them (Chikwanha, 2015). Zimbabwe Newspapers, Ltd. was established by the Trust to serve as the publications' publisher. The Herald is thus Zimbabwe's official newspaper. The photographs regarding the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation that were posted on the Herald's internet platform are examined in this study.

Since 2010, NewsDay has been a daily independent newspaper based in Harare, Zimbabwe. It launched on June 4, 2010, and its headquarters are in Harare. On its logo, the phrase "Everyday News for Everyday People" appears. This study examines the caricatures of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation that were published by this paper.

Below is an image of Zimbabwe Daily online news site (<https://www.zimdaily.com/>). The image of the online site speaks volumes of the manner in which Zimbabwe Daily forms representations. It is evident that the front image is caricatured to create humor towards a serious matter and also indoctrinate the audience.

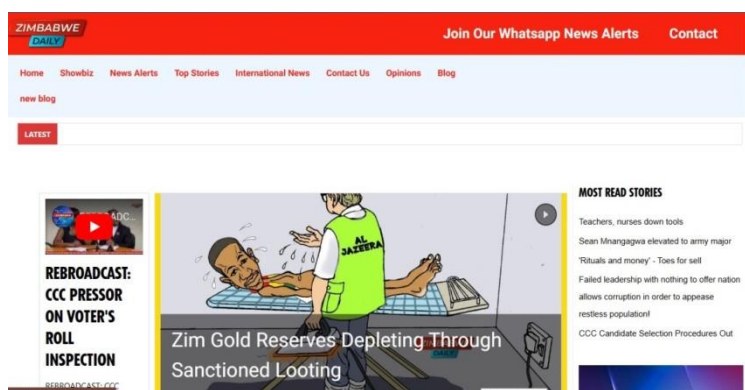


FIG. 1

Below is an image of The Herald online news site (<https://www.herald.co.zw/>);

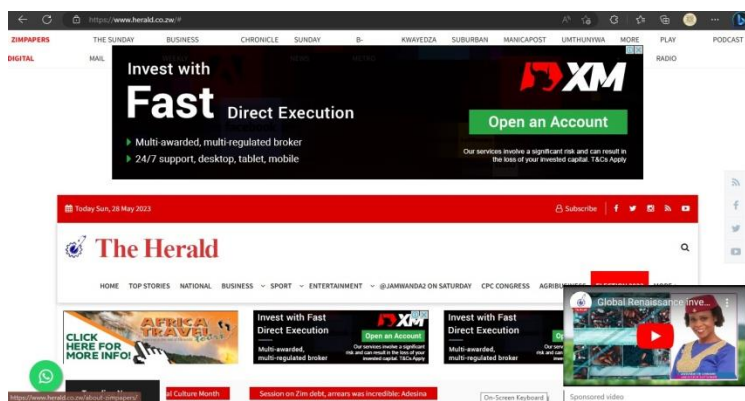


FIG. 2

Below is the image of NewDay online news site (<https://www.newsday.co.zw/>);



FIG. 3

2.3.2 Social Media

Social media is a collection of programs and websites that enable online communication, content sharing, and the creation of unique networks of friends, associates, and organizations. There are no established guidelines for what is "correct" for any site because every person utilizes their network in a unique way. Social media users visit the sites to communicate with friends, exchange ideas, and stay up to date on news. Social media, according to Mayfield (2008), are computer-mediated technologies that enable people to produce, share, or exchange knowledge, concepts, images, or videos in virtual networks. In order to build highly dynamic platforms for individuals and groups to share, co-create, discuss, and edit user-generated content, social media relies on mobile and web-based technology.

The creation and exchange of user-generated content is also made possible by social media, a category of Internet-based apps that builds on Web 2.0's theoretical and technological underpinnings (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2009). Social media also cover the following: online gatherings of communities of individuals using conversational media to share information, knowledge, and ideas. Web-based tools called conversational media enable the creation and simple transmission of content in the form of text, images, videos, and audios (Brake & Safko, 2009).

Both definitions focus upon the behaviors and interactions that are established among individuals, that is, for what individuals use social media. Because Safko & Brake (2009) emphasized behavior as the central characteristic of social media, we could argue that, accordingly, social media do not exist without users. This argument was corroborated by Beckett (2008), who said that social media interactivity also provides a sense of community that transcends anything offered by mainstream media. Social media can provide opportunities to

bring a variety of people together from different backgrounds to find common ground in their beliefs and interests (Greenwood et al, 2016). However, interaction is not enough to qualify social media as such. As Wright and Hinson (2009) explained, the contents posted must also be generated by people themselves. Therefore, social media are referred to as consumer-generated media or as user-generated content. This research selects a few social media sites used in the representation of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. These include Facebook and Twitter.

An active user can build a profile, upload photos and videos, send messages, and stay in touch with friends, family, and coworkers on the well-known and free social networking site Facebook. The Nielsen Group's statistics show that Facebook is the website that American internet users spend the most time on. Users send 31.25 million messages and watch at least 2.77 million videos per minute, according to Facebook's official figures, which were published in May 2017 (Dolata, 2017). The three online newspapers examined in this study use Facebook to communicate with their readers and disseminate information. Zimbabweans are also in charge of disseminating representational photos on Facebook.

The analysis of images that depict Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation is the foundation of this study. Both realistic and caricatured photographs will be examined. It is crucial to understand how the chosen new media channels are related to one another. The social media pages of these newspapers as well as those of other people feature the photographs that are posted on the online news media platforms. This study makes the case that social media is a new media platform that boosts the appeal of these representational images by allowing them to be shared with a wide range of consumers and groups. The social media sites that they employ bring the ideological information to those people who do not read the news on the internet news platforms. The caricatured pictures of the New Dispensation are frequently used to mock the situation in Zimbabwe and to inform the public while also evoking amusement. People congregate on online forums to talk about political topics that worry them in a safe environment. The photos of the Facebook pages for the aforementioned news websites that will be examined are provided below.

The Zimbabwean Daily Facebook page has three hundred and thirty followers. The followers are the audience. Since Facebook is a social media platform whereby people are a community,

these followers can also share to their friends the images published by Zimbabwe Daily. Thus, the representations of Zimbabwe Daily have an ability to reach multitudes of audiences.



FIG. 4

The profile picture of The Herald Facebook page below is evidence of it being a state media. This is because image is of celebrating the forty-third independence of Zimbabwe.



FIG. 5

The NewsDay Facebook page below is evidence of its huge following. The Facebook page has a total of eight hundred and twenty nine thousand followers. Thus, its ideologies can be spread to a huge number of people.



FIG. 6

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter clearly defined the term new media and explained its characteristics. This chapter also examined the selected new media sites used to form representations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. The purposively selected new media sites are online newspaper sites and social media. Specifically, the online news media sites selected are Zimbabwe Daily, The Herald and NewsDay. The main social media platform to be used for analysis purposes is Facebook. Thus, this chapter gave an incite of the selected new media sites to be used in this study.

CHAPTER 3: Understanding Zimbabwe's New Dispensation in the New Media.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on comprehending and characterizing Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation. The chapter opens by providing a brief history of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation in order to explain how it came to be. It draws a distinction between the old and new regimes. The second section of the chapter examines the ZANU PF People's Manifesto, which serves as a road map and document for comprehending the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. The second phase examines the ZANU PF People's Manifesto's Operation Restore Legacy. The third section examines the People's Manifesto's symbolic and metaphorical new dispensation and second republic. The fourth section focuses on the renowned "Zim is open for business" slogan that the New Dispensation began with. The goal of these parts is to provide a fundamental as well as a deeper understanding of what the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is based on the standards it has established for itself.

3.2 From the Old to the New Regime

The 21st of November, 2017 will be remembered as the historical day that marked the end of Robert Mugabe's 37-year tenure in Zimbabwe and announced the emergence of a ZANU-PF government under a 'post-Mugabe' leadership. Zimbabwe suffered what might be described as a regime change in November 2017. Some might claim that this was a change in administration or presidential leadership. The Mnangagwa regime, which replaced Mugabe's administration, is known as the New Dispensation or Second Republic. After 37 years in office, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe was deposed in a military coup in November 2017. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, his successor and former vice president, pledged a break from Mugabe's dictatorial reign and economic incompetence, establishing a "new Zimbabwe" that is "open for business," hence the phrase New Dispensation.

Since Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, ZANU PF, the country's ruling party, has been in control. While this has led to discontent among the populace, it has always been quelled by the party's strength and authority. Strong party-military ties, huge patronage networks, a common liberation philosophy, and a long history of political violence at the hands of the state all contribute to Zimbabwe's party-military alliance (Kasambala, 2011). In the early 1980s, security forces engaged in a violent campaign known as the Gukurahundi that resulted in the

deaths of more than 20,000 people, (Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace in Zimbabwe & Legal Resources Foundation in Zimbabwe, 1997). Despite this widespread violence, international players praised Mugabe's first 15 years in leadership as a model of racial harmony and post-conflict prosperity (Tendi, 2011). Despite the accusations of mass murder, Mugabe's favorable portrayal in the world media contributed to the impression that he was the ideal leader. It enhanced and cemented his dominance in various ways. Thus, the media representations have a strong impact on how people think and perceive things.

It is crucial to know the history of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation, at least as of 2014, when Mnangagwa assumed the position of second in command of Zimbabwe, in order to completely comprehend what it is. Joice Mujuru, Mugabe's vice president, was fired in 2014, and Mnangagwa, a longtime ally and one of Mugabe's most ardent followers, took her place. According to Southall (2017), Mnangagwa was Mugabe's assistant before independence and held a number of high-ranking positions in the government afterward, including minister of state for national security during the Gukurahundi massacre in the 1980s and later minister of defense and minister of justice. Mnangagwa is a key figure in the long-lasting party-military coalition in Zimbabwe that has held ZANU-PF in power for almost 40 years. He is also regarded as one of the richest persons in the nation, with vast business connections to dubious domestic and international business figures in the petroleum, diamond, and gold mining industries (Rutherford, 2018). According to Jackson (2011), a United Nations panel identified Mnangagwa as a significant figure in Zimbabwe's deployment to the DRC conflict in 1998, where Zimbabwean military and political figures were charged with resource theft and given the moniker "conflict entrepreneurs."

Mnangagwa and Mugabe's wife, Grace Mugabe, started to feud shortly after Mnangagwa was appointed vice president. Mare (2019) makes the claim that the Mnangagwa-aligned faction, which received support from key military figures (including commander of the Zimbabwe Defense Forces Constantino Chiwenga), became known as Lacoste. He continues by saying that the group led by Grace Mugabe, which included a number of younger leaders without experience in the liberation struggle, adopted the name Generation 40 (G40). Meanwhile, after Mugabe and ZANU-PF reclaimed total control and appointed party stalwart Patrick Chinamasa as minister of

finance, the economy started to decline once more after experiencing double-digit growth during the power-sharing period.

Mugabe's partnership with the military and liberation war veterans started to crumble as Lacoste and G40's outright enmity grew more blatant. The Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran Association formally shattered their alliance with Mugabe in 2016, denouncing his autocratic behavior and asserting that he had abandoned the principles of the liberation fight. Some politically aspirational generals were pondering a coup to restore the dominance of the liberation war ethos in the party and safeguard their interests as influential actors within the military started to distance themselves from Mugabe (Tendi, 2020). Mugabe's firm hold on the long-standing and advantageous party-military relationship was eroding. On November 6, 2017, Mugabe fired Mnangagwa, which was seen as a move toward Grace Mugabe and the G40 taking control of the succession fight. These escalating tensions reached a breaking point after that. The coup was finally sparked by Mugabe's reluctance to negotiate with the military on November 13, 2017, leading to the commencement of "Operation Restore Legacy" the following day and Mugabe's resignation on November 21, 2017. Operation Restore Legacy's goal was to purge the corrupt and infiltrated Zimbabwean government and return it to its rightful place in society. After being fired, Mnangagwa fled to South Africa and Mozambique before taking office on November 24, 2017. Asuelime (2018) claims that when Emmerson Mnangagwa took over as president of Zimbabwe following the November 2017 coup, some Zimbabweans reacted with great elation and others with cautious optimism. Hope for political and economic reform permeated the joyful people.

During and after the shift of power, the media played a critical role in educating both Zimbabweans and those outside of Zimbabwe. While the private media depicted it as a real coup, the state media of the cause characterized this change as calm. It is apparent that the media's favorable presentation of the change in power was done so as to brainwash the populace into thinking that the New Dispensation was a decent government with entirely new policies and methods.

3.3 Analysis of the ZANU PF's People Manifesto

A political party's manifesto is a document released ahead of a general election. It outlines the set of policies the party supports and would like to put into effect if it were elected to office. A

political manifesto is a published statement of the aims, motivations, or viewpoints of the issuer, whether they be an individual, group, political party, or government, according to Rollwage et al (2019). It can put out a strategy for action and push a group of concepts, viewpoints, or ideas. The document, which is often released by a political party prior to a general election, outlines the policies the party supports and would like to put into effect if it were elected to power. The ZANU PF political platform outlines the party's governing philosophies and positions. In 2018, ahead of the national elections in Zimbabwe, the political manifesto of ZANU PF, which stands for the country's new political system, was released. It provides a thorough overview of the system. The People's Manifesto by ZANU PF illustrates how institutions and events that led to the removal of Mugabe in November 2017 are reframed and re-imagined to ideologize social and political transformation processes. This section focuses on the use of language in the ZANU PF's endeavor to set up a new national order after the death of Mugabe. Examples include narratives of "Restoring Legacy" and imagery and themes of a "New Dispensation."

According to Mudau and Mangani (2018), "Operation Restore Legacy" (the code name for the 'operation' that deposed Mugabe as the incumbent president in November 2017) creates a space where the interruption and/or disruption of the 'old' political regime is symbolized and given meaning. The disruption serves as a foundation for the metaphor of the "New Dispensation," according to The People's Manifesto (2018), which is described as a method of "restoring the legacy of our liberation struggle." With Robert Mugabe's resignation, Zimbabwe is said to have entered a new chapter in ZANU PF's grand narrative. The People's Manifesto (2018) states that the new administration's priorities are liberalizing trade, combating corruption, generating jobs, modernizing the public sector, and promoting investment, economic empowerment, and realigning to an investor-friendly trajectory that fosters economic growth and job creation. This explains why Mnangagwa made so many business trips to connect Zimbabwe with other countries.

In ZANU PF discourse, the "New Dispensation" is predicated on the grand narrative that:

A new political era was ushered in on November 24, 2017, following the successful completion of "**Operation Restore Legacy**" and the subsequent inauguration of Cde. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa as the State President. This political era aims to restore Zimbabwe to her proper position in the international community.

In this time of optimism, the ambitions of the people will be prioritized and met in a fresh setting where **"Zimbabwe is open for business"** in order to reap the rewards of the growing goodwill and confidence on the part of the international community. (Bold in the original) (The People's Manifesto, 2018, p. 11)

The aforementioned People's Manifesto quotes show how the ZANU PF political party refers to the Mugabe and Mnangagwa regimes as being ancient and new, respectively. According to Mashingaidze (2021), Mnangagwa carefully re-presented himself to his fellow citizens as a transformative politician upon taking office, despite having been an ever-present enabler to the foregoing exclusionary politics from the liberation struggle when he served as Mugabe's special assistant and later as a long-serving government minister and Vice President in the post-colonial era. Mnangagwa asserted that he was "as soft as wool" on multiple times shortly after taking office (Mubangizi, 2018). Mnangagwa makes claims that he is a representative of a new Zimbabwean administration that is entirely apart from the one he ironically served in. The so-called New Dispensation is explicitly explained in the manifesto, along with what it is and how it differs from what it refers to as the former Mugabe administration.

As ZANU PF develops a language of rebirth, the "Operation Restore Legacy" narrative becomes strategic importance. National memory is strategically modified. As may be inferred from the following extract, liberation ethos evolved into the source for legitimizing renewal:

The ruling Zimbabwe African National Union - Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) party officially presents the People's Manifesto in an effort to revive the legacy of our liberation fight. at this crucially important time...The democratic and revolutionary ZANU PF Party is still fighting for the people's economic liberation and widespread development. It is a liberation movement that values national unity as the cornerstone of the conditions that are favorable for peace, security, and progress. (The People's Manifesto, 2018, p. 1)

The deliberate use of wording in this remark dispels any notion that "Operation Restore Legacy" (ZANU PF) was an attempt to save the country from itself. The party intervention known as "Operation Restore Legacy" seeks to reinstate the precedence of values over the individuals who support liberationist ideas. The People's Manifesto (2018), emphasizes that voting for ZANU PF is a vote "for the preservation of our legacy" and "ensuring that our legacy leaves some marked

footprints for posterity". Restoration is implied in the diction as correction of Zimbabwe's socio economic ills reinforced by phrases such as "restoring legacy", "re-opening the country for business", "re- invigorating covenant with the people", "re- building local, regional and international partnerships", "re- building confidence" and "re-industrialisation". Terms such as "preservation" and the quest to "leave footprints" construct a political 'species' of value that has been endangered and is in need of saving. Ironically, ZANU PF awards itself the heroic task of saving the nation from its rule. The rule, however, is re-imagined as a misnomer, a contradiction to values of the party that are being "restored" through the military operation. The political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe is built around the idea of restoring legacy. With fresh ideals and goals for serving the people of Zimbabwe, the ZANU PF party re-presents itself to the public as a whole new party, hence the phrase "New Dispensation."

3.4 The symbolic and metaphoric New Dispensation and Second Republic

The word "new" denotes a clear break from the previous state. The conceptual metaphor that follows, ZIMBABWEAN POLITICAL SYSTEM NOW=NEW DISPENSATION, depicts the 'new' as the answer to all of the old system's problems (Matsika, nd). By definition, the term "new" refers to something that has recently made an appearance or is novel. The newness in the Zimbabwean government is referred to as reforming the system in ways that improve its effectiveness for delivery, not just breaking with the past. In addition to showing how Mnangagwa differs from Mugabe, ZANU PF's use of the metaphor of newness highlights the old in a way that recalls Cleary's (2008) concept of "forgotten doubles," the strange ways in which people interpret the given states of phenomena in terms of their other, frequently past lives. The concept of newness does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it occupies a temporal space that bears the effects of ZANU PF control as well as its own regimes of truths.

The national objective of the Mnangagwa administration is constructed and given meaning in the imagined world known as the "New Dispensation." The expressions "Zimbabwe is open for business," "the People's Voice is the Voice of God," and the ideology of "Servant Leadership" are all metaphors related to the overarching story of the "New Dispensation" that direct and arrange how people will interact with the so-called "Second Republic." Mnangagwa frequently remarked that "the people's voice is the voice of God" in the early aftermath of the military-assisted transition (Ndawana, 2018). The metaphor of newness is a potent technique for affecting

perception and a communicative outlet that compellingly displays possibilities in the new ways that the socioeconomic problems of the post-2000 era could be overcome. It has a relationship to transformation and change, two factors essential to the longevity of remedial activities. Insofar as the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation attempts to portray itself as a people's government with the interests of the Zimbabwean people at heart, the assertion that "the voice of the people is the voice of God" is ideological. The people's government is thus the alternative definition of the New Dispensation.

The 'New Dispensation'/'Second Republic' serves as a frame of reference for ZANU PF to reconfigure ideas of transformation, regardless of whether that transformation has really occurred. As previously said, even though the removal of Mugabe had all the hallmarks of a coup, it was reframed as "Operation Restore Legacy" in order to distance it from the violent overtones and the forcible removal of an elected leader. However, the metaphors and symbols also beg the question, whose legacy are they referring to? Mugabe's? the ZANU PF? The so-called "New Dispensation"/"Second Republic" discourses that ZANU PF uses to characterize Mugabe's retirement as the end of an era and the demise of an unworkable political order. According to Hammar, Raftopoulos, and Jensen (2003), Sachikonye (2012), Raftopoulos&Mlambo (2009), and others, Mugabe had come to represent economic disaster, autocratic rule, patrimonialism, and international isolation. In order to highlight the need for a complete break from the ZANU PF of the past and to create a vision of restoration that distinguishes the party and its principles from the dictatorship and its inefficiencies, President Mnangagwa's metaphor of newness draws on these imagery. It becomes evident that the ZANU PF legacy is being restored and that the New Dispensation is a new administration that is superior than the former Zimbabwean government.

Mnangagwa's key participation in Mugabe's ouster is cited as evidence of his self-purification and positioning to lead a new government that values ZANU PF's governance ideals, despite the fact that he was an integral component of the regime over the years that contributed to the protracted crisis in Zimbabwe. Mnangagwa is seen as a leader who is prepared to faithfully serve the people, engage with all people, and reform the country. He is portrayed as being modest, tolerant, listening, and inclusive.

Operation Restore Legacy is a didactic website that "teaches" "appropriate" ways to experience and perceive the change from Mugabe's regime to Mnangagwa's. The term "Operation Restore Legacy" is symbolic. It serves as the foundation for the construction and operationalization of participant structures, identities, and tales that shape how reality is perceived. Dictated interpretations of "Operation Restore Legacy" get their persuasive power by emphasizing change while ironically framing it as a restoration. The oxymoron and contradiction between "restoration" and "newness" are not, however, lost on the discourse's proponents. This is due to the regime's deliberate attempts to (re)define what is being restored, which are the ZANU PF principles that Mugabe is accused of failing to defend against the G40 cabal. Thus, "Operation Restore Legacy" is reframed as a symbolic exit from Mugabe's failing regime, despite the fact that it is unmistakably a testament to ZANU PF failure. The action establishes and bolsters the New Dispensation. Mnangagwa did, in fact, refer to himself as Mugabe's son in his first inauguration speech, saying that he was chosen by the political heirs of the liberation movement to succeed his father. Mnangagwa was cautious to explicitly reject Mugabeism in his claim of heirship, which is why he emphasized the "restoration" of ZANU PF ideals in a move that effectively blamed Mugabe for the party's values' deterioration. To support this assertion, Mnangagwa made the following statements on November 24, 2017:

While we cannot change the past, there is a lot we can do in the present and future to give our nation a different positive direction. As we do so, we should never remain hostages to our past. I thus humbly appeal to all of us that we let bygones be bygones, readily embracing each other in defining a new destiny. The task at hand is that of rebuilding our great country. It principally lies with none but ourselves. I implore you all to declare that NEVER AGAIN should the circumstances that have put Zimbabwe in an unfavorable position be allowed to recur or overshadow its prospects. We must work together, you, me, all of u swho make this Nation...The values of Unity and Peace cherished by all Zimbabweans are the enduring foundations for the desired goal of development, itself the third pillar of the trinity of Unity, Peace and Development espoused by my Party, ZANU-PF [This is my own paraphrasing of the statements for better emphasize]. (Mnangagwa 25 November 2017).

In The People's Manifesto, Mnangagwa is referred to as a servant leader, which leads to the claim that, "due to his commitment to serving the people and loyalty to the Party, Cde.

Emmerson Mnangagwa faithfully served the People of Zimbabwe in various portfolios". (The People's Manifesto, 2018, p. 6). To help Mnangagwa win the people's ethos and pathos as a representation of the new government, all of his accomplishments are logically listed in the manifesto. He is presented as the rightful contender and republic's lawful leader.

3.5 Zimbabwe is Open for business

Due to its colonial past, Zimbabwe has a reputation for having unfriendly relations with Western nations. Due to these unfriendly relations, there was no trade or business between Zimbabwe and the citizens of these nations. To revitalize the failing Zimbabwean economy, the New Dispensation adopted a new policy of being open for business. With the state president announcing that "Zimbabwe was open for business," Mnangagwa's ZANU-PF ran on a platform of international political and economic reengagement (Hodgkinson, 2019; Ndimande and Moyo, 2018). Soon after taking office, Mnangagwa added a number of technocrats to his cabinet to demonstrate his dedication to reform. The most notable of these was Finance Minister Mthuli Ncube, whose responsibility it was to overhaul the monetary system and address issues with currency instability and how they affected the financial system.

Additionally, sanctions continue to have an impact on Zimbabwe's economic performance despite Mnangagwa's motto that "Zimbabwe is open for business." Through legislation like the Zimbabwe Democracy Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA), which was renewed in 2018 (Nyoni, 2019), sanctions were put in place on the nation in 2003. Since there are few opportunities for capital development due to Zimbabwe's prolonged economic isolation, many enterprises are operating in survival mode. Banks are not lending to businesses because there is not enough money in the system, and government agencies are used to set up lines of credit, which distorts the market (Helliker and Murisa, 2020). One of the interviewees claimed that "the private media criticizes the government for its failures while the state media blames these sanctions of the country's opposition." Political disagreements and contrasting opinions are the product of this media conflict. According to Maphiri et al. (2021), Zimbabwe is prohibited from taking use of opportunities provided by the African Growth Opportunities Act (AGOA), a significant piece of US trade law. Zimbabwe has never been qualified for the market access provided under this law, which has been extended until 2025, since the AGOA came into effect in 2001. For instance,

exports from South Africa to the USA under AGOA have reached an annual average of US\$2 billion.

It is important to note that the New Dispensation relates to Zimbabwe's administration as of November 2017. This study defines the political "New Dispensation" in Zimbabwe as Mnangagwa's rule, which is predicated on entirely eradicating the tyrannical rule that was typical of Mugabe's leadership and seeks to respect the Zimbabwean people while advancing the country's economy. Based on the commitments it made to the populace, the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe is evaluated.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a definition of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. In order to explain how the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe came to be, it opened with a brief history of that system. It compared the previous and current regimes. The People's Manifesto of ZANU PF was examined in the second portion of the chapter because it serves as a guide and explanation of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. The People's Manifesto's symbolic and metaphorical second republic and new era were examined in the third section. The renowned "Zim is open for business" catchphrase that the New Dispensation started with was the focus of the fourth portion. These parts served to clarify the meaning and provide both a fundamental and in-depth understanding of what the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe actually is in light of the standards it has set for itself.

CHAPTER 4: Representations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation in the New Media

4.1 Introduction

The new media monitors government acts like watchdogs. They give a platform for political expression and set the agenda for public discourse on problems. They aid in fostering a sense of community. The way representations are formed is significantly impacted by the use of digital media since new tools like fake videos and caricature photos make it even simpler to sway public perception. This chapter examines the different visual representations of Zimbabwe's political New Dispensation that have been made public by the country's governmental and private media. Three sections make up the chapter. Political representations are the center of the first section, followed by economic representations and social representations in the second and third sections. Both actual and caricatured photographs are among the images that will be examined. In order to evaluate the agenda that these images' frames set, the social semiotic theory is applied in the examination of these pictures. The investigation also takes into account media experts' interview responses.

4.2 Political Representations

Media portrayals of politics generally are prejudiced and founded on ideologies in order to advance an agenda. In the new media, politicians and governments are portrayed either badly or favorably. Governments are evaluated based on the promises they made to the general populace. The people of Zimbabwe were promised by the country's political New Dispensation a peaceful Zimbabwe, one free from violence and with both political and speech freedom. Zimbabwe's flawed peace building architecture, which is largely characterized by state-decreed reconciliation pronouncements, clemency orders, and amnesties for perpetrators of politically motivated harms, was well-established in President Mnangagwa's call for Zimbabweans to disregard their painful past(s) and move forward collectively under the all-inclusive national banner of "unity, peace, and development" (Mashingaidze, 2020). Politically, the Zimbabwean New Dispensation is therefore portrayed in the new media and evaluated in terms of maintaining political harmony, conducting fair elections, and its affiliation with other political parties.

4.2.1 The New Dispensation as a violent government

Acts of violence committed to advance political goals are referred to as political violence. It can encompass violent acts carried out by states against other states (war), civilians, and non-state actors (torture, police brutality, psychological warfare, targeted killings), as well as violent acts carried out by non-state actors against the state or other non-state actors (terrorism) (Mpande et al., 2013). While the official new media rejects this, the opposition claims that the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is primarily to blame for political violence including as forced disappearances, assassinations, and the torture of civilians and non-state actors. As evidence of the new regime's extremely low tolerance for dissent, cruelty, torture, rape, and murder of opponents were nonetheless state-sanctioned (Kingsley and Moyo, 2019). On August 1, 2018, when they were protesting what they thought to be vote tampering and delays in the announcement of the results of the recently held presidential elections, six MDC supporters were killed by soldiers using live ammunition. These soldiers fired at random and most of the demonstrators were shot from behind. A few onlookers also passed away (Rogers, 2019). The image below, which became popular on social media, adds to this;



Fig. 7

The photo up top was shot on August 1, 2018, during protests in Harare, Zimbabwe. One police officer and seven troops in camouflage are depicted in the image. The soldiers are armed with baton sticks and AK-47s. A sign of cruelty and tyranny is the soldier's crouching down and firing his weapon at the protesting bystanders. These uniformed soldiers are seen advancing fully on the civilians when they are seized. The soldier is seen stooping down as his teammate is going

to tap him on the back, possibly ordering him to stop even though the harm has already been done. This picture exemplifies the severity and violence of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe as it was presented in the new media. Commenting on this picture, one media expert in an interview stated that, *“Images are framed in the media with certain ideologies in mind so as to mirror reality rather than create reality.”* (Appendix 1)

The army is additionally depicted as a tool used by the Zimbabwean government New Dispensation to quell all resistance and maintain public silence. This alone demonstrates the violence of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. Fig. 8, which Zimbabwe Daily published on their Facebook page, supports this.

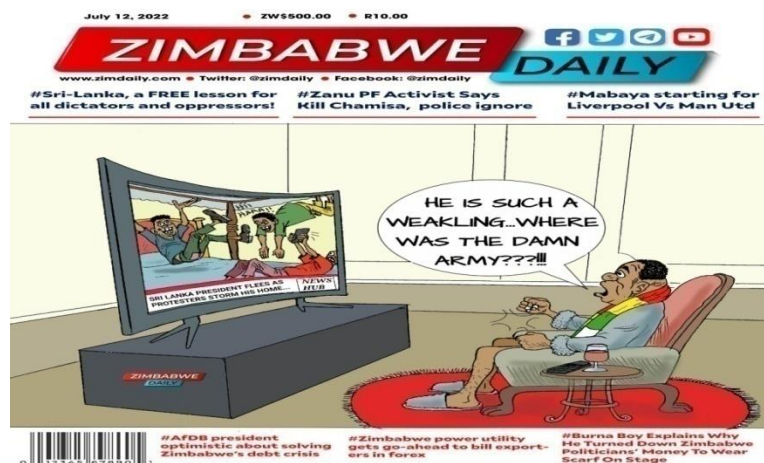


Fig. 8

The president of the New Dispensation is depicted in the above illustration in a derogatory comical light. He is depicted as leading a wealthy life. This is evident from the wine glass by his side, the opulent flat-screen television, and the luxurious chair he is sitting in. The president of Zimbabwe is making fun of the leader of Sri Lanka in this image, who was recently shown on the television escaping from his residence after being overrun by demonstrators. He is also characterized as authoritarian since he doesn't care about Sri Lanka's purported demonstrators' delight. On the television is an image of three ecstatic men jumping up and down on a bed. It epitomizes their freedom which any emotional human being would approve. The protestors are pictured as non-violent as evidenced by the absence of weapons on them and the happy smiles on their faces. The Zimbabwean president angrily chastises him aloud shouting, “He is such a weakling...where was the damn army???” which is direct evidence that the army is his source of

strength. His anger is evidenced by the way he is holding his fists tight. The ideology which this image communicates is that the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation uses the army as its source of strength to overcome any protests. This sets an agenda and represents this government as dictatorial and oppressive.

When the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) organized worker stay-aways protesting price hikes, declining pay, and the ever-escalating cost of living in the country in mid-January 2019, the country experienced fresh incidents of violence by the security forces. According to Mashingaidze (2021), the administration responded by enacting a three-day internet block to prevent potential popular movement. To enforce a curfew, the administration also sent out state security personnel. However, these security officers swiftly went on a preventative spree, kidnapping and forcibly disappearing oppositional activists and trade unionists who were leading protests. They had committed 26 kidnappings, 17 rapes, and 17 extrajudicial killings by the time they withdrew from the communities. Additionally, dragnet arrests resulted in the arrest of more than a thousand persons (Girdwood & Nichols, 2019). The President, who was out of the nation courting investors, did not denounce the tyranny of the security forces. He issued a statement criticizing the demonstrators' "wanton violence and vandalism," not that of the army (Rogers, 2019).

On August 16, 2019, the police used more force against peaceful protesters affiliated with the MDC who were unarmed. These demonstrators were protesting the rising cost of life in the face of skyrocketing inflation, severe gasoline shortages, water shortages, and power outages. There have been complaints about the police's brutality toward the protesters from a number of organizations, including the Law Society of Zimbabwe (LSZ), which stated that "where the demonstrators are subdued, there is no legal justification for unrelenting and unmitigated assaults to be perpetrated on unarmed citizens" (Nicodamus, 2019). Mashingaidze (2021) asserts that the police's harsh treatment of protesters indicated a reduction in civic space, which did much to damage the Mnangagwa administration's reputation as a "New Dispensation." The Zimbabwean Constitution's Section 50 (10) mandates that everyone detained or arrested shall be informed of the accusations brought against them at the time of their arrest. These state-instigated assaults on citizens and the ensuing unlawful detentions breached this provision. According to section 53 of the same constitution, which states that "No person may be subject to physical or psychological

torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment" (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013), such arrested individuals must be treated humanely.

The news of the August 2019 protestors' horrific treatment by the police was quickly discounted by the state news media. The photograph below, which was published on The Herald newspaper's website, adds to this;



Fig. 9

The picture above focuses on the August 2019 protestors. They are here depicted as violent and aggressive towards the security forces. They are also presented as destructive. This is evidenced by the fact that they are carry and throwing stones. The man in the khaki chino trousers is captured amidst throwing a stone. This is the same with the man in front wearing and white t0shirt and a blue jean whose fists are tightly held, a sign of being ready to fight. The same can be said to the man in shorts in the back wearing a sky blue hoddie. The audience who views this image is left with the idea that the demonstrators were anything but peaceful and were exceedingly violent, forcing the security forces to retaliate in like. The Herald picture aims to clear the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation of the charge of using violence against its own people. It fosters the idea that people are to blame for the violence. As a result, the state media favorably portrays the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe.

4.2.2 The New Dispensation as an accommodating government

The state media represented the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation as an accommodating government. The government urged a dialogue with all opposition party leaders in an effort to revive the economy and put a stop to the ongoing protests. This conversation was known as POLAD. In order to advance social, economic, and political advancement, political parties that

fielded presidential candidates in the 2018 harmonized elections created POLAD (Helliker&Chikozho, 2021). Different media outlets expressed varying views on POLAD. Evidently, the state media praised this initiative of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation, while the private media denigrated it. The projected POLAD under the New Dispensation is portrayed favorably in the Herald graphic below.



Fig. 10

Emerson DambudzoMnangagwa, the president of Zimbabwe, and the leaders of other political parties are depicted in this picture. This picture stands for success and wealth. The leaders are framed so that viewers may see the lush landscape they are standing in. The leaders are positioned in the center of a field of maize. Their facial expressions convey delight and contentment. The delighted expressions on the faces of all the political figures who attended the POLAD attempt to convey the success of the POLAD. They are standing in a corn field, which stands for their success. This picture promotes unity and presents the New Dispensation in a favorable light. The president of Zimbabwe is seen smiling and is placed purposefully in the middle of the picture. The fundamental purpose of this frame is to make the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe appear to be greatly concerned with the wellbeing and unity of the populace.

Additionally, to support this claim, The Herald's web platform mocks Nelson Chamisa for declining to participate in POLAD and portrays Mnangagwa favorably as being greatly interested in allying with Chamisa. This is supported by the caricature of The Herald below.



Fig. 11

ED can be seen reaching out to Chamisa, who declines to take his hand. Emmerson Dambudzo, the leader of the New Dispensation political party in Zimbabwe is often referred to as ED. After Tsvangirai's death, Chamisa took over as president of the MDC-T and then later founded the CCC (Citizens for Coalition Change). He ran for president in the 2018 harmonized elections while standing for MDC-T. As a candidate in the elections, he was expected to attend the proposed POLAD. According to rumors, he declined because ZANU PF was corrupt. His refusal is portrayed by the state-run media as a cowardly sabotage attempt. In doing so, it depicts the New Dispensation in Zimbabwean politics and the country as having a good administration. Commenting on this image, one of the interviewees asserted that; *"The state media has a mandate of protecting the state. To protect the state, it has to negatively portray other political competitors. In this context it is Mnangagwa versus Chamisa"* (Appendix 2)

In contrast to the state media, the private media adopts a different perspective. POLAD is portrayed as a pitiful justification for the political failings of Zimbabwe's New Dispensation. The caricature from NewsDay below adds to this;



Fig. 12

The picture up top shows a rotten apple. According to Shavkatovna (2020) an apple has the symbolic meaning of fertility; apples are also connected to the divine in several civilizations as the symbolism of the apple stretches back to the Greek era and is frequently linked to feelings of the heart. To represent POLAD as something good and positive, an apple is used as a symbol. The flies around the apple in the picture, however, show that it is rotting, and the apple appears to have been bitten on the right side. In this way, it is implied that POLAD is a bad deal. A scarf featuring the colors of the Zimbabwean flag is resting atop the apple. President Mnangagwa is known for wearing this scarf every time he enters the public eye. The picture suggests that Mnangagwa is to blame for POLAD's bad reputation. This portrays the corrupt and ineffective New Dispensation in Zimbabwean politics, which is trying to mask its shortcomings by focusing on POLAD. The public is taught to despise the government by this image, which propagates a negative ideology about it.

4.2.3 The New Dispensation as a parasite to democracy

Democratically, a person is chosen for a political office or other job in a formal, structured election. It can also mean the act of electing someone or the fact of having been elected. Since the 17th century, elections have been the primary method used to carry out representative democracy in modern times. Because the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation decided to approach elections differently, Zimbabwe held what were dubbed "harmonized elections" in 2018 (Mateveke & Chikafa-Chipiro, 2020). The 2018 elections were marked by tranquility, the absence of voter intimidation, abuse, or physical torture. The elections were hence referred to as harmonized. The state media made every effort to portray the elections as calm, but the private media seized every opportunity to criticize this. This assertion was strengthened by the Herald graphic below;

2018 Elections



Fig. 13

Numerous Zimbabweans can be seen waiting in line to cast their presidential election ballots in the image above. The image is framed to draw in as many viewers as possible. The fact that the queue of individuals has no beginning or end indicates that there are many people in it. The idea that underlies the image is that there are many people living in harmony. The dispute over physical or psychological coercion and oppression is brought about by the fact that there is no single image of a police officer. The lack of any uniformed security personnel speaks volumes about peace on its own. This is due to the fact that security personnel who terrorized and threatened people oversaw polls in every previous year. As a result, this picture portrays the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe as a tranquil authority that cares about the choices its citizens make.

The private media, in contrast, has a different stance. It acknowledges that the 2018 elections were orderly and peaceful but contests their fairness. The private media portrays the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe as being so corrupt that the elections were rigged. The NewsDay graphic below lends credibility to this statement.



Fig. 14

The picture depicts Zimbabwe's ruling party, ZANU PF, as having a relationship with the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). When two people are shown as being in bed together, it indicates that they are in a romantic connection and are hence likely to prefer one another. Here, ZEC and ZANU PF are comically portrayed as lovers, which makes the elections unfair because ZEC will always support its sweetheart. The man in the bed is labeled ZANU PF and the woman is designated ZEC in the image above, which frames everything. As a result, the private media portrays the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe as corrupt by claiming that the elections were unfair and probably rigged. Responding to this image, one media expert responded that; *“Of course, there is no opposition in any country that easily respects and agrees to the outcome unless it wins. Its politics and the media are used as the instrument of such propaganda. It is used to build and destroy governments.”* (Appendix 3)

4.3 Economic Representations

Since the Mugabe period, or rather the Old dispensation, the Zimbabwean economy has been in ruins. People anticipated that Mnangagwa's New Dispensation would restore the already failing and progressively sinking economy when he became office. He nominated Mtuli Ncube, a Harvard University professor and his technocrat, to be the finance minister as a means of achieving this objective (Nyamunda, 2021). Mtuli Ncube is portrayed in the official media as a genuine economic genius ready to revitalize Zimbabwe, while he is shown in the private media as yet another dreadful failure of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. Given his credentials, there were great expectations that Ncube would perform well in his role as minister of finance. He entered with a lot of enthusiasm and ideas for changing the economy. The eradication of the bond notes, which he defined as a stand-in for the Zimbabwe dollar but without the macroeconomic credibility to back it because it is bad money, was mentioned as one of his short-term goals in one of his first interviews (New Zimbabwe Television, 2020). Until the Zimbabwean economy had stabilized, Ncube's two options were to either join the rand monetary region or fully reinstate the multi-currency basket with the US dollar as the primary currency of focus (New Zimbabwe Television, 2020). In addition, he aimed to pay off debt, reduce the budget deficit to 3 to 5% of GDP, and finally bring back the Zimbabwean dollar by giving the "macro picture" legitimacy (New Zimbabwe Television, 2020).

Following his appointment, Mthuli Ncube encountered reality, which revealed how challenging accomplishing his goals would be. The 'new' administration gave the impression that it would be politically tolerant, but before the 2018 election results were even tallied, the government sent in heavily armed anti-riot police and soldiers to attack protesters, resulting in at least six fatalities and numerous injuries (Beardsworth et al., 2019). These murders tarnished the first impression of toleration just as Ncube and Mnangagwa started their re-engagement drive on venues like the Davos Economic Forum. These murders marred Minister Ncube's own attempts at global gatherings like Davos. Government increased fuel prices at the same time, making it the most expensive in the world at the moment. The seemingly obvious fact that urgently needed international help depends on transformation that goes beyond the economy and addresses ingrained political behavior patterns and decades of poor governance seems to have escaped Ncube's attention (Nyamunda, 2021). All of his efforts on the economic front were ineffective without fulfilling the requirements established for the lifting of American and EU sanctions, including press freedom and human rights, among others.

The new dispensation's reengagement policy included its financial and economic aspects. In an effort to achieve the goal of Zimbabwe becoming a middle-income nation by 2030, economic technocrats at the Reserve Bank and the Ministry of Finance developed this plan. Nearly two years into the new administration, Nyamunda (2021) claims that Mnangagwa and his Finance Minister failed to secure the US\$27 billion in investment for platinum mining, iron and steel production, and the construction of new hydropower dams despite making over 30 foreign trips to locations such as Davos, the United States, Russia, China, and the Middle East. He further says that Zimbabwe received just about \$500 million in foreign investment, significantly less than the promised big deals, and well behind its neighbor's southern African nations. If anything, Ncube's goals for restoring the basics to put the nation on the path to middle-income status were growing more and more out of reach.

Ncube quickly transitioned from his position as a technocrat to a politician defending ZANU-PF policies, such as violence against protestors, by working in such a toxic political environment where there were, among other difficulties, shortages of fuel and medicine, a liquidity crunch, and increasing electricity load shedding. Giving incorrect information about the economy, infrastructure, and other public services like the healthcare system was another aspect of this.

Hodgkinson (2019), expressing the sentiment of the majority of Zimbabweans, stated that the Zimbabwean government's response to the fuel protests in January 2019 was totally abhorrent, and Mthuli Ncube played a significant role in it as the finance minister and person responsible for collective accountability. His appeal as a rescuer of the Zimbabwean economy waned, and public hatred of the ZANUPF regime's policies took its place.

In order to accurately represent the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation as a failure given that the country's economy is dismal, the Zimbabwean dollar is compared to the currencies of other countries. The below Zimbabwe Daily visual demonstrates this;

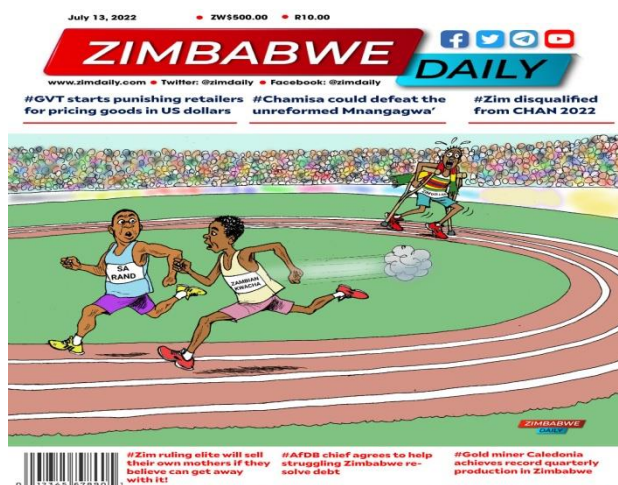


Fig. 15

Zimbabwean, South African, and Botswana currencies are represented by the caricatured image above. The athlete in pink shorts, who stands in for Botswana's currency, is ready to pass the athlete in blue vest, who stands in for South Africa. Given that the Botswana pula is symbolized by a quick athlete and has a white cloud behind him, it is implied that it is the most powerful currency. The South African athlete's appearance makes the swift pace and power of the Botswana pula seem startling. The Zimbabwean dollar, on the other hand, is seen as being severely weak. A disabled athlete is used to symbolize it in the back of the track. He is moving on walking sticks, which denotes fragility and frailty. This frame is used to make fun of Zimbabwe's currency under the current political system.

Additionally, the private media accuses the political New Dispensation, particularly the Minister of Finance, of being to fault for all of Zimbabwe's economic issues. This is demonstrated by the below Zimbabwe Daily image;



Fig. 16

The Zimbabwean economy is the victim of Mtshuli Ncube's depiction as a serial killer in the image above. The Zimbabwean economy is represented by the image on the left, which shows a dead person who has been murdered with a spiked instrument and has blood all over the place. The caricature of the murderer, Mtshuli Ncube, may be seen on the right side. He is charged with the crime of being a "serial killer". This image gives the impression that Mtshuli Ncube and the New Dispensation have devastated the Zimbabwean economy and are still posing a threat to it. One interviewee commented this image stating that; *"Indeed the Zimbabwean currency is in shambles; but we have to be critical towards the representations of the matter in the new media. Some representations are provocative as they carry an agenda of rioting the masses against the government"* (Appendix 4)

Private media typically accuses the government of being dishonest. The Zimbabwean government acknowledges the pervasive corruption that exists there. The Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC), tasked with aiding in the capture of the corrupt people, was established as a result of this. ZACC is accused by the private media of being crooked and unfair in its decisions, particularly when it comes to apprehending corrupt individuals. This claim is supported by the photo below, which was published by Zimbabwe Daily.



Fig. 17

ZACC is portrayed as ZANU PF's puppet. This is demonstrated by the fact that the man seated on the ZACC desk is wearing a scarf, a symbol of staunch ZANU PF support, in the picture. The ZACC mission statement evokes grim humor. The phrase "Doing nothing is doing something" refers to ZACC's inaction against corrupt people. The motto "Catch and release" only serves to emphasize the incompetence of ZACC. ZACC has been charged with apprehending corrupt people and releasing them the next day due to their positions. The corrupt people frequently hold key positions in the government. For instance, Henrieta Rushwaya was discovered smuggling gold at the airport. She was detained but then released and found not guilty, demonstrating the government's corruption. This picture aims to educate viewers on the extent of government corruption and to demonstrate how it is the primary driver of the current economic crisis. Even ZACC and the government took notice of the above caricature of the ZACC, and they later sued Zimbabwe Daily, demonstrating the absence of press censorship. The image below lends credence to this;

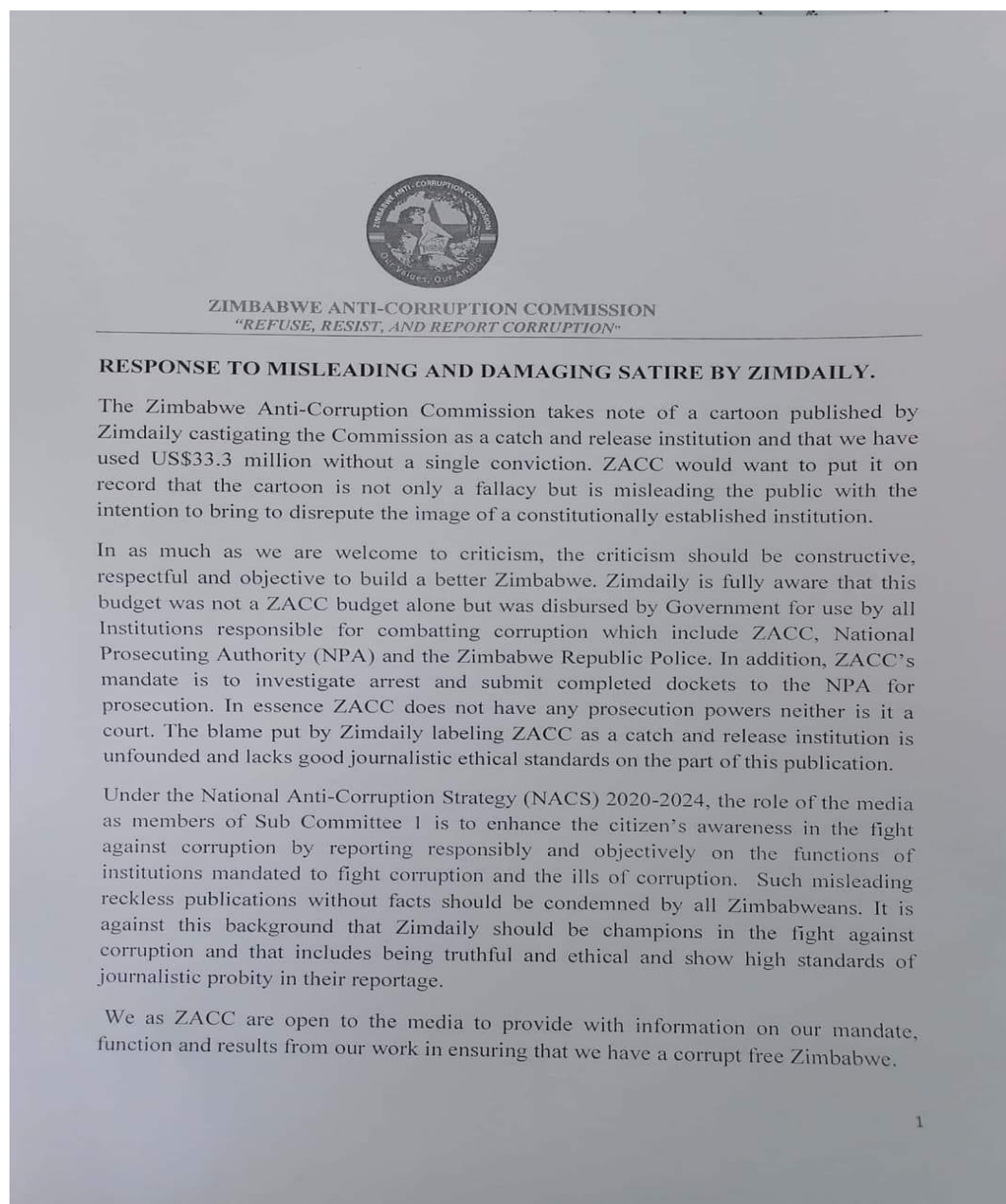


Fig. 18

Commenting on the image above, one media expert claimed that; *“The media reflects the truth. There is no such thing as bad publicity. The response of ZACC is evidence that the media hit a nerve, if not so they would have simply ignored the matter”* (Appendix 5)

The Herald is a vehicle used by the political Nee Dispensation in Zimbabwe to disseminate propaganda and present a favorable image to the public. The Herald consistently reports that the government is taking action and that the economy in Zimbabwe is stable. The image below lends credence to this;



Fig. 19

The Zimbabwean economy appears to be prospering in the image above. The numerous gas tanks in the image give the populace hope and demonstrate that Zimbabwe's economy is not deteriorating. As a result, The Herald newspaper challenges the private media and presents the New Dispensation as a good administration that is making every effort to improve the Zimbabwean economy.

The Herald newspaper also portrays the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation as a government that is putting up significant effort to counter sanctions in order to strengthen the nation's economy. Zimbabwe has been subject to economic sanctions, which the official media sings about to explain away the government's failures to revive the economy. The photograph posted by The Herald newspaper on its website serves as proof of this;



Fig. 20

The aforementioned image supports the viewpoint that Zimbabwe's economic collapse is a result of sanctions. The word "sanctions" is written in black, bold characters to draw attention to it and ensure that readers remember it. Danger is indicated by the yellow ribbons running through the picture. Here, sanctions are portrayed as a danger. The major objective of this kind of portrayal is to sympathetically convey and appeal to the emotions of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation. The Zimbabwean people and the government are both portrayed as victims of the sanctions.

4.4 Social Representations

Zimbabwe had a string of kidnappings, torture, and forced disappearances of opponents of the government from January 2019 to May 2020 by unidentified perpetrators. By October 2019, 50 activists had gone through such kidnappings, including Dr. Peter Magombeyi, who was coordinating the medical doctors' strike action for improved pay and working conditions (Zenda, 2019). The state was embarrassed by the medical professionals' strike, which shut down the health industry. According to Mangena (2021), on May 13, 2020, while they were being held in police custody at the Harare Central Police Station, unidentified assailants abducted Joana Mamombe, the MP for Harare West, together with Cecilia Chimbiri and Netsai Marova, two other female MDC colleagues. They had staged an unauthorized flash protest against the country's rising hunger and poverty when they were detained at a police checkpoint. The COVID-19 lockdown limitations on demonstrations and gatherings were allegedly broken by the women. Two days later, at Muchapondwa Business Centre in Bindura, more than 80 kilometers from Harare, the women were discovered upset and severely beaten. Additionally, they have experienced sexual assault (Moyo & Phulu, 2021). The European Union, the US, and African civic organizations all condemned this mistreatment on a global scale.

Due to widespread poverty, Zimbabwe's social conditions are appalling. The majority of individuals are unemployed, and the social facilities are subpar. The political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe made a commitment to address these socioeconomic issues, but their attempts have been ineffective. The private media portrays Zimbabwe's political and socioeconomic failings under the New Dispensation with a radical tone. The caricatured Zimbabwe Daily image below serves as an example of this;

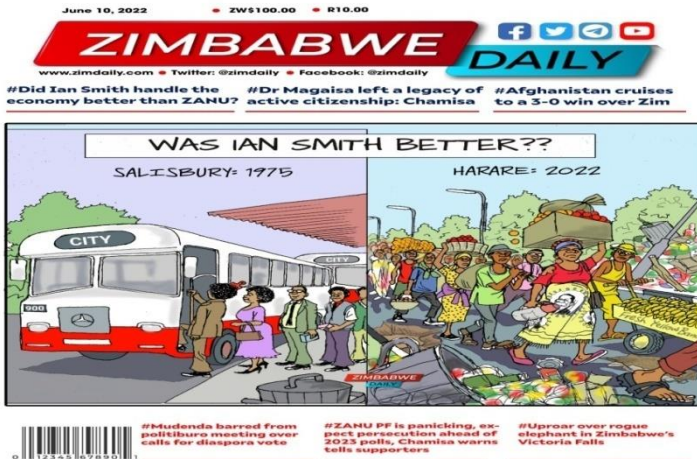


Fig. 21

The frame of the image above is intended to draw comparisons between the colonial administration and the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe. Living conditions in Salisbury, now known as Harare, were seen on the left side of the image in 1975. The capital of Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe, was Salisbury. The left-hand graphic depicts Harare's living environment in the year 2022. Salisbury's inhabitants are shown to be cheerful, smiling, and well-dressed, which is a sign of favorable social conditions. The city looks tidy, and it appears that public transportation is easily accessible. Compared to the picture that portrays Harare, this is different. Harare residents are depicted as being extremely impoverished, all of them working as vendors, and the city is filthy, which is a result of a dysfunctional city council. The fact that the city is currently a health risk reflects diseases as well. Another indication of poverty is the torn clothing worn by the people. The way the photograph is presented conveys the appalling living conditions that people in Zimbabwe endure. This paints a poor picture of the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe.

Furthermore, Zimbabwe is also compared to its neighbouring country, South Africa. Most Zimbabwean citizens travel to South Africa looking for greener pastures. They however face the dangers of xenophobic attacks in South Africa, for instance "Operation Dudula". The suffering of the Zimbabweans under the hands of the political New Dispensation is portrayed below;



Fig. 22

The president of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, is seen pursuing Zimbabweans out of his nation in the image above. Ironically, the Zimbabweans are portrayed as small children who visited their neighbors' home. The presence of flowers and a clean landscape give the neighbor's home in South Africa the appearance of being a lovely and tidy environment. They are being escorted out of a lovely location and instructed to go back to their father, President Mnangagwa, who is wearing a gray robe. Yusupov et al, (2021), grey is a color that represents misfortune, hence Zimbabwe's represents domestic woes. On Mnangagwa's side, the other children are shown to be in need in Zimbabwe or at home. Mnangagwa is carelessly holding the youngest by his pants while the other is sobbing because his head is trapped. Mnangagwa is holding a massive spiked weapon in his hands. All of these signs aim to highlight the dire social conditions in Zimbabwe while disparaging the country's current political system, known as the New Dispensation. One media expert commented on this image stating that; *"The media is now used by the media to reflect the truth of the society. The caricatured images in the media serve to create humor and satire at the same time communicating the truth. They are significant in that their frames are not easily forgotten, thus, they easily make issues salient"* (Appendix 6)

Additionally, the government is presented as repressive and oppressive as it does not allow people to protest. This is augmented by the image below;



Fig. 23

The picture above shows how the people of Zimbabwe are oppressed by the current governmental system. The six men are reminiscent of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), who also wear blue pants. The white-clad men and women resemble Zimbabwe's nurses and medical professionals. This picture shows the demonstrations that Zimbabwean nurses and medical professionals held. They were grumbling about their low pay and inadequate medical care. The New Dispensation sent the ZRP to disperse the protestors rather than listening to their demands and reasoning with them. The weaponry the ZRP is holding and the fact that they are charging the nonviolent protesters in the picture show that they utilized force. The demonstrators are shown as nonviolent because all they are doing is waving signs demanding pay in USDs because it is a more valuable currency. Thus, the private media frames its images in a way that seeks to disparage the political New Dispensation in Zimbabwe, particularly when addressing its failure to improve social conditions.

In contrast, The Herald, the state-run media, gives a favorable impression of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation's attempts to improve people's social conditions. The picture below can be used to support this;



Fig. 24

The image above seeks to overwrite allegations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation's failures to uplift the Zimbabwean society. In the image, the Zimbabwean president is making a grand opening of Madokero Shopping Mall in Harare. The building of a shopping mall in the city is a strong sign of social developments. This is because it helps create employment and it gives nearby residence easy access to basic commodities. It is also a step towards infrastructural development. Hence, The Herald paper portrays the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation in a positive light.

4.5 Conclusion

It bears emphasize that the new media sets an agenda and carries ideological messages that form varied representations. The Zimbabwean political New Dispensation of portrayed both positively and negatively in the new media. The state media such as The Herald portray the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation positively whilst the private media represents it negatively. This chapter assessed the representations of both the private and state media in representing the political, economic and social status of Zimbabwe under the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. The findings show that the media is biased in all its representations although it reflects reality.

Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the research's findings and discussions through analyzing the manner in which the selected new media represents the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. This chapter intends to summarize the findings, give recommendations and make necessary conclusions of the research. This chapter provides an overview of the entire research and highlights the central and important concepts highlighted in the research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The main aim of this study was to analyze the various representations of the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation in selected new media. This first chapter of this research served as an introductory chapter and explained the importance of this research in the department of Literature, Languages and Cultural Studies. The first chapter explained the context of this study and what motivated the researcher to conduct this research. The first chapter clearly highlighted the main objectives and research questions of the study. It went on to discuss the pertinent literature which shapes this research so as to lay a foundation of the research and show the research gaps to be filled and the body of knowledge to be added. The methodology was also clearly presented in the first chapter so as to give a vivid map of how the research would be conducted. Amongst many other things, the first chapter also presented the theoretical framework which forms the foundations of this research.

After giving the background and foundation of the research, the second chapter focused on the concept of the new media and highlighting the selected new media sites/platforms for the research. The second chapter contains literature about the new media. It defines new media and gives the readers the definition of new media which forms the basis of this research. One of the important aspects of this chapter is that it presents the selected new media platforms and sites to be used in the research considering there are numerous new media sites used to formulate representations.

The third chapter of this research looked at a different aspect from the second chapter. The third chapter gives a comprehensive understanding of what exactly is the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation. It defines the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation and traces its history or

origins. The third chapter also analyzes the “People’s Manifesto” of ZANU PF so as to give an understanding of what the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation is.

The fourth chapter serves as a joining chapter. It joins chapter two and three so as to form the analysis of the research. The fourth chapter looks at the representations of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation (defined in chapter three) in the selected new media sites (highlighted in chapter two). This chapter uses the social semiotic theory to analyze the images as well as the agenda setting theory so as to assess the frames of the images and come up with hidden meanings. The chapter also analyzes the images so as to put a judgment between the private and state media. To generate an unbiased judgment, the perspectives of media experts are also included in the research’s analysis.

5.3 Conclusion

This research has observed that all media houses and media practitioners are biased when they are formulating representations. The research has discovered that the state media is obliged to positively represent the government in a positive light always. This explains why The Herald always represents the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation positively. It is also the duty of the state new media operators to negatively portray the opposition parties because this is a political issue. The state media belongs to the state and hence has to send ideologies which favor the state to the people.

The research has also discovered that the private media is also biased. This is because it always represents the government in a negative light. This is especially common with the Zimbabwean private media. The oppressive media laws in Zimbabwe resulted in the opening of numerous online papers by the opposition. This is the main reason why most of these online papers denounce and criticize the Zimbabwean political New Dispensation.

The major discovery of this research is that no media house can be exonerated as honest and they all try to send certain ideologies to their audience. This creates a divided society especially in the context of Zimbabwe. Also the research discovered that images are now vastly used to create representations as mental pictures stay longer in the minds of the audience. The state media frames all the successes of the government and are quick to publish them on all their online platforms. On the other hand, the private media vastly makes use of caricatured images. This is

because the real pictures are mostly biased towards positively portraying the government. The caricatured images create humor and satire in ridiculing the state or representing real life issues.

With all that being said, it does not mean the media always lies to the people. In most if not all instances, there is the truth hidden in all representations in the media. The media aims to reflect the society and report all the events occurring. This means the Herald images of the successes of the Zimbabwean New Dispensation are real as they are real activities the government undertook. Although unreal, the caricatured images of the private media are a construction of reality as it is. They try to construct the real issues which occur in the country. In this research, I have discovered it is more like a fictional movie. The characters are not real but what they represent in acting is real and reflects real life issues being experienced.

5.4 Recommendations

- I advise upcoming academics to conduct comprehensive researches of memes and caricatures as forms of political representations which communicate grim humor whilst at the same time sending ideologies.
- Future researchers have to look at how other digital media sites such as WhatsApp, Twitter and blogs amongst others formulate representations.
- Researchers should also analyze how the people have taken the role of formulating representations themselves in the digital media than only looking at new news media sites.
- I advise the government to formulate and legislate policies that allow the media to be independent so as to avoid negative representations as they result in hostile relations in the country.
- I advise all media personnel and media houses to try by all means to represent the truth whether it is positive or negative since all people deserve to know the truth. The media should also detest from producing fake news to the people.

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7.0 Appendices

Some of the interviewees refused their names to be stated due to need of confidentiality.

Interview with Mr. V. Dube on 05 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person

Question: In your view, do the images published online by the new media reflect reality or create reality?

Response: “Images are framed in the media with certain ideologies in mind so as to mirror reality rather than create reality.”

Interview with Miss S. Mashoko on 07 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person.

Question: The state media is always accused of siding with the state even when the state is wrong thereby giving people false information. What is your opinion on this matter?

Response: “The state media has a mandate of protecting the state. To protect the state, it has to negatively portray other political competitors. In this context it is Mnangagwa versus Chamisa”

Interview with Mrs. T. Kunaka on 12 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person.

Question: Specifically looking at Zimbabwe, would you say the state and private new media did justice in reporting the outcomes of the 2018 elections?

Response: *“Of course, there is no opposition in any country that easily respects and agrees to the outcome unless it wins. Its politics, and the media are used as the instrument of such propaganda. It is used to build and destroy governments.”*

Interview with Mr. G. Magamba on 13 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person.

Question: Is the private media just in negatively portraying the economic failures of the Zimbabwe political New Dispensation.? Response: “Indeed the Zimbabwean currency is in shambles; but we have to be critical towards the representations of the matter in the new media. Some representations are provocative as they carry an agenda of rioting the masses against the government”

Interview with Mr. B. Manjengo on 14 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person.

Question: Looking at ZACC's charges against Zimbabwe Daily's caricatured frame of ZACC, would you say that the private media creates false representations so as to negatively portray the New Dispensation

Response: "The media reflects the truth. There is no such thing as bad publicity. The response of ZACC is evidence that the media hit a nerve, if not so they would have simply ignored the matter"

Interview with Mrs A. Chiriga on 16 April 2023. The interview was conducted in person.

Question: The reports and frames of the private media are said to be mostly false especially looking at caricatured representations. What is your opinion on this as a media reporter?

Response: "The media is now used by the media to reflect the truth of the society. The caricatured images in the media serve to create humor and satire at the same time communicating the truth. They are significant in that their frames are not easily forgotten, thus, they easily make issues salient"

Mathew Magwarada first draft

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