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Challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by The Manica Post in Zimbabwe

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my siblings Beatrice, Brenda and Calvin Munyamana. I also dedicate this project to my nephew Tadiwanashe and niece Tatendaishe.

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I would like to thank my God ,the creator of everything and my source of strenghth.I also thank my supervisor Dr Z.E Mugari for guiding me through this project and for being patient with me .I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to my siblings Beatrice, Brenda and Calvin Munyamana for supporting me financially and emotionally. Lastly l would like to thank my friends Guidance, Tariro, Ruvimbo and Anesu for spiritual and emotional support throughout the project.

Abstract

The main aim of the research is to explore the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism. The study also seek to explain the extent to which the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* has promoted democratic participation of citizens and the contribution of the phenomenon to the production of news. The mainstream media have embraced the use of ICTs and this witnessed by the mainstream having their own social media pages and online websites where they publish articles. The uptake of citizen journalism has led to the creation of a converge newsroom and has helped in promoting democratic participation of citizens. *The Manica Post* has enjoyed the use of social media, although to a limited rate.

List of acronyms

ICTs …………………………………………Information Communication Technologies

NSSA………………………………………… National Social Security Authority

MDC…………………………………………Movement for Democratic Change

ZMMT………………………………………… Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust

ZIMPAPERS…………………………………Zimbabwe Newspapers

ZANU PF…………………………………Zimbabwe African National Union –Patriotic Front

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

Most newspaper organisations like *The Manica Post* seem to be warming up to the concept of citizen journalism and seeing it as a necessary adjustment to how the media operates .Kelly (2009) define citizen journalism as an evolving form of journalism where common citizens take the initiative to report news or express their views about happenings in their communities. The advent of new media technologies has made the practise of citizen journalism possible .In contemporary Zimbabwe, citizen journalism has challenged the conventional media in that citizen journalism report on news first before the mainstream media report on it .This has seen the mainstream media specifically *The Manica Post* trying to adopt this new phenomenon.

This study explores the challenges and opportunities faced by *The Manica Post* in implementing citizen journalism .It seeks to interrogate the challenges and prospects of citizen journalism for *The Manica Post* .The research also seeks to investigate how citizen journalism contributes to the creation of a converged newsroom for *The Manica Post* .

1.2 Background of the study

The phenomenon of citizen journalism did not exist before the advent of the internet. Citizen journalism grew together with interactive functions of the internet. Citizen journalism includes forums, blogs, uploading photographs or videos to the media and contributing journalistic content to the news process. The world's first website in 1991 did not offer audiences the liberty to interact. In 2004 Web 2.0 was introduced with new features that allowed citizens to publish their own content on blogs and contributing in the mainstream media. This marked the beginning of citizen journalism. According to Deuze (2003) Web 2.0 came with social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and this marked beginnings of audience participation in online media .The phenomenon of contributing and publishing to the media seem to be growing .

The Manica Post is a state owned newspaper under The Zimbabwe Newspaper Company. The newspaper started online publishing around the 1990s .Restrictive media laws in the country gave birth to the use of online social platforms as the online platforms provide alternative public sphere where citizens could express themselves without fear. Banda (2010) argues that continuous use of internet, mobile phones and computerised gadgets have given

birth to counter hegemonic voices where citizens can express opinions and views and challenge those in power

1.3 Problem Statement

The emergence of information communication technologies (ICTs) has opened up the once tightly controlled communication space (Tsokota2017) .The popularity of citizen journalism through social media brings to question how it has managed to challenge conventional media with specific reference to *The Manica Post* .It seeks to explore the challenges and prospects in the uptake of the phenomenon and how it has re defined the creation and reporting of news by *The Manica Post* in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Significance of the study

Studies on citizen journalism have been carried out (Banda 2010, Mabweazara 2011, Deuze 2003), but the emphasis has been largely on defining citizen journalism. Banda (2010) explored how citizen journalism is perceived as an agent for democratic change or transformation and this study departs from the by focusing not on how citizen journalism is a tool for democratic change ,but rather the challenges and prospects of adopting the phenomenon by *The Manica Post.* The study contributes to the knowledge about the importance of social media in citizen journalism as well as the challenges and opportunities brought by the concept for *The Manica Post* .Deuze (2003) focused on the future of professional journalism in the era of social media and citizen journalism in Western countries, but this study will focus on Zimbabwe particularly *The Manica Post.*

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study aims to:

- investigate the challenges and prospects faced by *The Manica Post* in the uptake of citizen journalism.
- explain the extent to which uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* has promoted democratic participation of citizens.
- establish the contribution of citizen journalism to the production of news for *The Manica Post.*
-

1.6 Research Questions

* What are the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism for *The Manica Post?*

1.6.1 Sub research questions

* To what extent has citizen journalism promoted democratic participation of citizens?

* How does citizen journalism contribute to production of news for *The Manica Post*?

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study is limited to the online version of *The Manica Post* from July 2016 up to date. The researcher will analyse content posted on *The Manica Post* website, Facebook page and Twitter handle. A deeper analysis to be made on how these platforms and citizen journalism have worked together in coming up with a counter hegemonic public sphere.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The study will only focus on *The Manica Post* and posts from January 2018 to May 2018. The research focuses on *The Manica Post* in assessing the extent to which citizen journalism is being practised and how they are promoting democratic participation of citizens.

1.9 Conclusion

The chapter introduces the study, sets the objectives, research questions, limitations and delimitations of the study. The next chapter looks on the existing literature and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the problem statement, significance of the study, research objectives and the research questions. This chapter reviews related literature and work that has been done on the area under study .Theoretical framework such as the democratic participant theory, revisiting the public sphere and critical theory of technology were explored to understand the study from a theoretical point of view.

2.2 Literature Review

Even if there has been literature on media in Africa, most are largely focused on traditional mainstream media (Wassernan 2011:5). As Mabweazara (2011:102) notes, regardless of the vast increase of online journalism research in western countries, less can be said on the same in the African context. Mostly researches on citizen journalism in general are rather western Vaan Noort (2005) states that the advent of computers and the internet gave rise to communication technologies therefore in line with this argument citizen journalism came with the advent of the internet. Number of people accessing the internet through different gadgets is getting higher by the day.

2.2.1 Citizen journalism as a tool for democracy

In a democracy people have rights to own beliefs, to say and write what they think, to be informed, to express their opinions and interests as well as to watch how their political leaders use their powers. Banda (2010) defines democracy as the active participation of ordinary citizens in politics and civic life. According to Banda (2010) the purpose of citizen journalism is to allocate common people to be partners in the making of news and giving them a voice to discuss issues that concern them. Citizen journalism promotes horizontal communication .The study agree with Banda's arguments in that it tries to look at how *The Manica Post* tries to promote democratic participation by engaging them on their social media platforms to share news and comments. However the study departs from Banda in that it further looks at the challenges paused by the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post*. Moyo (2014) claim that citizen journalism acts as a subaltern space and practice where the civic virtues and freedom and ordinary people in authoritarian regimes find expression .According to Moyo (2014) citizen journalism gives ordinary people communication space to tell their stories free from publishing monopolies .The researcher argue that citizen journalism is a space for ordinary people or marginalised people to discuss issues of the day or question news. Considering that *The Manica Post* is state controlled, the study seeks to

find out how *The Manica Post* online social platforms give citizens power to question the news and how these platforms act as alternative subaltern spaces.

The authenticity of democracy through the internet is questionable.Feenberg (2009) questions authenticity of democratic participation brought by the internet. According to Feenberg (2009) the internet is a virtual mall, a final extension of capitalism in every corner of our lives ,a denser web of surveillance technologies threatening individual autonomy .This suggest that citizens have lost individual autonomy and where they believe they are being given space to communicate they are being exploited. Feenberg's argument is critical to the study as the study explores the extent to which *The Manica Post* promotes democratic participation through citizen journalism.

2.2.2 Citizen journalism and traditional media
Scholars like Deuze (2007) look at the relationship between citizen journalism and the mainstream media. The debate is whether citizen journalism can replace professional journalism. From the onset, the downfall of mainstream media at the hands of citizen journalism has been predicted .The fear is that mainstream journalism shall lose audience to citizen journalism since journalism was created by the citizens themselves. However, Mabweazara (2010) ,argue that citizen journalism can never replace professional journalism. The researcher argue that citizen journalism does not have the potential to replace professional journalism however the two can complement each other hence the study looks at the contribution of citizen journalism to the production of news for *The Manica Post.*

Berger (2008) states that the prospects for user generated content once thought possibly central to the next era of journalism appear limited. He further argues that while researchers have been scripting the decline of professional journalism because of citizen journalism or contributors, citizen journalism remains an overrated concept. The researcher reckons that citizen contribution are new ideas, comments, pictures and videos but a citizen posting news content is less valuable hence the study looks at contribution of citizens to the production of news for *The Manica Post* .Berger (2008) highlights that citizen journalism plays a supportive role in the news gathering process thus complementing professional journalism. The study seeks to fill gap by looking at the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism *by The Manica Post.*

2.2.3 The internet as key technology for citizen journalism

The internet, radio, and telecommunications have become a very important platform of disseminating information across the globe. In almost every country the least that they have is a mobile network providing a wide range of services including voice calls, messaging and internet connectivity. Mobile phone adoption has exploded all over the continent, so much that most Africans have access to a mobile device. According to Chari (2013) the relationship between new media and journalism is grounded in technological determinism in that new technology I the agent of social change .The approach used here compliments the advent of new technology in media as the main catalyst in bringing citizen journalism to life.

The introduction of 3G networks has changed the way by which many people access the internet .Mutsvairo (2013) argues that the rise of the internet has not left journalism untouched and digital networks enable ordinary citizens to report and disseminate news. This has seen newspapers like *The Manica Post* publishing content online. According to Benkler (2006) the rise of the internet and citizen journalism has welcomed the emergence of a networked public sphere. Information communication technologies are key technology for citizen journalism for example the proceedings of 'operation restore legacy' were reported on social media before the legacy media reported on it. Journalists today are often experienced ICT users with vast experience in using social media. Moyo (2009) argues that blogs, twitter and Facebook are the most used outlets for citizen journalism.

2.2.4 Citizen journalism and ethics

Citizen journalism breaches journalistic ethics. Citizen journalists can be from any walks of life and may not necessarily have any related background of journalism or media, and who collect, disseminate and analyse news on Weblogs (commonly known as 'blogs'), Wikis, and other information sharing websites using their handheld devices, cell phones, tablets, laptops, digital cameras, and other modern wireless technologies. Bimber (2014) argues that citizen journalism has often been criticized by career-journalists due to lack of their training and orientation toward the standards, ethics, norms, and practices of professional journalism. The researcher argues that journalists are justified in saying that citizen journalists do not uphold the traditional journalistic value of objectivity when working on a specific subject and only professionally trained journalists can understand the ethics required of news editors and reporters. Moyo (2009) argues that even though citizen journalism is a space for ordinary people, the citizens abuse this space by breaking simple journalistic ethics. This study tries to

fill the literature gap of establishing how these ethics affect professional journalism at *The Manica Post.*

2.3 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework comprises of the concepts, definitions and their references that serve up to fortify a study (Swanson 2013:4) It is important to have a theoretical framework as it connects a researcher to existing knowledge, enlightens and effectively engages the researcher to the study .Theories to be explored in this chapter include revisiting the public sphere, democratic participant theory and critical theory of technology.

2.3.1 Critical theory of technology

Critical theory of technology looks at the relationship between technology and society. It was propounded by Feenberg in 2009. According to Feenberg (2009) technology is a neutral tool that can be used for different purposes whether good or bad. This theory is relevant to the study in that the researcher is looking at the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism with specific reference to *The Manica Post*. The study is going to explore the relationship between a new media technology and a newsroom and how it affects audiences. The emergence of Web 2.0 helped media organisations like *The Manica Post* to reach wider audiences and to disseminate information on different platforms hence catering for all audiences. According to Schmid (2006)The fact that audiences are not only responding to media texts but are also involved in producing content has made it hard for the mass media to gate keep some information . The option of remaining anonymous or using pseudo names has led to online users to abuse that power and this affects media organisations. For example in 2008 there was a page created by 'Baba Jukwa' where information concerning government officials and elections was released and people would discuss about it.

The theory also questions the authenticity of democracy offered by the internet. Feenberg (2009) argues that the internet is a virtual mall, a final extension of capitalism in every corner of our lives. He further argues that the internet is a trend supported by an ever denser web of surveillance technologies threatening individual autonomy. This argument enhances the study in that the study is seeking to explore the extent to which citizen journalism works a tool for democracy .It will look at how the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* promotes democratic participation hence Feenberg's argument will help in assessing whether or not the internet is offering freedom to the citizens. Feenberg (2009) argues that the internet is re- producing capitalism .This argument helps the study in that it will look at the relation

between the people and capitalism. Where citizens think they have democracy and freedom of expression by commenting and contributing content on social media platforms and online pages, should they not be paid for that content since they are contributing. The internet as a virtual mall is used by the elite and media organisations to sell their ideas. This study question the extent to which citizen journalism has promoted democratic participation of citizens.

Feenberg (2009) argues that the evolution of technology that is mobile technology is increasingly influencing broader aspects of human life. Access to hand held devices has given way to multitude of social opportunities and engagements influencing both the most advanced and marginalised groups .This therefore attempts to answer how the incorporation of citizen journalism in to professional journalism helps to promote democratic participation of citizens. Audiences from various places including those from the rural areas are able to contribute information to *The Manica Post* .According to Feenberg technology is still evolving and it is an improving factor that increases efficiency in every era and society. This theory is relevant to the study as it focus on the relationship between technology and society. It helps in exploring how the uptake of citizen journalism enhances democracy and promotes the idea of an alternative public sphere.

Technology design is an open process that can produce different outcomes depending on the social circumstances of development (Rossi 2012).Kyle (2006) argues that internet is still an ongoing project, it is still evolving coming up with new features every day. This is relevant to the study since the researcher would like to explore the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* and how they are keeping up with continuously evolving technology.

2.3.2 The democratic participant theory

The theory was propounded by Mcquail in 1987 as follow up to the development media theory and the social responsibility theory. The democratic participant theory calls for the mass media to be open to ordinary citizens to participate in issues concerning governance and welfare .This is in line with the research topic in the sense that it According to Roelofsel (1996) the theory is a response against commercialisation and monopolies in public broadcasting .This theory suggest that citizen journalism has the potential to create a free market of ideas where diverse opinions can be expressed freely. The theory calls for multiplicity of the media and horizontal communication and interaction. According to McQuial (1983) the citizens have the right to relevant information and the right to answer

back as well as becoming sources of information hence the tenets of the theory are relevant to this study as it seeks to explore the extent to which citizen journalism promotes democratic participation. The theory calls for the involvement of ordinary citizens in news gathering and dissemination at local level and this is line with the study as it seeks to understand how the incorporation of citizen journalism affects news production.

The theory was proposed in respect to new media developments and increased criticism of dominance of the main mainstream media monopolies. According to Berger (2005) this theory is the key enabler of citizen journalism in that new platforms like blogging and cell phone cameras are readily available to individuals. The theory supports the right to relevant information, right to communicate back and right to use ICTs for communication and interaction. This is in line with the topic under study as it explores the uptake of citizen journalism and how *The Manica Post* online platforms allow horizontal communication.

2.3.3 Revisiting the public sphere

The theory was propounded by Papacharissi in 2002 as a critic to the public sphere theory by Habermus. The theory states that the internet and ICTs have created to a new public sphere where people from different backgrounds share and transmit information. According to Papacharissi (2002) the internet and ICTS have the capability of reviving a public sphere. Castells (2001) sees the public sphere as a space of communicating ideas and issues that rise from society and addressed to the decision makers in institutions of society for example *The Manica Post* online platforms allows citizens from all over the country to participate in political and civic news.

Papacharissi (2002) argues that the role of the internet as an ideal public sphere is still a visualization, it encourages but has on yet managed to change political and social structures. For example in Zimbabwe even if *The Manica Post* online platforms allow public debates and discussions, the government has not changed policies because of that .Papacharissi notes that cyberspace is both public and private therefore it calls for those who want to reinvent their private and public lives. Cyberspace provides new ground for phasing out of the age friction and identity, the individualism and community hence Papacharissi (2002) regards as an ideal public sphere as how internet discourse contribute to democracy. However, Gerhards and Schafer (2009) argue that the internet could speed up the disintegration of the public sphere .He claim that this could happen to already dominant groups and actors would take up

the foreground in practical use of the internet and reproduce a capitalist society .Hence this study seeks to explore if this is the same with *The Manica Post* online platforms.

2.4 Conclusion

The chapter reviewed different literature and raised themes. The theory also explored theories like revisiting the public sphere, critical theory of technology and democratic participant theory. The next chapter explains the methodology employed in the research.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter looked at the available literature on citizen journalism and the themes that help in understanding the topic under research. This chapter focuses on the research methodology, design, methods of data collection target population and methods of data analysis. Research is basically a process of looking for and getting answers (Keyton, 2011:2).Research on its own is a logical and systematic search for new and useful information on a particular topic. Freebody (2003) adds that, research methodology can be noted as a systematic way to solve a problem. It is a research guideline with components such as methods and tasks that help in organising information in a comprehensive study. In other words research design refers to the kind of approach taken in confronting research questions of social and cultural phenomenon that might not be quantifiable.

3.2 Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative approach. Qualitative research tries to distinguish theory from numbers. This study employed a qualitative approach in exploring the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post*. Flick (2014) argues that qualitative research analyses social phenomenon in terms of texts and images hence the researcher used this type of approach as it analyses a citizen journalism as a social phenomenon. Du Plooy (2001) articulates that qualitative research adds weight and significance to a given study hence the researcher employed it. The study takes a descriptive approach which is regarded by Du Pooy (2008) as the most accurate form of research methodology .The nature of the study employed is a case study of one daily newspaper which is *The Manica Post*. Descriptive research is one which is based on human observation and responses whereby data can be obtained through interviews and participant observation. The study made use of this type of research as it relies on observation and in depth interviews in data collection and this assists in understanding situations and trends and also allows recording of information for future analysis.

Interviews, netnography and participant observation are purely qualitative hence they give room for attitude and behaviour which are key in dealing with people. The variables are largely unknown and the researcher concentrates on the context that may shape the understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2011). Descriptive research is critical in dealing with participants in a social set up such as *The Manica Post* newsroom. An observation of how they carry out their duties is critical in this study. In such studies, a

hypothesis is created following the research process, because a limited amount of information exists on the subject matter. The flexibility of descriptive qualitative study enabled the researcher to make sense of and construct meanings out of the ongoing interactions between journalists, their immediate context of practice and their wider social context. This methodological approach reveals the dependent nature of cultural production and facilitated a close understanding of the dynamics of news making practices in which new technologies are deployed.

3.3 Unit of analysis

Unit of analysis is an entity that a study is focusing on, and that is who or what is being studied. (Yin2009:29).Groups of individuals, individuals and geographical units can all be classified as units of analyses. The time frame of the study will comprise of articles that start from January to May 2018.In this study the unit of analysis were the articles that were sourced from social media and published by *The Manica Post* and the other unit of analysis were the views and comments of the editors on the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism .They were analysed as a means to try and meet the demands of the main research question hence the unit of analysis will help the study in coming up with concrete conclusion. The participants include journalists from The *Manica Post* and online consumers. The research analysed posts from *The Manica Post* Facebook page, Twitter handle and website.

3.4 Research population

Elements that make up a study sample are derived from target population using various sampling procedures. The research population include journalists and editors from *The Manica Post* as well as audiences who view the online publications. Journalists and editors are crucial in this study as they are mostly affected by citizen journalism. The universe comprises of articles and posts from January to May 2018.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting a population in a research area (Flick 2014:168).The study employed non-probability sampling which is defined by Krippendorf (2014) as those samples based on a population that has an unequal chance of being selected ,hence difficult to select a sampling frame. The study employed purposive sampling which conform well to the qualitative paradigm. Sampling is a process of selecting units such a people or organisations from a population of interest so that by studying the sample we may fairly generalise our results back to the population from which they were chosen for the purpose of the study.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is when a researcher judges who fits into the study .The researcher used purposive sampling in coming up with a sample of online journalists and editors .This kind of sampling requires that the researcher select who participates and whom to study according to the research objectives. The researcher used purposive sampling because it includes participants who are specific and relevant to the study. Purposive sampling was used in this study because editors and sub editors are busy people as they usually chase after news stories and try to meet deadlines Sample enables the researcher to study a larger population through a small group if the sample is representative .This means the sample chosen by the researcher can be deemed adequate to satisfy the requirements of the research .The sampling technique was relevant to this study in that the area being researched needed people who are knowledgeable on the issue who could provide the necessary information that can help the research. As above stated the people that had the knowledge about citizen journalism were the sub editors and editors. The researcher purposively interviewed journalist and editors at *The Manica Post* to get their views and thoughts on the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by the publication.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The researcher collected data verbally through interviews. The researcher also collected data from *The Manica Post* online social media sites.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviewing involves asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study (Gubrium, 2001). The researcher drew interviewees from the broadest range of positions in the newsroom, from the most senior editorial level to the most junior reporter and across gender divides in order to get the various perceptions around the uptake of citizen journalism. The researcher used semi structured interviews because questions were prepared ahead of time thus giving respondents the freedom to express their views in their own terms. The primary data was extracted from interviews with the journalists and editors as they helped in giving an account of challenges they are facing in adopting citizen journalism as well as the prospects of the new phenomenon. The researcher interviewed three desk editors and two editors. The researcher selected journalist per each position in the newsroom and this allowed her to get different perceptions from the different people as people have heterogeneous views

about citizen journalism. The researcher used face to face interviews which helped her concretising her data by capturing facial expressions of the respondents when they were responding to the questions. The researcher did not manage to have a face to face interview with the online editor as he was in Harare. The researcher then came up with a counter strategy of conducting the interview via email and this had a limitation in that the researcher could not observe facial expressions and she was not able to ask follow up questions.

3.6.2 Netnography

The researcher used online ethnography known as netnography on each of the different social media platforms and *The Manica Post* web page to collect data for analysis. Netnography is defined by Kozinets (2007) as a research approach used to collect information from online computer-mediated communities. The researcher used this approach to extract information from comments posted by users on social media .These posts provided the researcher to gain in depth understanding into the practise of citizen journalism without influencing the journalists and the audiences. The researcher took advantage of the internet access at Midlands State University, where she is a student and this enabled her to spend more time everyday observing and participating and engaging in the virtual communities. Since online ethnography involves studying virtual communities who in most scenarios are anonymous (Mugari 2018), it saved the researcher from ethical issues of securing informed consent from both *The Manica Post* and the audiences. Furthermore the researcher believed that netnography has a level of truthfulness and disclosure depth than face to face conversations. The researcher looked at the posts, comments and reviews on *The Manica Post* social media platforms as well as their online website from July 2016 to May 2018.

3.6.3 Participant observation

The researcher was attached at *The Manica Post* for her work related learning and this helped her to observe some trends through spending time in the newsroom and interacting with journalists on a daily basis for three months. Participant observation is defined by Krippendorf (2004) as the process of creating connection within a community and learning to act in such way as to blend into the community so that all its members will act naturally. In this regard the researcher managed to observe the journalists and editors in their natural setting and environment without them knowing that they were being observed. Participant observation allowed the researcher to have backstage information about the organisation and it allowed her to have richly detailed description. The researcher had the privilege of getting close with the journalists through interactions. The researcher was taught some of the skills in

news gathering and production by the journalists and this gave an insight into the topic under research. Through interaction with the journalists for three months the researcher managed to get relevant information for the study as she also participated in news gathering and production. Participant observation provided opportunities for the researcher to view and participate in unscheduled events like attending news diaries and meetings with the editors and journalist at *The Manica Post*.

3.7 Methods of data analysis

Data analysis refers to the attempt to detect the existence or absence of meaningful themes, shared or conflicting ideas (Krippendorf, 2004).The nature of data to be analysed can be directly related to the way it was collected. The researcher used qualitative approach on analysing data as well as content and discourse analysis.

3.7.1 Content analysis

Content analysis is a way of systematically describing written, spoken or visual communication and usually includes the uses of newspapers, magazines and the internet among others (Hayes and Krippendorf 2004:77). The study uses content analysis to analyse respondent's written responses through interviews completed by journalists from *The Manica Post* .Content analysis helped in the interpretation and comprehension of the research findings. Content analysis allowed the researcher to make replicable and valid interpretations by understanding and coding textual meaning. Content analysis became a powerful tool in bringing order and hidden meaning to the collected online posts as well as interviews. Content analysis provided the reading of texts, images and symbolic matter that was produced on the online platforms. Content analysis was used in this study to assist in finding out about the rituals that journalists undertake when using online social media as a source for news for *The Manica Post*.

The researcher also employed content analysis to analyse data as it can be used with any type of communication applicable in a particular area of study .The researcher chose content analysis to analyse images and written content because it is free from bias and is done without the subject's awareness .It is recorded and can be done at the researcher's convenience .Content analysis is appropriate for analysing open ended responses and can be used with existing data for achieving the objectives of the research.

3.7.2 Thematic approach analysis

The researcher employed thematic approach analysis as it was applicable to research questions that go beyond the researcher's experiences. Du ploy (2001) argues that thematic analysis is a qualitative analytic method for identifying ,analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data, organising and describing data set in rich detail. . Three themes were used in the study so as to make the findings of the research more understandable. Thematic approach allows for categories to emerge from data for example other themes emerged from the data collected. The researcher also used thematic approach analysis as it allows interpretation of themes supported by data thereby increasing accurateness. The data that was gathered was analysed using thematic analysis as it helped come with the conclusion for the research. The researcher used content analysis as it provides a means of organising and summarising the findings from a large, diverse body of research .Thematic approach analysis is flexible as it allows for use in various subjects including media texts and images. Thematic approach analysis helped the researcher to get a clear picture of the content of a text.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Research ethics are employed to enhance the validity of the research results and above all to protect the rights and participation of the participants (Saunders 2003).The research considered ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality and respect for intellectual property rights. To enhance anonymity the names of the research participants were protected through using the terms respondents and participants. The researcher also got verbal consent form the participants .The respondents participated out of their own willingness.

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter highlighted the research methodology used by the research. It also highlighted how the researcher obtained data which was presented .Data collection techniques, the techniques advantages and sampling procedures.

CHAPTER 4: ORGANISATIONAL ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter analyses the organisational structure and political economy of The *Manica Post* newspaper. Ownership patterns, funding mechanisms and control of the newspaper are discussed in relation to how they affect the print media and day to day operations.

4.2 Political economy

Media ownership and control is rooted in politics and this affects the content produced and disseminated to the audiences. ".. Political economy as a branch of the science of a statesman or legislator concerned with the twofold objective of providing a plentiful revenue or subsistence for the people…". He suggests that political economy is the study of social relations, particularly power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources including communication resources. Mosco (2009) points out that political economy in its more ambitious form, it is the study of control and survival of social life. This suggests that issues of ownership and control of the media take centre stage throughout the communication process.

Golding and Murdock (1991) state that critical political economy is interested in the interplay between economic organisation and political, social and cultural life and their implications on basic moral questions of justice and equity for public good other than economic and technical efficiency. Political economy of the media relates to how power relations and how they affect media operations. According to Herman and Chomsky (1987) there are filters in the communication process that the media are subjected in the manufacture of news. This suggest that these filters directly influence content produced by the media. Power relations affect the content, processing, distribution and markets forces for any media house. This plays a central role in explaining the nature of internal and external publics that journalists from *The Manica Post* operate in.

"Political economy is the study of social relations particularly power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources."(Moscow 1996:25).Political economy is interested in media ownership that is private, state, public, civic, community, conglomerates and concentrates. "Media are economic industries that operate like other industries regardless of their special roles in society." (Garnham 2000:213).This suggests that media industries including *The Manica Pos*t bear all the characteristics of capitalistic production and through advertising they are part of the capitalist construction and are therefore conservative. *The Manica Post* furthers Zanu Pf hegemony by

promoting its propaganda. *The Manica Post* is always representing and framing the ruling party positively and vice versa to the oppositional parties. Furthermore there has been changes in the operations of the Zimpapers where there is now central production and they now have one group editor, Pikirayi Dekete .This exerts force on the quality of content produced as one person has the power and final say over all the publications including *The Manica Post.*

4.*3 The Manica Post* **Mission**
The Manica Post's mission statement is to produce newspapers, computer paper, cheques, books, and other printed matter including packaging of the highest quality at competitive prices that add value to customers, employees and shareholders. A mission statement is a combination of what your business does and how it does it, expressed in a way that captures the values that are important to you (Ward (2017).She further argues that the mission statement expresses a company's purpose and announces to the world at large why your company exists. *The Manica Post* has managed to be the competitive paper in the Manicaland province as it is the leading paper in the province. However the fact that the paper is state owned, it has failed to meet up with its mission of adding value to customers as it usually report in favour of the ruling party .Thus the ownership and control patterns limits the paper to add values to customers, employees and stakeholders.

4.4 The Manica Post vision
Ward (2017) defines a vision statement as an inspiration or framework for all your strategic planning .A vision statement enunciates your business and dreams for your company thus it describes what you are trying to build and serves as a benchmark for your future actions. The company's vision is to provide up to date news and information from Manicaland to all the people of Zimbabwe at world class standards and at affordable prices, bringing a dynamic and market led media company in Southern Africa, providing quality products and services in a healthy environment and handling its stakeholders, employees and customers professionally hence satisfying its customers profitably. The paper has tried to meet its vision of providing up to date news and information to all the people of Zimbabwe in that they post some of the news on their social media sites and their online page. This allows everyone with internets access in Zimbabwe to access news from everywhere.

4.5 *The Manica Post* core values

The Manica Post's core values are customer satisfaction, good corporate governance, equal opportunity employer, profitability ,quality products and services, credibility, fair and balanced news as well as family values, integrity and accountability ,reliability, ethical business practises, customer orientation, social responsibility ,teamwork and recognition of employee contribution. Core values are vital beliefs of a person or organisation. These are guiding principles that dictate behaviour and help companies to determine if they are on the right path and fulfilling their goals by creating unwavering guide (Ward 2017). Adoption of citizen journalism it's a step in the right direction for *The Manica Post* in the sense that it helps to meet customer satisfaction. By giving the citizens a chance to comment and suggest and participate in the production of news, it brings customer satisfaction. However use of online social media as source of news challenges policy makers to limit the impact of the disadvantages of the internet. Furthermore publishing news online forces the policy makers to be accountable for each and every day to day issues as citizens can easily verify the story in the comment box.

4.6 *The Manica Post* objectives

The Manica Post objectives are to produce a publication that is of the highest quality, serving the interests of both the community and that of the company. The newspaper is popular in Manicaland province and the largest in terms of circulation in the province suggesting that it fulfils the objective of serving the community. The newspaper is printed in Mutare but it also circulates in places like Harare and Bulawayo and other cities .The adoption of new media technologies and use of social media sites for publication makes the paper's publications readily available and accessible to all audiences in the country and beyond boarders .This meets the objective of serving the community in a broader way.

The other objective of *The Manica Post* is to give fair reportage .While a story might have many voices of authority when reported, the authoritative voices are mostly pro Zanu PF. This is because the government owns the majority shares in terms of ownership. The state has the superseding decision when it comes to policy making and production of content. There is lack of multiplicity of political parties' representation by the newspaper. This therefore suggests that *The Manica Post* fails to meet its objective of fair reportage.

4.7 *The Manica Post* Ownership and Control

Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust (ZMMT) controls the major stake and the majority voting power of 51.09 percent of Zimpapers. The remaining shares are shared among companies like

Old Mutual Investments Corporation, National Social Security Authority (NSSA), Zimbabwe Pension Fund and First Mutual Life Assurance are some of the companies that own the remaining shares of Zimpapers. It crucial to note that the government has the superseding power in terms of voting and none of the companies has complete voting power, thus the company is owned by the government and other entities.

The government own more than fifty percent stake of Zimpapers thus it has more powers over the day to day operations of *The Manica Post*. "Government owns more than fifty percent stake in Zimpapers, therefore it is the government that has an overall ruling over the publication and its policies." (Munyuki 2005).During the pre-independence era the publication was used to advance the interests of the whites and after independence the oppressed became the later day oppressors using the paper to further their propaganda and hegemony as well. Moyo (2002) argues that opposition and criticism is regarded in a negative light thus often termed as 'regime change agenda'. Oppositional political parties, civic society and western regimes are represented as enemies of the state who are set on reversing the gains of the liberation struggle. Mukasa (2013) argues that the Zimbabwean print media is a genuine reflection of the Marxist ideologies that are premised on the fact that at every epoch, the dominant ideas are that of the ruling class. Hence *The Manica Post* is an effective tool that furthers government hegemony and ideology. Considering the fact that the publication is controlled and owned by the government, the possibility of *The Manica Post* journalists safeguarding highest professionalism becomes controversial.

4.8 The Manica Post Editorial Policy

Editorial policy refers to the guidelines and protocols that manage the operation of a media organisation. It outlines the dos and don'ts of the day to day operations like news sourcing, production as well as dissemination. According to Hall (1992) reality is constructed thus it can be relayed, subjective or constructed. Apart from their duties of informing, educating and entertaining the media is in the business of creating and constructing reality. Through the way they package their content the media shape our opinions, attitudes, styles and way of thinking. The media help those in high power or the capitalist to regain dominance every time thus the encoding of messages help to shape public opinion and results in the audience decoding preferred reading of media texts .*The Manica Post* is upholds the ruling class ideologies through framing and agenda setting thereby shaping public opinion on important issues like who to vote for. Framing is used to achieve dominant reading. For example *The Manica Post* and its sister papers like *The Herald* conveniently choose to downplay or cover

rallies by Nelson Chamisa meanwhile reporting about the first lady's donations to underprivileged people.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the political economy of *The Manica Post* and funding mechanism and how it affects content and the day to day operations of the organisation. The following chapter presents analyses the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the political economy and funding mechanism of *The Manica Post* and how ownership affects content. The research was presented qualitatively, with use of thematic approach and content analysis. The research is based on the research objectives that were identified in previous chapters which sought to institute the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *Manica Post* in Zimbabwe. The data was obtained through interviews of desk editors and editors, participant observation as well as analysis of reader comments and analysis through netnography. The data was presented thematically.

5.2 Overview of findings

Table 1.1 shows uses of Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter by the Manica Post

Activity	Twitter	Facebook	WhatsApp
Engaging audience to debate on issues	✓	✓	✗
Gathering news	✓	✓	✓
Disseminate information	✓	✓	✗

The table above shows how social media networks are being used by *The Manica Post* to engage audiences to debate on issues, gather news and disseminating information. The research carried out sought to answer the question challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* .Content analysis displayed that Twitter was used to reach audiences such as journalists, ordinary citizens as well as politicians. A lot of stories are sourced from twitter as many politicians use twitter handles to reach out to audiences. Journalists also draw entertainment news from various artist twitter handles. Facebook was also used to disseminate information as well as trigger debates. Information disseminated through Facebook is not targeted to everyone though audiences take time to like and comment on *The Manica Post* page.

Through interviews that were conducted with journalists at *The Manica Post*, the researcher discovered that the various social media platforms that are available helped the publication in the gathering of news. Citizens add on comment or correct the published content, videos as

well as pictures. This sought to answer the objective of establishing the contribution of citizen journalism to the production of news for *The Manica Post*. Citizens' views, attitudes and opinions become a part of storytelling which tries to answer how citizen journalism has promoted democratic participation of citizens.

5.3 Challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism

Among the journalists and editors that were interviewed the researcher discovered that *The Manica Post* seem to be embracing the uptake of citizen journalism. The junior journalists established that they enjoyed using social media platforms to gather news. The interviewees pointed out that social media has greatly changed the journalism profession in a better way and has transformed how the newsroom operates and has promoted the idea of a converged newsroom. The researcher discovered that social networking sites make life easier for journalists in that they can get news from online sources. Use of online sources perpetuate citizen journalism which sometimes help journalists look for news.

> The digital world has changed the newsroom lifestyle .We can seek comments and feedback from political, economic and other experts .Twitter is the most ideal platform because it has more experts than people seeking to create relationships .On Facebook readers who have come across a newsworthy incident often inbox us and we make a follow up as well as on WhatsApp. Said one of the journalist.

The respondents agreed that social media together with citizen journalism has had the potential to provide multiple sources of information .Most newspaper organisations in Zimbabwe get news from executive, prominent business people ,government officials and leaders of large corporate bodies .

From netnography through content analysis the researcher observed that citizen journalism through online platforms enhance democratic participation of citizens. The researcher discovered that citizen journalism facilitates more interpersonal communication. The researcher also observed that citizen journalism enriches media content as it has the capacity to improve opportunities for feedback and interaction. The internet through social media networks gives room for the marginalised groups to participate in issues and politics of the day. Citizen journalism help to cut across geographical boundaries in terms of participation of citizens and there is real time processing of news.

From participant observation the researcher discovered that uptake of citizen journalism in a way breaches journalistic ethics. Sometimes journalists use pictures from social media on their stories .They do not take time to take appropriate pictures from accident scenes or for

other stories .Below is an example of pictures from *The Manica Post* web page of an published articles with un appropriate pictures :

Pictures contributed by citizens used by *The Manica Post:*

Furthermore, the editors and other senior reporters pointed out that the uptake of citizen journalism has given birth to desktop journalism whereby most of the journalists source for news and online and rarely go in the field. .

> Various social media platforms and citizen journalism encourages passiveness within journalists because nowadays some stories can be extracted from social networks such as WhatsApp and the story might be published in the paper besides the fact the facts might not be correct. And also most of the young journalists in the newsroom spend of their working hours on their phones claiming to be sourcing for news. said one of the senior reporter

Some of the senior journalists noted that social networking has had a notable impact on the journalistic profession as they deem it as encouraging laziness within the journalistic profession.

5.3.1 Discussion

It emerged that the prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* include enriched content and democratic participation of citizens. Citizens have the ability to add to the content produced or published hence increased news values. *The Manica Post* online facilities also allow the citizens to choose the media they want .This is in agreement with Banda (2010) argument that citizens have a responsibility to be informed about public issues as well as the right to choose between different sources of news and opinions to read in the newspapers. This also tallies with Mcquails democratic participant theory which claim that citizens should be given space to contribute in the media. However McChesney (1995) argues that the internet is a capitalist enterprise hence despite being cheap or bringing democracy, it might be beyond the reach of some society .Factors that contribute to this digital participation divide could be in terms of access to the internet, poor network infrastructure, money to purchase data and sometimes literacy level .In other words it can be problematic for citizens to practise citizen journalism or partake in the democracy project by *The Manica Post.*

Furthermore, it also emerged that citizen journalism has led to the creation of a converged newsroom. The creation of a converged brings profits to the publication. Sparks (1996) argue that the purchase of hard copy newspapers is on decline therefore there is need for electronic distribution. Citizen journalism has brought about media convergence resulting in greater profits for *The Manica Post* as supported by Papacharissi (2002) who regards electronic distribution as a mass enterprise whose cheap access by audiences has been countered by inventions such as electronic banners and portals as sources of advertising revenue. The idea of a converged newsroom promotes a democratic alternative digital public sphere which the

theory of revisiting the public sphere talks about. Everyone can participate and contribute in the digital public sphere through *The Manica Post* online social media sites and their websites. Creation of a converged newsroom help journalists to multi task as supported by Cottle (2003) who argues that news production texts have seized to be separate entities but have become interconnected. In other words the roles of journalists are no longer confined to one discipline or medium but have become multi tasks through use of various platforms of news production and citizen journalism.

Citizen journalism help in delivering news in real time processing and it cuts through geographical boundaries in terms of participation of citizens. *The Manica Post* through their WhatsApp platform get latest news from citizens all over Manicaland and process the news in real time whilst it is still newsworthy. *The Manica Post* online platforms also cut through geographical locations in terms of participation where citizens from different background and social classes can have rational debates and discussions. This tallies with revisiting the public sphere theory in that Castells (2001) argues that the internet and related technologies have created a new public space which brings people from diverse backgrounds together. However the critical theory of technology state that the internet is a virtual mall of ideas which suggest that the idea of a public sphere is chimerical as the elite still sell their ideas on those digital platforms and audiences consume. The fact that *The Manica Post* digital platforms allow real time processing of news and cuts through geographical locations agrees with McQuial (1983) democratic participant theory which supports the democratisation of the media by calling for the opening up of media space to multiple and diverse channels and sources of information.

Although citizen journalism has some prospects, it has also brought challenges for *The Manica Post.* Uptake of citizen journalism breaches journalistic ethics in that sometimes the journalists just post content from social media especially pictures. Citizen journalism as a source of news poses a threat to professional journalism as it lacks frameworks such as ethics to guide its operations. Local bloggers like TechZim bloggers has also claim that *The Manica Post* plagiarise their work and have published volumes of articles without permission nor attribution. This tallies with the critical theory of technology which state that the media offers pseudo participation and democracy. In other words *The Manica Post* exploit the citizen journalists by plagiarising their work and this is unethical. Chari (2013) argues that the rise of new communication technologies particularly cellular phones and citizen journalism has

changed the reporter –source relationship in a profound way thus the bond between journalists and sources is slowly diminishing. However use of incorporation of citizen journalists' work into professional journalism tallies with the claims by democratic participant theory that the citizens must be given the space and opportunity to participate in the media. This also tallies with the theory of revisiting the public sphere which state that the internet provide space for everyone to participate in cyberspace.

Citizen journalism allows people to post as much content as they want, whenever they want .In order to stay competitive, journalists at *The Manica Post* now have to write, edit and add pictures in to their content and must do it a rapid pace .According Taylor (2014) it is essential for news companies to produce content at the same rate that citizens can post content on the internet. This is a challenge for publications like *The Manica Post* as they sometimes face budget cuts Furthermore, citizen journalism has given birth to desktop journalism. Use of social media networks has promoted desktop journalism. Instead of going out to gather news most journalists get news from online platforms. Birth of desktop helps in sustaining democratic participation of citizens as supported by the democratic participant theory. The fact that citizens can add content when they want and what they want helps to keep the publication on its toes and this helps in maintaining the alternative digital public sphere that allows citizens to engage in public debate .Birth of desktop journalism is in line with Papacharissi's theory of revisiting the public sphere which state that people use technology in whatever way they want whether positive or negative.

5.4 Citizen journalism promoting democratic participation of citizens

From netnography it emerged that *The Manica Post* online platforms allow participation of citizens. Social media sites like twitter and Facebook and the *Manica Post* online page allows readers to interact with reporters through comment boxes and retweets without the fear of being victimised. Citizens can comment on issues as soon as they are published online unlike in the traditional media where they communicate back to the editors or reporters through letters to the editor. The researcher discovered a number of published articles online where citizens commented and contributed information to stories. This shows that citizen journalism is promoting participation of citizen in cyberspace.

The researcher discovered that journalists are open to criticism from the general citizenry .Out of the twelve journalists that were interviewed, six of them confirmed that they allow and foster participation of citizen in public and civic issues.

> I personally believe that everyone has a right to talk freely about issues that affect them, after all sometimes as journalists we won't be having enough or adequate information about events or incidents like accidents so the people fill us in with information. Said one of the junior reporters.

The junior journalists and editors   pointed out that citizens ought to be given a space to air out their views, opinions and attitudes about issues in the publication .*The Manica Post* allows citizens to participate through comment boxes and retweets as well as their feedback facility on their official website.

It emerged that citizen journalism in a way keeps journalists on their toes to post and report issues as they are as citizens can question the authenticity of the stories. For example a story that was posted on *The Manica Post's* twitter handle which was titled *'One die in city traffic enforcement high speed chase'* where the story was saying one person died on the spot and citizens who witnessed the accident corrected the reporter saying there were four people who died on the spot. It is in scenarios like these where journalists are forced to gather correct facts about an incident. In a democracy, people have the right to air their own beliefs, to say and write what they think and the emergence adoption of new information communication technologies by *The Manica Post* has allowed this kind of democratic participation. However three of the interviewed journalists noted that in as much citizen journalism promotes democratic participation, some of the citizens abuse this privilege by posting using pseudo names. From the interviews, the researcher discovered that *The Manica Post* WhatsApp platform allows citizens to contribute content to the publication which is a form of democratic participation.

The picture shows a Facebook post by The Manica Post where citizens commented on an article titled 'Woman jailed 5 years for possessing diamonds '.

Enock Simbarashe Mutore Zvinoda wakabata usina kuvharirwa vamwe wachitenga ma latest fortuner pakaipa

Like · Reply · 4w

Farai Chiwara kusungira munhu zvinhu zvisina value

Like · Reply · 4w

Mwakazvida Chaonwa How can 20 pieces of diamond worth $10. Can't get the calculation here

Like · Reply · 4w 👍 1

Vincent Matika JUST forgive her and set her free she was trying to upgrade her life since there are no jobs

Like · Reply · 4w

↳ 1 Reply

Charles Mhuzzy Asi nhai ko inga vakaba eee mari yacho haikwanisike kutaurika varikufamba nenyika wani. Iii asi vakamirira kutongwa kudenga ndazvishayawo kungo😏

Like · Reply · 3w

Ian Gwatura 20 pieces worth $10- zvakushisa ($10-or $10 000)

Like · Reply · 2w

The comments show that ordinary citizens get to comment on issues without fear of being victimised and they engage in public debate. The citizens are to free to talk about issues that involve the government officials and the state for example the issue of fifteen billion dollars from diamonds where citizen question how the money was used. *The Manica Post* online platforms allow the journalists and audiences to engage in debates over issues of public interest hence there are no longer any barriers between journalists and audiences .The new generation of citizen journalism has taken over the internet, where feedback would be filtered by media houses, now feedback is given there and there publicly.

5.4.1 Discussion

Uptake of citizen journalism enhances democracy .It has over the past period seen citizens engaging in online debates. Social media network sites like WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook have given space to the citizens to participate in public and civic issues. *The Manica Post* has a WhatsApp platform where citizens with any lead to a story send their stories to and reporters follow up with story. This kind of platform allows democratic participation and is in line with Banda (2010) who argues that citizens have the right to participate and engage in public and civic life through the media. Through *The Manica Post* Facebook page and the twitter hand audiences are able to correct, comment and monitor news without fear of being

victimised and everyone can see the comments unlike in the printed copy where the editors choose which comment goes in the letters to the editor column .Citizen journalism perpetuates safe modes of participation where citizens can post, comment without fear. This tallies with McQuails's democratic participant theory which gives power to freedom of expression and freedom of speech. *The Manica Post* online platforms foster democracy like what the democratic participant theory pushes forth which is a lot of media space to various and diverse channels and sources of information.

Moreover the researcher discovered that *The Manica Post* online website and social media platforms allow citizens to discuss about the order of the day without fear of being harassed or being victimised. This is in line with Papacharissi's theory of re visiting the public sphere where she argues that the internet is the modern day form of a public sphere. Richards (2006) notes that an ideal public sphere foster democracy hence through the social media sites most citizens are free to express their freedom and freely discuss social, economic as well as political issues without fear or hesitation. With the emergence of new information communication technologies people can use pseudo names on social media to avoid identification .This further promotes democracy in that people can freely express what they want without fear of being identified .However other people abuse technology by circulating wrong information or posting hate speech .This tallies with Feenberg (2009) 's critical theory of technology where he argues that people decide how they use technology ,they can use it positively or negatively.

5.5 Contribution of citizen journalism to the production of news
The research findings through interviews show that uptake of citizen journalism enhance democracy. *However this has turned to work in favour of the journalists as they sometimes come up with stories or angles and sometimes they depend that they extract from people's views and opinions from the ordinary citizens.* One of the respondents noted that social media sites specifically twitter linked them to newsworthy stories from ruling party officials, government officials, celebrities and even prominent people like pastors, businessman and prophets. He added that twitter allows them to follow these news makers closely as everything that they post might be newsworthy and of interest.

From the conducted interviews the researcher noted that twitter handles are used to reach audiences like politicians and ordinary citizens that continue to grow interest in twitter. A lot of stories that were sourced from twitter made headline news and the research found out that

most stories from twitter were mostly political stories. Political analysts like Matigari are constantly feeding their twitter handles with content and analyses.

> I use Twitter to share information and to get story ideas. Since social media is the in thing right now, why not as journalists use those platforms to source for news. Social media is convenient and it encourages interactivity with the audiences .Social media has made it easier for us as journalists to reach a wider audience, said one of the journalists.

> Before the advent of social media we used to go out of our way to source for news and this was exhausting and time consuming .Nowadays with various social media platforms it's very easy to get a diary and write a good balanced story .Some of the audiences will be well informed with news such as accidents and their posts help us to follow up on a story. Said another journalist.

It emerged that citizen journalism bring about enriched content media content. The senior and junior reporters pointed out that social media is not only useful for disseminating news but also sourcing news. Internet is the key tool for citizen journalism hence the internet has given birth to massive uptake of new information communication technologies that have encouraged journalists to assess Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp .Journalists are diverting from the traditional way of gathering news and incorporating citizen journalism .The editors pointed out *The Manica Post* have a WhatsApp number where citizens post their story ideas or any current news .The journalists sometimes use these leads from citizens to source for news .

One of *The Manica Post* photographer pointed out that sometimes he uses photos from social media for open source reporting .He also noted that he relies on social media for pictures especially those pictures from accident scenes .He commented as follows:

> Most of the times for accident scene and even news in general l get pictures from social media. The people are always there when it happens and because of technology they do not wait for us journalists to get there, rather they take pictures and videos with their mobile phones and post on social media. Said the photographer.

Other journalists pointed out citizen journalism has greatly benefited them a lot in that they get news instantly and sometimes in the comfort of their own homes or offices which keep them well informed all the time .The other journalist pointed that media organisations have shifted to online where virtual communities have been established and communication happens in real time because of the internet. Citizens have the ability to add to the content produced or published hence increased news values.

However the editors and other elderly journalists it is essential to do a background check of stories from citizen journalists. There is need to deliberately confirm and verily online sources. Respondents alluded that in as much as stories are supposed to be composed fast under the circumstances, there is need to pay particular attention to online stories from citizens and verify credibility of the stories .A journalist commented as follows:

> There is need to verify information we get from our WhatsApp platform and social media networks inboxes .Stories from social media must be double checked so as to make sure that they are well written and have correct facts so that we publish the right information and not compromise the credibility and reputation of the company. Said the journalist.

The old journalists indicated that they preferred to use the traditional way than basing on online information and citizens .They pointed out face to face interviews or via phone gives them the opportunity to ask clear questions and get clear picture or explanation on the things that they do not understand .They however said that citizen journalism and online social media networks help them each day to get current world issues as one interviewee said as quoted below:

> Audiences through social media networks gives me background information and allows me to evaluate everything .Sometimes we will not be able to gather information from events but citizens help us with inside information so we can not entirely dismiss citizen jou*rnalism* .said the respondent .

5.5.1 Discussion

The Manica Post social media platforms like WhatsApp gives audience a platform to exercise freedom whereby they can freely express their feelings and attitudes without fear. Moyo (2014) argues that citizen journalism is a subaltern space where ordinary citizens are able to add or contribute content in the media without fear of being persecuted or harassed. This tallies with Banda (2010) who argues that in a democratic society citizens have an obligation to be informed about public issues, to watch carefully how their political leaders use power and how the media operates as well contributing towards the creation of news content. The online platforms engages citizens in the production of news which tallies with the democratic participant theory which stipulates that citizens should be given the chance and opportunity to participate in the media. By incorporating citizen journalism in the production of news through social media, *The Manica Post* agrees with Atton (2002) who argues that alternative media has been organised to steer debate, discussions and to allow wider social participation in the creation, production and dissemination of content .Through the use of new information communication technologies, *The Manica Post* is line with Papacharissi' theory of revisiting

the public sphere which points out that technology is the mirror that exposes the inadequacies ,the merits and the hopes of a society.

Incorporation of citizen journalism in the production of news furthers democracy and has helped *The Manica Post* to gain profit in that instead of spending money hunting for news, the journalists can get lead stories from social media. In other words the citizens are providing information for free instead of getting paid for their efforts .This agrees with Feenberg (2009) critical theory of technology who argues that the internet has brought exploitation of citizens by the elite in that it offers pseudo participation. Where citizen think they have democracy they are actually being exploited by the media. However the contribution of citizen journalism to news production is overrated .Although the incorporation of citizen journalism in the production of news furthers democracy, it is also important to note that it sometimes provides less valuable or little that is new or verifiable information.

5.9 Conclusion

The chapter presented and analysed the various results that were obtained from the research investigations. The uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* has brought about democratic participation of citizens, converged newsroom and enriched content. However the extent to which citizen journalism promotes democratic participation remains debatable as the publication is state controlled. In addition though uptake of citizen journalism promotes democracy, it is also a form of exploitation of the ordinary citizens by the elite.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of findings

The focus of the research was to investigate the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* in Zimbabwe. The research has shown that uptake of citizen journalism promotes democratic participation of citizens as well as enriched media content. *The Manica Post* online platforms give citizens the platform to participate in politics, economics and other civic issues. The social media platforms also allows citizens to choose the type of media they want to get news from. Although there are factors that hinder some citizens to participate on the online platforms, the researcher noted most citizens discuss and debate on different articles published by *The Manica Post*. In other words uptake of citizen journalism bring the opportunity of democratic participation of citizens in politics and other related disciplines. *The Manica Post* is able to bring latest news with details from citizens thus enriching their content through their WhatsApp platform. Citizen journalism also helps in delivering news in real time processing and it cuts through geographical boundaries in terms of participation of citizens. Citizens from every part of the country can comment, question and discuss issues of the day published by the publication and through the WhatsApp platform can notify journalist on the latest news. Uptake of citizen journalism has also given birth to a converged newsroom. The creation of a converged newsroom profits the publication in that journalists can now get some news diaries from citizens for free instead of going out and gather news.

However, despite the opportunities provided by uptake of citizen journalism, the researcher discovered that citizen journalism has given birth to desktop journalism .Instead of going out to gather news most journalists get news from online platforms. In other words citizen journalism promotes laziness in journalists .The researcher also discovered that citizen journalism breaches journalistic ethics .The fact that journalists sometimes get stories from citizens, they just publish without verifying and most of the time use inappropriate pictures .*The Manica Post* has also been accused of publishing volumes of articles from TechZim bloggers' publications without permission.

The other thrust of the research was to establish how citizen journalism promote democratic participation of citizens as well the contribution of citizen journalism to the production of news. *The Manica Post* has a WhatsApp platform where citizens with any lead to a story send their stories to and reporters follow up with story. The online platforms also allow citizens to

correct, monitor, comment and share news without fear or victimisation unlike in the printed copy where letters to the editor first undergo through filters. Citizen journalism promotes safe mode participation of citizens thereby promoting democratic participation as supported by Banda (2010) who claim that citizens have the right to engage in public and civic life. The researcher also discovered that citizen journalism contributes a lot to the production of news. Citizen journalism acts as a subaltern space or digital public sphere where citizens from different backgrounds can participate and contribute in the media. It also emerged from the research that in a way uptake of citizen journalism exploits the citizens .Where *The Manica Post* is supposed to pay for news they just get free news from citizens through their social media platforms.

6.3 Recommendations

The research findings prompted the researcher to make the following recommendations. These recommendations are to ensure that the publications improve their respective products at the same time adhering to the professional conduct expected of them in production and dissemination of news. The newspaper organisations should create and provide space or column specifically for citizen's work. The publications should implore a project that targets citizen journalism and blends in because both citizen journalism and the mainstream need to make use of the numerous opportunities that the practise offer. This will help to promote democratic participation of citizens as well as creating a sense of belonging for them. Furthermore the news organisations should acknowledge stories that they would have taken from bloggers to avoid cases of plagiarism. To avoid breaching ethics journalists should acknowledge their sources as well as verify stories first before publishing.

Furthermore media houses should orient all journalists on how to use social media networks. The reason why some of the journalists do not embrace the uptake of citizen journalism is that they do not have the knowledge on how to use the internet especially the old journalists. If journalists are oriented on how to use the technology, they can then embrace the uptake of citizen journalism and full adopt the idea of a converged newsroom. The newspaper organisations need to invest more in ICTs so that they can fully benefit from the information that the internet brings to them.

In addition journalists should deal away with desktop journalism. In order to uphold ethics, citizen journalism should complement professional journalism not entirely depending on it for news. Information from social media is sometimes unreliable so there is need to verify the

information before publishing .Social sites are better utilised when there is a link to authenticate the story for instance Twitter gives an option to open and confirm the source of the post. The researcher noted that social media is promoting laziness within journalists.

6.4 Areas of further study

This research was based on the challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* .This study mainly focused on the challenges and opportunities brought by the uptake of citizen journalism, contribution of citizen journalism to production of news as well as the ways in which the concept promotes democratic participation of citizens. Research should be carried out on how citizen journalism compliments professional journalism and how professional journalism contributes to citizen journalism for other newspaper organisations as this research only focused on *The Manica Post.*

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter gave the conclusion of the research which was under study. The researcher proposed recommendations that can possibly increase the embracing of the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* .The researcher also expressed how most journalists have embraced citizen journalism and use it as source of news.

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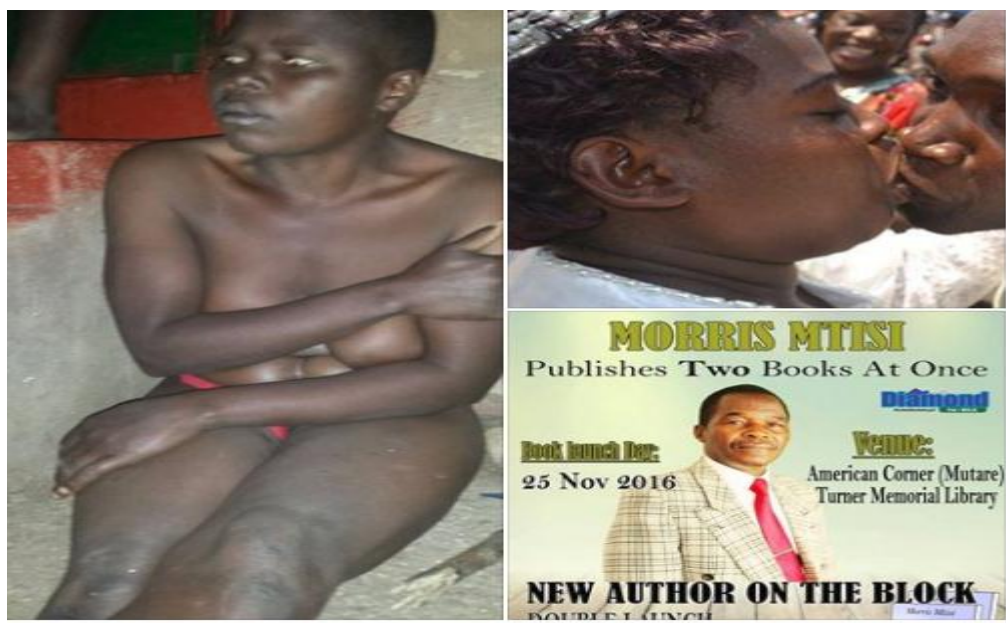Yin, R. (2009) *Case Study Research Design and Methods*, London: Sage.

Appendix one: Interview guide

My name is……………, lam a 4.2 student at Midlands State University studying for a BSC Media and Society Studies Honours Degree. Am currently carrying out a study on: Challenges and prospects in the uptake of citizen journalism by *The Manica Post* in Zimbabwe. I would like you to help by answering the following questions. Please note that your responses will be held with strictest confidentiality and used for academic purposes only.

1. What are the chances that people who are not journalists can also contribute content in the Manica Post?
2. How does Manica Post make it possible for its readers to also contribute content to the publication?
3. How do you as a journalist use WhatsApp groups, Facebook or Twitter platforms in your news gathering and writing process/
4. How have new information communication technologies such as the internet and mobile phones changed the way you do your work as journalists
5. Do you think readers ought to be given more space to contribute in the newspaper and if so why and how?

Appendix two: Stories extracted from *The Manica Post* **online platforms**

JUST IN: One die in city traffic enforcement high speed chase

ate	Views	By
month and 4 weeks ago	2432	Post Reporter

Appendix three: Picture from that show claims by TechZim that *The Manica Post* stole articles

Techzim for instance, has discovered volumes of its articles republished without permission nor attribution on The Manica Post and The Chronicle. In some cases, new media publishers have also been in the mix and recently, Techzim also discovered an original photo cropped, resized and reused – all without permission or attribution – by New Zimbabwe, a UK based news publisher.

In the case of New Zimbabwe, the photo was cropped to remove the Techzim watermark seal that says "this is Techzim's intellectual property" which in our eyes translates to mischievous theft.