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Cleophas Taurai Muneri

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**NEGOTIATING CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN
ZIMBABWE: POSTCOLONIAL TRANSITIONS AND ENDURANCE**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy
Communication**

The University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, New Mexico

July 2012

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my late grandmother, Cresencia Chivizhe, who passed away in 2007, just a few months before I left Zimbabwe to embark on what has turned out to be a career defining journey. My grandmother was a tireless hard worker who instilled in me the value of education and inspired me to pursue my dreams. Her grace and modesty continues to inspire me to become a better person.

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ABSTRACT

This project examines how discourses on democratization in Zimbabwe, a country transitioning from colonialism constituted and reconstituted cultural identities. I specifically focused on discourses from both government controlled and privately owned newspapers and 18 civil society organizations involved in the struggle for democracy. I also explored the ideological implications of the newspaper and civil society discourses. The research was guided by three research questions.

This research was informed by theoretical and conceptual underpinnings of postcolonial theory, democracy, identity, public and counter-public spheres. Consistent with the critical perspective that informed this project, I utilized Fairclough's critical discourse analysis to bring out the ideological implications of the discourses to various forms of identity implicated in the struggle for democracy. The newspapers were selected to give contrasting perspectives between a government controlled and a

privately owned newspaper. Civil society organizations were selected based on their involvement in human rights and democratization advocacy work.

Findings from the study showed that much as the rulers changed with the end of colonialism, the domination that typified colonialism did not change. The study highlighted that democracy as a value and aspiration was a contested term with various groups' conceptualizations of the democratization process informed and influenced by political affiliation. Results showed that democratization is not only about politics and economic changes but also about a cultural process that entails the re-negotiation of identity positions through discursive struggles. There are discursive struggles to fix the meaning of what constitute democracy that play out in civil society, governmental and private media forums. Discourses from both newspapers and interviews showed that the ruling party resorted to using populist discourse on land in order to regain lost political support. National and political identities were collapsed to suit the interests of the ruling party. On the other hand, the opposition emphasized human rights issues such as freedom of expression, assembly and association.

The research therefore showed that not only did colonialism remain the referent point for the ruling party, but it also informed social practices. The ruling party's view of the world remained Manichean between the colonial past and the anti-colonial struggle that ended colonialism. The discourses that ensued remained trapped within the same dichotomies that had characterized social relations during colonialism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION -----	1
Problem statement -----	1
Goals of Study -----	5
Historical Background -----	7
Theoretical Background-----	10
Ideology -----	10
Representation -----	14
Identity-----	15
Identities as Produced and Constructed-----	16
Negotiating Status Positions and Agency -----	19
Democracy and Democratization -----	21
The Public Sphere and Counter Public Sphere -----	22
CHAPTER 2: POSTCOLONIAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND -----	32
Postcolonial Theoretical Perspectives-----	32
Political and Economic Background-----	39
Civil Society Groups in Zimbabwe -----	45
The Media in Zimbabwe -----	50
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH METHOD -----	55
Method -----	61
Selection of Newspaper Texts-----	69
Interviews -----	72
CHAPTER 4: THE <i>HERALD</i> -----	76
Introduction -----	76
Revisiting Past History and Anti-colonialism as key to Democracy-----	78
Social Actors and Relationships Related to Colonial History-----	82
Refuting Sanctions and Attacking Foreign Governments Protect Democracy-----	85
National Identity as Salient -----	91
Justifying Land Redistribution as Democratic -----	95
Themes of Land Redistribution -----	95

Social Actors and Relationships Related to Land Redistribution -----	102
Racial Identities as Salient -----	104
Social Actors and Relationships-----	110
Media Freedom and Human Rights as Present in Zimbabwe-----	111
Social Actors and Relationships-----	117
Political Party Identities as Salient -----	118
CHAPTER 5: THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT-----	123
Democracy Requires Countering Ruling Party’s Calls for Anti-Colonialism -----	123
Intergroup Relationships -----	127
Free Media and Human Rights are Essential to Democracy -----	129
Free Elections and Lack of Violence are Essential to Democracy-----	135
Rule of Law and New Constitution as Fundamental to Democratization-----	140
Representations of Cultural Identities -----	145
CHAPTER 6: CIVIL SOCIETY-----	150
Civil Society Staff Interview Discourse on Democracy in Zimbabwe-----	150
Conceptualizations of Democracy-----	158
Social Actors and Relationships-----	161
Cultural Identities and Representations -----	168
CHAPTER 7: IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE	180
The Ideology of Anti -Colonialism -----	183
The Ideology of Land Ownership as Democracy -----	197
Ideology of National Interests and Western “Imperialism” -----	202
Ideologies Normalizing the Status Quo -----	204
The Ideology of Human Rights -----	209
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS-----	218
Theoretical Foundations-----	218
Applying Postcolonialism – History and Current Relationships-----	218
Discourses of History as Contested in the Struggle for Democracy-----	223
Cultural Identity Positioning-----	227
Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology and Method -----	229
Summary of Results-----	232

Discourses of Democracy-----	232
Discourses of Democracy in the <i>Herald</i> -----	233
Discourses on Democracy in the <i>Zimbabwe Independent</i> -----	235
Civil Society Discourses on Democracy -----	237
Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning-----	238
Representation and Cultural Identity Positioning in the <i>Herald</i> -----	239
Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning in the <i>Zimbabwe Independent</i> -----	242
Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning in Civil Society Interviews -----	244
Ideology and the Struggle for Democracy-----	246
Democracy-----	253
Methodological Challenges: Doing Research in Zimbabwe-----	255
Strengths, Limitations and Future Research-----	260
Applications-----	262
Conclusions -----	263
APPENDICES-----	266
Appendix A -----	267
IRB Approval -----	2697
Appendix B -----	2679
Civil Society and Community Organizations in Zimbabwe -----	2699
Appendix C -----	270
Invitation to participate in a research study-----	270
Introduction -----	270
What is the purpose of this study?-----	270
Why are you being contacted?-----	271
What are the procedures? -----	271
What are the benefits for my participation? -----	271
How will my interview responses be used?-----	271
What do I need to do to participate in the interview?-----	272
Appendix D -----	273
Interview Guide-----	273
Instructions -----	273

Organizational Background and Work -----	273
Assessment of Communication-----	273
Cultural Identities and Democracy-----	274
Democratization Strategies-----	274
Appendix E -----	275
Consent to participate in research -----	275
Introduction -----	275
Purpose of study-----	275
Procedures and activities-----	276
Potential risks and discomforts -----	276
Potential benefits to participants and/or to society-----	276
Confidentiality-----	277
Participation and withdrawal-----	277
Identification of investigator and review board -----	277
REFERENCES-----	281

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Problem statement

Zimbabwe has been gripped by political, social and economic problems for slightly over a decade now. The problems have affected almost every facet of life. Living through these problems has changed many aspects of peoples' lives. Historically, whenever there is deep upheaval in society, relationships among different groups tend to be realigned or reconstituted. New hierarchies can be formed and new discourses can also come into the picture. As people deal with new challenges, they also have had to come up with new strategies of coping with the ever-changing political, social and economic situation. While the challenges that people face might span the whole gamut of peoples' lives, the purpose of this research is to understand the communication implications of these changes. Even without major political upheavals, people's cultural identity positions are bound to change in one way or another. Under conditions of deep social, political and economic changes, the effect of these changes are most likely to have an effect on identity positions.

The political, economic and social changes alluded to above ushered new ways of communicating that also brought new identities into the picture and new ways of talking about them. As new identities are constituted, it is important to understand the changes that have taken place and how they have influenced the direction the country has taken since the year 2000. The role of history, especially the colonial historical experience and how it impacts democratization is also explored. While much has been said about

countries coming out of colonial rule, there is very little research on how cultural identities are affected when autocratic rule is confronted with the clamor for democratic change from opposition political parties working together with civil society organizations. The relationship between the political groups seeking to maintain the status quo and those advocating for change has constituted new forms of identity relations that are underpinned by the interaction of civil society and community group and media discourse. These new forms of identity relations have to be analyzed in order to understand how identities are positioned and represented in societies going through political, social and economic transformation. Many organizations are working for democratization in Zimbabwe and the work calls for reflection and advocacy for particular cultural identities and questioning others. Again, since 2000 because of the heightened political engagement, civil society organizations have become more visible and active in the country's political, social and economic affairs.

Researching cultural identity relations and democratization processes is relevant to the contemporary post colonial situation in Zimbabwe because research of this nature can shed light on how societies like these develop. This focus can help in applying and expanding theoretical understanding of how a struggle for democratic politics unfolds in developing countries. Democracy as both a social and political concept is yet to be fully established in developing countries in Africa. There is need to study the discourses that are being applied in Zimbabwe in order to add to the limited literature and knowledge on this topic.

It also has to be pointed out that democracy is not only seen as an ideal but is also considered as an alien concept that is being imposed by outside countries especially

Western developed countries. In this respect, research on the process of democratization must be considered from a critical perspective given that the changes that have been taking place in Zimbabwe have affected almost every facet of life ranging from getting a lot of people involved in politics to the use of new forms of communication such as web based newspapers and many others. All these issues have meant that from a communication perspective, culture as a contested space has to be brought into the study of democratization especially as it has unfolded in the last decade in Zimbabwe. Culture, identity and democratization can therefore be seen as intersecting with communication. This study can help in understanding why past efforts in entrenching democratic values have failed in many parts of Africa. Incorporating issues related to culture and identity can therefore broaden the topic on democratization and hopefully theoretically contribute to the understanding of the relationship between negotiating cultural identity relations and the democratization process. This knowledge can be incorporated in future struggles for democracy not only in Africa, but elsewhere in the developing world where democracy is yet to take root.

Zimbabwe, just like many other African countries, is in the middle of civil strife which has potential to destabilize the country and other neighboring countries whose economies and people are intertwined with that of Zimbabwe. Many Zimbabweans have migrated to some of these neighboring countries putting a strain on their already fragile economies. These mass migrations of people from Zimbabwe to neighboring countries have also affected cultural relationships in both Zimbabwe and the countries that are absorbing most of these Zimbabweans. Most African countries, including Zimbabwe, are still experiencing some form of instability, ranging from electoral malpractices to

political repression of opposition members and suppression of many civil and political rights that are commensurate with a democratic political dispensation.

This study therefore has potential to be applied not only to Zimbabwe but to other African countries that are still making the transition from autocratic rule to democracy. While the immediate focus of the research is Zimbabwe, the research has wider implications to most countries given the continuing challenges that many people in these countries still face, especially in making the transitions from colonial rule to fully fledged democratic countries. The study therefore has potential to generate knowledge that has wider application to other parts of the world, especially those grappling with issues of democracy.

While some research on democratization has been carried out in Africa including Zimbabwe, this has tended to focus on electoral politics and structural issues such as institutions that are required to successfully hold democratic elections. Moyo (1991), for example has argued that in order to entrench democracy in Zimbabwe there is need for “individuals to choose their representatives at various levels of government, under an institutional background which entrenches human freedom and dignity” (p. 97). Much as the focus on electoral politics is important, it might not help in understanding people’s understanding of democracy and the role of the discourse on democracy in constituting cultural identities. Especially under conditions where democratization appears to be the major rallying point for the majority of the people, studying the relationship between media discourses on democratization and civil society organizational interview discourse is warranted.

Research on cultural identity negotiation in Zimbabwe is also needed.

Communication scholars have focused on how identities are constituted, forms of representation and consequences of the range of discourses that are found within a specific context. As Hall (1996) has pointed out “identities are constructed within, not outside discourse” and must be understood as “produced in specific historical and institutional sites within specific discursive formations and practice, by specific enunciative strategies” (p. 4). Media representations also play a significant role in people’s lives especially in the contestation for political, social, and political power. These media representations also have consequences for the constitution of different identities. In the case of Zimbabwe, the struggle for democracy has underpinned the cultural identities that have come to the fore as a result of the events of the past decade. Media representations have tended to be affected by the media ownership patterns in the country.

In Zimbabwe, government controlled media have tended to support the ruling party and the private media have tended to be sympathetic to the opposition in their coverage of political events in the country. The media therefore have taken an active role in the events that have unfolded in the country. The media have long been regarded as central to the realization of democracy. It is therefore important to analyze media discourse on democratization as this has potential to explain the different ideological positions that inform understandings of democracy.

Goals of Study

Zimbabwe was under colonial rule for nearly a century. The colonial experience affected and influenced cultural identities and relative status positioning of various

groups. The historical consequences of colonial rule and the post colonial contradictions that even political independence could not easily solve, are both context for and manifest in media discourse as well as civil society organizational interview discourses. The overarching goal of this study is to research how power relations and ideological struggle over democratization are constructed in media and civil society organization discourses in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe attained political independence from British colonial rule in 1980. Zimbabwe, like many other countries emerging from colonialism, has had to deal with the contradictions that have been created as a result of the colonial experience.

The struggle for independence mobilized different cultural groups as they came together to reverse some of the odious economic, social and political effects of colonial rule. The motivation to end colonial rule brought different cultural groups together sometimes masking internal contradictions that existed between groups. Some of the differences among the groups that were involved in the colonial struggle were to emerge soon after the attainment of political independence. These included ethnic, class, gender, and regional differences. With the end of independence euphoria, these differences came to the front at distinct moments.

Much as most societies are characterized by contradictory social, economic and political relations, the ruling class in Zimbabwe managed to keep in check most of the contradictions through a combination of intervening factors. In Zimbabwe, these contradictions came to the fore after almost two decades of uninterrupted rule of Zanu PF government. Political events that began to unfold in the country just before the beginning of the new millennium must be considered as the culmination of a gradual erosion of the ruling party's hegemony. This became more evident in the period leading up to the 2000

legislative or parliamentary elections. It can be argued that the struggle for democracy became one of the more visible issues around which different cultural groups started to build coalitions in order to challenge the ruling party's hegemonic influence on the country's population.

As the different cultural groups sought to establish their influence, they employed various strategies to communicate their goals and interests. The discourses and their underlying ideological positions were therefore analyzed in order to understand how democratization is constructed and the consequent effects on cultural identity positioning and relationships between groups. For this reason, discourses were analyzed from newspapers and interviews with organizational members working for democratization to understand how the struggle for democracy reflected and produced cultural identity positions in Zimbabwe.

Historical Background

In order to have a fuller understanding of issues related to democratization, it is important to provide background information about the period leading to the first elections in which an opposition political party participated and nearly won. In the period immediately after independence, the ruling party consolidated its rule through various programs; this resulted in the expansion of services that traditionally were not accessible to the majority of the population. Education and health services were expanded through the building of more schools, hospitals and training of more professionals in these sectors. This was also facilitated by the financial support the government received from various international donors mostly from Europe, the United States and Canada.

While the government made inroads in the delivery of social services, not many changes were made to the economic structure of the country. The country's economy remained largely racialized. Zimbabwe has a diversified economy with agriculture playing a significant role in the country's economy. After independence, the majority of the Black population could only find work in the public sector most commonly as teachers, nurses and physicians. This was mainly because of the government's efforts to deliberately expand social programs. The public sector proved to be the areas where the majority of the Black population could enter without facing too many hurdles. In this respect, the economy of the country remained racialized.

As the government sought to broaden the national economy, it adopted World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) inspired economic reforms at the beginning of the 1990s. The economic reforms resulted in the government removing subsidies on many social services such as education and health. This put a strain on many social groups, as incomes could not match increased cost of living. The problems were compounded by retrenchment of many workers that ensued as companies streamlined their activities to meet the challenges of the new economic environment. As the economic challenges facing the country by the mid 1990s increased, they spilled into the political arena as the government resorted to repression in order to maintain political power. By the mid 1990s, the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe was characterized by "unfulfilled expectations symbolized by rising unemployment, a spiraling cost of living, land hunger and disillusionment with the tendencies towards self-enrichment and corruption by some sections of the political leadership" (Sachikonye, 1991, p. 46).

Given the above background, it is important to point out that the struggle for democracy became the rallying or focal point for addressing many of the growing contradictions that Zimbabwe was now facing by the turn of the century. Groups and organizations that were concerned with gender equality also joined in the struggle for democracy. Professional groups such as teachers, journalists, doctors and nurses rallied behind the banner of democratization. Opposition political parties became the embodiment of the struggle for democratization as they formed coalitions with other groups in civil society. The struggle for democracy became a social movement that mobilized large sections of the population on either side of the struggle. It is for this reason that the struggle for democratization during the period of 1990-2010 can be used as the basis for understanding cultural identity positions and representations that are being negotiated in Zimbabwe and the ideological positions that inform them. The study will therefore seek to answer the following research questions in the context of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe:

1. How is democratization constructed in media and civil society interview discourses?
2. What cultural identity positions and representations emerge in media discourses and interviews with civil society organization staff?
3. What are the ideological implications of discourse and counter discourses in the media and interview discourses?

Theoretical Background

Ideology

Communication takes place within specific contexts and situations. These contexts and situations facilitate the positioning of individuals that are involved in the communication process and the meanings that are derived from the relationships among cultural identity groups. Individuals are also products of specific historical, material and discursive practices and this can inform or influence these individuals in terms of their interaction with others and the discourse that they produce. For this reason, individuals can be considered to be ideologically positioned. Ideology has been theorized in relation to reproduction of domination and power relations in society (Gramsci, 1971, Althusser, 1977, Hall, 1977, 1982, 1996, Fairclough, 1992, 2003). There is no single way of defining ideology as different scholars from Williams, Fiske, to Van Dijk have theorized this concept with varying levels of convergence and, in some cases, clear differences. Van Dijk (1998) has viewed ideology as “clusters of beliefs in our minds” (p. 26). Van Dijk elaborates on this by arguing that “one way to describe and analyze ideologies is in terms of a cognitive psychology of the internal structures, relations and processing or other ‘manipulation’ of (some kind of) beliefs” (p. 26). In the context of this study, ideology is conceived as “playing a constitutive role in the social construction of reality” (Mumby, 1989, p. 295). As Mumby has gone on to elaborate “ideology is located not in the individual per se, but in the interplay of symbols and meanings that make the lived world of the individual” (p. 295).

Given the wide range of positions regarding this concept, ideology within the context of this research project is viewed as a social concept. Hall (1982) aptly captured

this when he argued that “in the critical paradigm, ideology is a function of the discourse and of the logic of social processes, rather than the intention of the agent” (p. 88).

Raymond Williams (1977) has offered three contrasting definitions of ideology. These three versions are broadly defined by Williams as referring to “a system of beliefs, characteristics of a particular class or group; a system of illusory beliefs - false ideas or false consciousness - which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; the general process of the production of meanings and ideas” (p. 54).

As Hall (1982) has pointed out, “ideology is a site of struggle (between competing definitions) and a stake – a prize to be won – in the conduct of particular struggles” (p. 70). It must be added that the material and discursive conditions under which individuals live are likely to influence these individuals in one form or another. For this reason “ideology can no longer be seen as a dependent variable, a mere reflection of a pre-given reality in the mind. Nor are its outcomes predictable by derivation from some simple deterministic logic. They depend on the balance of forces in a particular historical conjuncture: on the ‘politics of signification” (Hall, p. 70). Ideological positions, therefore, can be evidenced in media discourses as well as interview discourses related to people’s experiences in civil society and community organizations.

Fairclough (2003) has defined ideology “as representations of aspects of the world which can be shown to contribute to establishing, maintaining and changing social relations of power, domination and exploitation” (p. 9). This view of ideology can be central in understanding how the country’s history is represented especially in the *Herald* newspaper in ways that seek to establish and maintain the ruling party’s interests. This understanding of ideology is also evident in the competing definitions of democracy from

both newspaper and interview discourses. For example, the *Herald* defines democracy in ways that are consistent with the political interests of the ruling party whereas the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society's approach to democracy bear resemblance to that of the opposition political party.

William's third definition of ideology as production of meanings about what is and what should be, is consistent with the understanding applied in the context of this study. Ideology is considered in the context of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. The struggle for democracy has positioned groups with different definitions of democracy. Analyzing the discourses from the different civil society and community groups and newspapers bring out the different contestations for meaning. This is so because "discourse is the principal medium through which relations of domination are both constituted and represented, and that ideology functions in a mediatory capacity, to connect discourse and relations of domination" (Mumby, 1989, p. 301). In the context of this research, for example, depending on group affiliation, democracy can mean different things to different people. The concept of democracy can be understood and applied to the Zimbabwean context in relation to the ideological inclination of groups in civil society. The actions that different individuals have taken in this struggle have largely been informed by the meanings that have been constructed by the organizations and groups with which they are affiliated.

Organizations and institutions such as the media have also played a significant role in meaning creation and must be considered as a site of ideological struggle. Understandings of democracy are manifest in the discourse on democracy that is generated in both the media and civil society organizations. How issues of democracy are

represented must be seen as ideological because, democracy is very broad in its scope and tends to elicit contrasting opinions depending on where individuals are culturally positioned. It is therefore, important in this study to understand the relationship between individuals' cultural identity positions and the views they hold on democracy. Most of the civil society groups involved in the democratization struggle have specific views and positions on what they think democracy should contain and what the democratization process should entail. In this study, how democracy is defined is considered as being informed, influenced and constrained by structures and discourses in civil society and media through ideological and cultural identity positions that diverge and change.

Considering ideology as a meaning process also entails that the actions and the discourse on democracy that can be found circulating in Zimbabwe should not be attributed to individual behavior; the actions that individuals take and the resultant discourses that people use must be attributed to societal-wide influence. This is not to say that there is no individual influence on people's behavior, actions or discourse but individual influence must be considered against the overall societal influence as individuals are part of society. Ideology then is not something that an individual possesses but should be considered as having an effect within the context of a wide range of factors that cannot be considered in isolation. Hall (1996) confirmed this when he argued that "the social relations of production are necessary to the material existence of any social formation or any mode of production" (p. 98).

It has to be added that experiences also become ideologically influenced because of the historical moments that affect individuals and events. The ideological struggle for democracy and its influence on cultural identities, consequently, must be analyzed within

the context of Zimbabwe's history. Histories divided the country and affected different cultural groups based on different views they hold on democracy. Ideology then must be historicized in order to have an enhanced understanding of individual accounts of groups and their positions, and views of unfolding events.

Representation

In the context of this research, media and interview discourses must not be considered as only representing events or offering views on events that happened, but also as producing specific ways of knowing that are consistent with ideological positions of the different media institutions and civic groups and the interests they stand for. As Hall (1997) has argued "representation is a source for the production of social knowledge – connected in more intimate ways with social practices and questions of power" (p. 42).

Representation is closely linked with discourse. Discourse here is used in the manner in which Michel Foucault uses the term to refer to "systems of representation, or a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment" (Foucault, 1972, cited in Hall, 1997, p. 44). This can help to inform this study as the language that is used both in media and interview discourse can be considered as circumscribed by the political and historical context of Zimbabwe. The discourse produced can only be understood within this context. Discourse from interviews and newspapers that are the focus of this research should be considered as not only representing events or views about events as they were happening but as indications of power relations amongst the different cultural groups in the country. As Saukko (2003) has pointed out "the interests in texts within the social context is umbilically connected with an interest in power" (p. 100). In

analyzing media and interview texts, the thrust is to show how discourse that is employed can bring out the levels of social domination in Zimbabwe.

Through interview and newspaper discourses on the democratization process, it is possible to show how groups discursively produce positions of more or less domination. Even with regards to issues of democracy, the interests and concerns of different groups will be analyzed to show the extent to which democracy is expressed is inclusive of different cultural groups or advances interests that are consistent with ideological positions of specific cultural groups. Given that the focus of the research is to analyze a range of interview discourses from various groups in civil society and newspapers with contrasting editorial and ownership patterns, issues of representation are important as they help to show the struggles for meaning among the different groups. In bringing out the contestation of discourses and counter discourses and ideological struggle, the relationships that exist between the different groups and their implications for levels of agency and voice in democratization are uncovered.

Identity

The concept of identity has been theorized from different perspectives and this section highlights those which are helpful in understanding the constitution and reconstitution of identity in Zimbabwe. Multiple forms of identity ranging from nation, race, gender, social class, ethnicity, religious and other forms of identity, have emerged from past research. As Shin and Jackson (2003) have pointed out “identity is an overarching term encompassing multiple structures of ethnic, cultural, and racial identities as well as any other socially designated identity label” (p. 214). Given the context of this study, Anderson’s (2006) argument about identity, especially from the

perspective of nation, is very important to highlight. Anderson pointed out that “nationality or ‘nation-ness’ as well as nationalism are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. To understand them properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time and why today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy” (p. 4). Anderson was pointing this out in relation to national identity, yet this can also apply to other forms of identities as they must also be considered as historically situated thereby affected and influenced by the context in which they occur.

Identities as Produced and Constructed

In the context of this study, identity is viewed from the perspective of social identity in communication. This study focuses on the manifestation of cultural identity in social interaction and discourse drawing from Hecht, Collier, & Ribeau (1993). The forms of identities that emerged within and among civil society organizations are of interest. Beyond the civil society organizations, the media also act as a referent point for society and as such media discourses are examined as well. The role of media in constituting identities is aptly captured by Appadurai’s (1996) argument that “there is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and, in general, agency” (p. 7). The media should therefore be considered as playing a role especially in an increasingly mediated world. As pointed out by Collier (2009), “group membership and group positioning are also produced through cultural representations. Representations may take the form of group stereotypes and ascribed cultural identifications” (p. 6).

Identity has traditionally been considered a subject of study especially in those contexts that are multiracial and this has to a certain extent made other forms of identity appear as if they are of less significance or cannot be talked about outside race. Much as race is a form of cultural identity, there is also need to consider other forms of cultural identity such as social class, gender, ethnicity and geographic location especially for post colonial environments such as Zimbabwe. This is necessary because cultural identities “intersect with structurally and socially produced representations and forces such as racism, sexism, classism and other ideologies” (Collier, 2005a, p. 252).

In the case of Zimbabwe, it can be argued that one cannot separate identity markers; they are entwined because of colonial history and continuing effects felt after the end of colonialism. For example, social class and gender identifications in Zimbabwe are underpinned by colonial history and experience. The colonial experience in Zimbabwe, just like elsewhere in the world, continues to play a significant role in the way identities have been formed and structured. As Collier (2005a) has pointed out, “identifications must be considered as overlapping and problematic, and are negotiated through multiple discursive and dialectic tensions” (p. 252). Colonialism bifurcated society into two distinct groups of Blacks and Whites and this had the double effect of masking and accentuating differences even after the end of colonialism. These differences became even more marked with the end of colonialism.

While the early years after the end of colonialism were characterized by independence euphoria, this was to be short-lived as many groups started to make demands for more freedoms in almost all spheres of life ranging from political, social, and economic aspects. The coming to the forefront of groups that traditionally did not

actively participate meant that professional and advocacy groups got involved in order to address social, political, and economic imbalances that were increasingly becoming more visible in Zimbabwe. While not much research has been carried out to show the contribution of these organizations, it can be observed that many of them have played and continue to play a significant role in redefining and reconstituting identities in the country.

Identity in this study must be considered as unstable and at times fragmented and contradictory and contextually produced. Collier, Hegde, Lee, Nakayama, Yep (2001) pointed out that “cultural categories are not universal; not only do they change over time, but the ways in which we categorize the world are not universal” (p. 240). It is for this reason that there is need to find out some of the shifts that have taken place in Zimbabwe especially as individuals and groups joined new political formations or civil society groups involved in the democratization process. The democratization process should, therefore, be considered as the focus of these identity negotiations; it has been the basis for mobilizing or rallying many Zimbabweans disaffected or concerned with the deterioration of their economic status and increased political repression by the ruling party. In order to deal with the clamor for democracy, the ruling party resorted to violence and other coercive means in order to retain political power that it had enjoyed unchallenged for the first twenty years of independence. Groups opposed to the ruling party used the struggle for democracy as a basis for getting involved in public affairs. Membership and involvement in civic and community groups meant that individuals that previously were apathetic to public affairs, or were not active, became involved and active in public affairs.

Participation in the democratization process can be considered as resulting in the reconstituting of cultural identities of different groups such as professionals, youth, women, religious, or ethnic groups that have become more involved in the democratization process. The majority of these groups were galvanized by the combined effects of economic decline and political repression that started to be felt by the majority of the population. The experience of having people that had not been involved in public affairs taking an active role in public affairs must be considered in communication terms especially in terms of the relationships that were created and the discourse that constituted these relationships. This is so because “enactment of cultural identifications occurs through varied discursive and textual forms and serves multiple functions to constitute, reinforce, as well as resist institutional structures, ideologies, and social norms, and group, and individual identifications (Collier, 2005a, p. 253).

Negotiating Status Positions and Agency

As the democratization process has been unfolding, it is important to find out the levels of agency that the different groups had in terms of influencing the direction of events. This is important to point out because “power relations are constrained and enabled by structures as well as are evident in status positioning and levels of agency which are dynamically negotiated in discursive interaction” (Collier, 2009, p. 5). Agency is defined as “freedom of action” Phillips and Jorgensen, 2002, p. 16). This freedom of action can be limited by institutional and historical factors. In the context of this research it must be considered in relation to discourses as “they can limit the scope for action and possibilities” (Phillips and Jorgensen, p. 17) that groups might have in society. The concept of agency is important to consider especially with regard to how level of agency

impacted the understandings of and actions taken related to democratization. This must be considered in relational terms especially with regard to positioning of different groups into hierarchical relations and as advancing adversarial views.

Before the advent of competitive multi party politics in Zimbabwe, the ruling party had enjoyed unparalleled dominance in many aspects of public life. This was underscored by the merging or blending of government departments with structures of the ruling party, that made it difficult to separate the ruling party from the government. This was evidenced in how party affiliation was considered to be more important than other factors for individuals to get government services. Upward social class mobility was therefore largely influenced and affected by the politics of the country, largely dominated by the ruling party. The shift that was heralded by the struggle for democratization can therefore be considered as a significant change not only in the politics of the country but also in the way cultural identities were constituted/reconstituted.

Civil society organizations and other community or cultural groups can be considered as having set in motion a movement that brought into context new discourses that also reconfigured relationships in Zimbabwe. Many groups, that for the greater part of the first decade of independence, were not involved in politics, became more involved. These groups included college and university students through numerous associations that represented their interests. Women also became more visible in politics through various advocacy groups that put women's concerns at the center of their programs. Professional associations especially for teachers, lawyers and doctors were also formed. These associations not only addressed professional interests but were also engaged both directly and indirectly in political issues, such as human rights, especially in light of

widespread violence that members of these associations and the general population faced from 1999.

In trying to understand how cultural identities have been constituted/reconstituted, it is important to explore the relationship of civil society and community groups with politics and the democratization process. This can be achieved by focusing on the intercultural relationships between and among these groups. The relationships illuminate cultural identity positions and how they were being constituted/reconstituted.

Media discourse also play an important role in constituting identities. In Zimbabwe, over the past decade the media have been involved in giving coverage to the social, political and economic changes in the country. How the media represented different groups especially these groups' participation in public life through the democratization process is important to consider. Media discourse must be analyzed in terms of coverage and the role that discourse played in representations as well as reconstitution of cultural identities. One aim of the study is therefore to understand how cultural identities are produced as well as socially constructed. Communication through the media is one way through which people make sense of themselves and the world around them and for that reason, it is important to bring out the role of the media discourse in identity formation.

Democracy and Democratization

Democracy is a widely used term that must be qualified to convey a clear meaning in the current study. Different scholars in a wide range of disciplines ranging

from political science, sociology to communication have theorized democracy. The focus of democracy in this study is as it is related to communication.

Democracy must be considered as linked to the concept of civil society. Civil society can be defined as “the sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements and forms of public communication” (Cohen & Arato, 1992, p. ix). It is for this reason that this research focuses on voluntary associations and public communication in the form of newspaper discourses. The issue of communication both in civil society organizations and public texts is important to consider because “the rights to communication, assembly, and association, among others constitute the public and associational spheres of civil society as spheres of positive freedom within which agents can collectively debate issues of common concern, act in concert, assert new rights, and exercise influence on political (and potentially economic) society” (Cohen & Arato, p. 23). In addressing the role of civil society in the democratization process, the concept of the public sphere is therefore relevant.

The Public Sphere and Counter Public Sphere

The concept of the public sphere broadens the understanding of democracy. In talking about the public sphere, this can be extended to mean the role of civil society organizations in getting space to communicate. Also the content of the communication must be considered as relevant to the democratization process. According to Craig Calhoun, the concept of the public sphere came out of Jurgen Habermas’ post doctoral thesis titled *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. In this thesis, Habermas

sought “to establish what the category of public meant in bourgeoisie society and how its meaning and material operation were transformed in the centuries after its constitution” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 5). Habermas’ understanding was grounded on the need to understand “changes that had occurred in both capitalism and state structures through the period of western modernity” (Calhoun, p. 6). The public sphere was conceptualized as the communicative space between private capital and the state.

In terms of historical development and influence, the public sphere concept can also be traced to classical Greece which had some influences on the enlightenment in Western Europe, especially Britain, from which Habermas’ conceptualization is based. As Calhoun points out, “Greek thought made a strong division between public and private affairs. Freedom was to be found in public, though of course the public realm of autonomous citizens rested on the private autonomy of each as master of a household” (p. 6).

It can therefore be argued that some of the attributes that are found in Habermas’ public sphere concept can be traced to classical Greece. From classical Greece, the concept is largely historicized by Habermas within the context of seventeenth and eighteenth century Western Europe. The early public sphere was argued to have been occupied by the aristocracy but with the development of a bourgeois class it expanded to incorporate them as well. The public sphere’s development can thus be linked to the historical development of capitalism. As the propertied class came into being, it became part of the public sphere, joining the aristocracy who were already part of it. This, therefore, means that communicative space of the public sphere as evidenced through coffee houses and salons was a privilege of groups of people who had access to certain

resources, and other groups outside the bourgeois could not participate in this early public sphere.

From this historical perspective, the concept of the public sphere is understood as the realm between the state and private capital where individuals met as separate entities to discuss issues of common interest without being governed and controlled by the state or private capital. Calhoun argued that “the public sphere was not coterminous with state apparatus for it included all those who might join in a discussion of the issues raised by the administration of the state” (p. 8). The participants in the discussion that took place in the seventeenth and eighteenth century included agents of the state and private citizens. The public sphere was occupied by educated elite, and as such, did not include working class people, women and other groups who did not have the franchise or the right to vote. In his thesis, Habermas not only highlighted the historical development of the public sphere but also its structural transformation especially towards the end of the nineteenth century when it began to lose some of its key attributes. Initially, the public sphere was “rooted in the world of letters even as it assumed political functions. Education and property ownership were its two criteria for admission” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 16).

In the discussion on the refeudalization of the public sphere, Calhoun, among others, criticized the media as advancing commercial interests at the expense of rational debate as initially called for by Habermas. Calhoun said “where works of literature, for example, had previously been appropriated not just through individual reading but through group discussion and the critical discourse of literary publications, the modern media and the modern style of appropriation removed the ground for a communication about what has been appropriated” (p. 23). By means of these transformations, “the

public sphere has become more an arena for advertising than a setting for rational-critical debate” (p. 26).

The concept of public sphere has enduring value. Other scholars have reworked or reformulated the public sphere in order to apply some key concepts to contemporary communication situations. Michael Schudson links the concept of the public sphere to the media and points out that “one critical feature of the bourgeois is the availability of public media for carrying on and informing public discussion” (Schudson, 1992, p. 152). Again, as Schudson has pointed out, the media are no longer platforms for conversation as the commodification of news has meant that debates or discussions that do not advance commercial interests of media institutions are not given space. He argues that the media do not publish ‘mobilizing information’ in contrast to the 1830s American press. This is because the media are more interested in constituting the audience as a market instead of a community. Schudson pointed out that the concept of the public “is still relevant as a model of what a good society should achieve” (p.160). Schudson’s contribution to the understanding of the public sphere is the way in which he pointed out how modern media have made it difficult to realize some of the ideals of the public sphere. This has come as a result of the commercialization of media. Much as Schudson raised these arguments he still considered the public sphere concept as having some value especially as a normative concept.

Nicholas Garnham discussed the continued relevance of the public sphere concept despite some of the criticisms that have been leveled against Habermas. Garnham regarded the concept of the public sphere as still relevant especially in the way it focuses on the “the link between the institutions and practices of mass public communication”

(Garnham, 1992, p. 360). Secondly, Garnham said the existence of a public sphere has a material basis and for that reason any consideration or discussion of the public sphere must consider how it is materially sustained. For a public sphere to be sustained, there must be a material base; this has a bearing on one's understanding of groups of people that are capable of establishing a public sphere. The implication of this is that some groups in society without the necessary material or financial resources to establish a public sphere either in terms of media or forum to discuss issues that affect them, are limited in achieving that goal. Economic resources are therefore key and relevant in understanding the existence and sustenance of a public sphere in Zimbabwe.

Garnham (1992) also made the point that in understanding the public sphere, there is need to guard against the dangers of establishing binaries of free market on one hand and state control on the other. What is important to highlight is that at times communication space as represented by the public sphere might exist without necessarily being part of either the state or free market. This is so because human relations are not always marked by the clear distinctions of the free market or state control as both can constitute the communicative space that people occupy and for that reason there might be limited analytical value in making the binaries of the state and free market. From Garnham's point of view, the concept of the public sphere is important as it can be used as a basis for democratic communication space especially in the context of globalization and its influence on the commercialization of the media. Garnham said Habermas' concept "offers a sound basis for the critical analysis of current developments both in the media and democratic politics and for the analysis and political action necessary to

rebuild systems of both communication and representative democracy adequate to the contemporary world” (Garnham, 1992, p. 364).

The other point in Habermas’ concept of the public sphere as highlighted by Garnham, is the universalizing qualities it embodies; this has been seen as part of the enlightenment project. For Garnham, the public sphere is seen in terms of institutions that are capable of providing and sustaining public debate in society such as public service broadcasting. The main criticism that has been leveled against the enlightenment and against the work of Habermas in particular, is that the concept of the public sphere does not recognize differences and this has largely been pointed out by post modernist critics. The criticism of not recognizing differences has been advanced by scholars who point out the existence of counter public spheres.

Understanding of the concept of public sphere for Asen (2000) starts from the position that there is no single public sphere but multiple public spheres. In a context where multiple public spheres exist, there are possibilities that some public spheres will be positioned against others. According to Asen, the seventeenth century bourgeoisie was conceived as “singular and overarching” (Asen, 2000, p. 424) and for that reason excluded other groups. To conceptualize the public sphere within the context of counter public spheres is to include other groups that traditionally have been excluded in public debates or discussions. This conceptualization is incorporated in the current study.

Groups that have been previously left out of the conceptualization of the public sphere must be viewed as having their own public spheres that are meant to reflect their interests and are at times positioned against the bigger public spheres. This is aptly

captured when Charles Taylor quoted in Asen referred to them as “nested public spheres” and Asen said this is used to refer to a situation “in which smaller public spheres nested within larger ones feed into the agenda of a national public sphere” (Asen, 2000, p. 424). This elaborates further how the public sphere must be understood not as one overarching public sphere but as characterized by the existence of smaller public spheres. These smaller public spheres might exist within bigger or national public spheres and for that reason smaller public spheres maybe nested around it as it might be difficult for the bigger public sphere to capture the interests of its various constituent groups.

It is important to add that the national public sphere in most cases is usually constituted by different aggregate groups which, much as they might have common interests with other aggregates might still want their own communication space outside the national public sphere. This can result in the constituent group forming their own separate public spheres that could be nested around the national public sphere to ensure that their interests are taken care of by the bigger public sphere. In other contexts or situations, these counter public spheres may be parallel to the mainstream public sphere.

Extending the above argument therefore shows that “counter public spheres emerge as a kind of public within a public sphere conceived as multiplicity. They illuminate the differential power relations among diverse publics of a multiple public sphere” (Asen, 2000, p. 425). The issue of power that is brought in the conceptualization of the public sphere is important as it shows that where different groups of people exist, there is likely to be power differences and for that reason it is important to acknowledge this in understanding the public sphere. Power differences can result in other groups that might feel that their interests are not being adequately represented opting out of existing

public spheres to form separate ones. In Zimbabwe, this must be understood both in terms of how groups left the ruling party to form new political parties. In the media, this has been characterized by the establishment of new publications that were geared to represent emerging interests.

In the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, power can be understood as the extent to which different groups have communication space to discuss and debate issues that affect them in a way that can contribute to wider ideas being debated in that society. The media play an important role in a public sphere. Power can also be approached as different groups' access to media, and the extent to which the media cover concerns that are raised by different civil society groups in a manner that reflects and captures their interests. When considering the media as part of the public sphere, there is always need to consider the relationship between the bigger or national media and smaller media that tend to cover and represent local interests or groups of people whose interests might not always be covered in the national media.

A conceptualization of multiple public spheres is also important in as far as it recognizes the increasing complexity of many societies that are characterized by heterogeneity in their national boundaries. In Zimbabwe for example, diversity is evidenced through ethnicity, language, class and geographical location which in most cases result in key distinctions between people living in urban areas and rural areas. Under circumstances as the one explained above, it becomes imperative not only to discuss a single public sphere but to acknowledge and include diversity in the conceptualization of the public sphere.

Asen also added the issue of logistics to conceptualizations of the public sphere. Under circumstances where people have varied interests that are spread out over a very wide area, it might not be conceivably possible to expect the different constituent groups to have and share the same interests that would enable them to live together. It is not logistically possible to achieve this. According to Asen (2000) “a singular public sphere suppresses social-cultural diversity in constituting an arena inimical to differences” (p. 425).

Counter public spheres therefore “advance affirmations of specificity in relation to gender, race, sexuality, ethnicity and other axes of differences based on commonality in the experience of oppression” (Asen, 2000, p. 429). Given that in some environments, oppression is ingrained in people’s understanding of their sense of history, it is important to view counter public spheres within the larger context in which different groups are struggling to create their own understanding of their political, economic and social situations through communication. When particular groups feel excluded in the national public sphere they might end up creating or constituting their own separate public sphere. Counter public spheres therefore offer excluded groups an opportunity to direct their communication to articulating alternative discourses that might not be captured in the main public sphere. Asen pointed out that “counter public spheres maintain their public character by directing their arguments outward to society as a whole. In this way, they serve a dual function” (p. 429).

The argument for the need to include counter public spheres in this study can therefore be summarized as a way of recognizing and appreciating differences given the diversity that characterizes Zimbabwe. Counter public spheres can also be considered as

spaces of struggle for groups that could be marginalized. One can also regard counter public spheres as parallel or oppositional discursive arenas, that groups who have been seriously excluded in mainstream debates form, to ensure that their interests are represented. Exclusions that result in the creation of the counter public spheres can not only be distinguished in terms of markers of identity such as gender, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, class and race, but also by the political positions and topics that each of these public sphere advance.

In summary, the public sphere is a discursive communicative space that different groups occupy as a way of representing their interests. At a wider level, the deliberations of different public spheres can influence public policy depending on the capacity and resources of the group and the contextual conditions. The different civil society and community organizations must be considered as being part of the public sphere. It is in this context therefore that the discourses and counter discourses in the public sphere are considered along with the extent to which the discourses advance the interests of specific groups and what this means for the democratization process.

The key theoretical constructs of ideology, representation, cultural identity theory, civil society, public sphere and counter public spheres guide analysis to inform inquiry around research questions concepts. The key research questions concepts are democratization, identity positions and ideology. The struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe implicated cultural identities and the ideas of democracy that emerged were also influenced by the representations in the two newspapers and positioning in interviews with representatives of civil society organizations in the country.

CHAPTER 2:

POSTCOLONIAL THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Postcolonial Theoretical Perspectives

The focus of this study is on the struggle for democracy in post independent Zimbabwe. While it may not be possible to account for all the experiences that have taken place in Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, it is possible to broadly situate the study within postcolonial theory. This can help to explain how the political and economic situation in the country has unfolded and the historical roots that connect contemporary political, social and economic outcomes/developments to the country's colonial history. The end of formal colonial rule in Africa and elsewhere in the world did not result in the end of the cultural and political influence that this historical experience had on the formerly colonized people. The basis of colonialism was the need to "redeem the heathen African" (Dangarembga, 1988). This can be confirmed by how religion, especially Christianity, was used to achieve some of the broader cultural goals of colonialism. Beyond the use of religion, the education system, political, and economic infrastructure were developed to entrench the values of colonialism. Colonialism as a political, cultural, and economic system was considered by outsiders as an antidote for all the problems that were deemed to be afflicting Africans.

In situating Zimbabwe within the broader terrain of postcolonial theory, this study does not seek to place everything that has happened in Zimbabwe on the doorstep of colonialism. On the other hand, it would not be plausible to lay all the blame for the

political and economic strife that has befallen Zimbabwe on the African leaders that took over after independence. An explanation for post independence experience in Zimbabwe must therefore be found in both the colonial legacy and its impact on post-independence Zimbabwe. The post independence experience must also be considered within the context of global networks and connections that characterize today's global capitalism. This chapter therefore, first presents some of the key theoretical strands of postcolonialism and shows how they can be applied to the current conditions in Zimbabwe. The chapter then provides background information on Zimbabwe focusing on politics, economics, civil society organizations, and the media in the country.

Postcolonialism has been defined variously by different scholars. Central to the concerns of postcolonial theorizing are issues of colonization and decolonization. Zimbabwe as a former British colony can be considered to be still engaged with these issues. In describing postcolonialism, Bhabha has argued that post colonial critics “formulate their critical revisions around issues of cultural differences, social authority and political discrimination in order to reveal the antagonistic and ambivalent moments within the ‘rationalizations’ of modernity” (p. 190). Postcolonial criticism must be considered in light of the failure of ‘master narratives’ of modernity and development to account for the conditions that now exist in formerly colonized countries.

As Hegde (1998) has pointed out “it is almost impossible to think of the 20th century without focusing on the impact of colonialism in the production of cultural and aesthetic forms” (p. 281). These master narratives cannot account for the subjugation that ensued as a result of colonialism. It is from this position that Dirlik has argued that “postcolonial criticism repudiates all master narratives, and since the most powerful

current master narratives are the products of a post-Enlightenment European constitution of history, therefore Eurocentric, postcolonial criticism takes the critique of Eurocentrism as its central task” (p. 565).

Postcoloniality therefore must be considered as discursive in terms of the discourses that it applies to address how formerly colonized peoples have been presented in history. It can be argued that the way the subjectivity of living in a world as defined by the dominant narrative has often been positioned as first emanating from the gaze of the colonizer. This is evidenced in the works of cultural critics such as Edward Said especially on how the discourse on orientalism has been constructed. Said (1978) has pointed out that “ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power” (p. 5). In the case of formerly colonized peoples, this power is the colonial legacy and its continued manifestation as underpinned by global capital.

Critics and theorists have tended to present the postcolonial condition as if it is a matter of an outsider commenting on the formerly colonized. This approach fails to account for the effect of colonialism and only helps in essentializing the subject position of the colonized. On the other hand, trying to account for all the ills and problems that have befallen countries such as Zimbabwe as if it is all the responsibility of the formerly colonized people also misses the point of explaining the interconnections between the local and the global. The point is that it can neither be a question of one position over another as this might not adequately account for the condition of postcoloniality. Dirlik has argued that “the end of colonialism presents the colonizer as much as the colonized with a problem of identity” (p. 568). The result of colonialism has, therefore, created an

in-betweenness that needs to be accounted for if the political and social developments, cultural and material consequences that have taken place in Zimbabwe, or elsewhere in formerly colonized countries, are to be fully understood.

With respect to broader theorization, post colonialism also shares some of the theoretical arguments of postmodernism especially in its direct repudiation of master narratives. It therefore provides alternative ways of understanding the world that cannot be fully explained by existing theories. The end of the Cold War must also be regarded as having spawned new forms of nationalism that have resulted in crises that started in the early 1990s. The events in Zimbabwe must therefore be contextualized within the global context, and events that unfolded after the end of the Cold War.

Given the many strands of postcolonial theory that have been outlined above, the question becomes, how is post colonial theory applicable to explaining the experiences of Zimbabweans in post independence, especially the period from the late 1990s to 2009? With nearly a century of British colonial rule that ended in 1980, Zimbabwe is still connected to global capital through a number of transnational companies that still operate in the country. The postcolonial approach is useful not only in explaining the political, social and economic developments since the attainment of political independence, but also as an orientation to researching cultural identity negotiation. It can help in “offering a way of situating and historicizing difference by studying the systematic manner in which exclusions have been legitimized in Western scholarship” (Hegde, p. 283). The use of a postcolonial theoretical perspective is thus not only helpful in understanding social and structural forces in Zimbabwe, but is a most plausible perspective to examine cultural identities and how they are affected and influenced by historical and material conditions.

There are caveats to the use of this perspective. First, not all the aspects of postcolonialism, especially as it relates to global capital, are consistent with events in Zimbabwe. As Ferguson has pointed out, in many parts of Africa “it is hard to find evidence of the depredations of runaway capitalist expansion in countries that are begging in vain for foreign investment of any kind and unable to provide a significant market for the consumer goods stereotypically associated with globalization” (p.26).

Beyond the uneven reach and spread of global capital in countries such as Zimbabwe, it is appropriate to apply the postcolonial theoretical perspective because colonialism must be considered in cultural terms. Cultural practices and identities were affected because of the cultural exchanges that took place from the time when the country was colonized in 1890 to when colonialism ended in 1980. The cultural influences were largely achieved through the control of not only the political system but also through the control of other cultural institutions such as the education system, media and religion. This has meant that the resultant cultural practices were now a combination or a blend between Western cultural influences and African cultural practices.

The experience of colonialism meant that many Zimbabweans were caught between two worlds - the world that is characterized by cultural practices informed by African experiences on one hand, and those informed by Western experiences on the other. It is because of these experiences of colonialism that Ferguson has pointed out that “African institutions and practices are failed copies, faint copies, mere shadows of the original – indeed, such imperfect likenesses that they are unable to function as that which they pretend or ought to be” (p.16). The degree to which different cultural groups are influenced by these experiences vary from one cultural group to the other; with those in

urban areas being more in contact with Western cultural values as compared to their rural counterparts. The level of urbanization is also a factor in how different cultural groups have been and continue to be affected by the reach of global capitalism.

The key argument from the foregoing background is that once colonialism established its roots in Zimbabwe, it connected the country to global capitalism. Attempts to understand the cultural relationships that have endured as a result of the colonial relationship must be examined through the theoretical lenses of postcolonial perspectives. This is mainly because the colonial experience integrated formerly colonized people within global capitalism. Once this was achieved, it established relationships that have continued up to the present. It is these relationships that make it imperative for the explanation of the post independence experience of Zimbabwe to be situated within the broader theoretical perspectives of postcolonialism.

Closely linked with how colonialism established relationships between countries like Zimbabwe with global capital is also the issue of cultural differences and how formerly colonized people have negotiated these. It is important to take these into account as scholars like Frantz Fanon argued that the way former colonizers treated their colonial subjects (because they were not treated as equal citizens with the same rights as the colonizers themselves) could partly explain some of the political and economic trajectories that most of these countries such as Zimbabwe have followed. Fanon (1963) argued for this position as indicated when he pointed out that “the colonized subject is a persecuted man (sic) who is forever dreaming of becoming the persecutor” (p. 16). The major problems that Zimbabwe has encountered for its three decades of political independence have been characterized by violence. This violence has erupted every time

the country has held elections. The aspect of cultural differences and the discourses that have emerged as a result of these differences must therefore be analyzed.

Colonialism also means that issues of social authority and political discrimination upon which colonial hegemony was established must be explored. This is mainly because these political systems created influences that have lasted well beyond the duration of colonialism. Political discrimination was concretized through various racial policies that were enforced in different ways ranging from coercive methods to the use of other ideological means evidenced in the role of political, economic and social institutions such as the judiciary, education and the media. Most of these institutions in the case of Zimbabwe were inherited from the colonial government and continued to serve only a portion of the country's population. The role of these institutions in the post-independence environment must be examined in relation to the role that they played during the colonial era. The role that they continue to play with minor changes however were meant to serve the interests of a political and economic class that was more oriented and connected to global capital. Fanon captured this well when he pointed out that "the national bourgeoisie in the underdeveloped countries is not geared to production, invention, creation, or work. All its energy is channeled into intermediary activities" (p. 98).

The postcolonial approach is also applicable to the Zimbabwe situation especially with regard to the role of the media that was inherited from colonialism. Much as the media during the colonial period clearly entrenched the status quo by supporting the colonial government, the post independent government inherited the same media. The media continued to play the same role of supporting the government and the ruling party

while demonizing opposition political parties. The role of key institutions after independence, including government and media, in producing influential discourses is examined. Colonialism and the modernity that it was supposed to bring were informed by a teleology that the condition of the Africans, and in this case Zimbabwe would be better because of the colonial experience. This study examines discourses about such conditions in relation to the evidence of what has been happening in Zimbabwe after the end of colonialism.

The economic situation in the country must also be considered in relation to the social structures that exist in the country. Given the imbalances of the economic structure in Zimbabwe, economic conditions must be explained in terms of the country's relationship with global capital and the economic policies that have been pursued. Some of the problems that the country has faced must be understood as emanating from these relationships. Having pointed out some of the key arguments of postcolonial theory and why it is relevant to apply to the Zimbabwean situation, it is important to next overview more background information on the political, social, and economic situation to broaden understanding of why the post colonial perspective is useful when applying it to the Zimbabwean situation.

Political and Economic Background

In terms of Zimbabwean politics, the government that took over at independence in 1980 espoused a policy of racial reconciliation between Blacks and Whites that Herbst (1990) described as “the most striking development in independent Zimbabwe” (p. 221). It must be pointed out that Whites constituted about 5.6 % of the total population at independence (Herbst, 1990, p. 223) although they owned more than 80 percent of the

economy through either multinational corporations or agriculture. After independence, the country was a de facto one party state as evidenced by Zanu PF's dominance of politics in the country. The reconciliation that was proclaimed between Blacks and Whites also appeared to have been based on an unwritten tacit understanding that Whites would continue to enjoy their lifestyles as was the case before independence, as long as they were not actively involved in politics. Herbst argued that the bargain between Whites and the new government was that "whites in independent Zimbabwe can stay, continue to operate their businesses and farms, and lead the 'colonial lifestyle' that they are accustomed to for the rest of their lives" (p. 222). This therefore meant that Black people took a central role in politics after independence while Whites dominated the economy.

In terms of economic policy, the new Zimbabwean government pursued distributive economics that meant accommodating a lot of the Black population that previously did not benefit from the country's economy. This was achieved through the building of more schools and hospitals in order to allow access to social institutions that traditionally were not available to the majority of Blacks because of colonial policies. Mandaza (1991) captured this clearly when he pointed out that, "it has been easier to implement reforms in the social sectors than it has been to attend to economic transformation issues" (p.36). Economic resources traditionally meant to serve a small portion of the country's population were now being expanded to include the rest of the country. At the same time there was no accompanying expansion in the country's economy, and it remained largely skewed in favor of the White population who controlled most of the mining, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors.

While initially the government policies and expansion of the social services did not result in any significant or recognizable effect on the country's economy, over time it led to a large deficit that the government had to address eventually. The post independence economic structure was inherited from the colonial government. The post independence government did not have much control over the economic infrastructure as it was largely in the hands of large transnational corporations and a small segment of the few remaining Whites who, as pointed out earlier, continued to control mining, manufacturing, and agricultural sectors of the economy.

One other key moment in Zimbabwe's politics during the early years of independence was when the country was plunged into civil disturbances in 1982. This happened when the ruling Zanu PF government targeted one of the nationalist parties, Zimbabwe African People's Union (Zapu) that had fought alongside the ruling Zanu PF party for independence from Great Britain. When Zapu lost the multiparty elections that ushered in independence, it still was incorporated into the unity government arrangement in 1980. The government was to later collapse in 1982 when the leader of Zapu was accused of hiding an arms cache in the southwest part of the country. The government used the excuse of the arms cache to accuse Zapu of wanting to overthrow the government and for instigating dissident activities. Some of the leaders of Zapu were detained without trial. The accusations later deteriorated into civil disturbances as the army was deployed into the region. The army was used against supporters of Zapu, and what became the opposition party. These civil disturbances later divided the country along ethnic lines since members of the Ndebele ethnic group mostly aligned with Zapu were being targeted in the civil strife that ensued.

From 1982 until 1987 more than 20 000 people in the southwest of the country were killed during the civil strife. Many views have been offered to explain what triggered the civil disturbances, including accusations that it was ethnic cleansing aimed at members of the Ndebele ethnic group. There have also been arguments that it was motivated by the need of the ruling Zanu PF government to introduce a one party state in the country in order to entrench its rule. This claim was mainly based on the fact that the opposition political party was one of the strongest in the country.

The civil disturbances ended in 1987 and culminated in the signing of a unity accord between the two political parties. The opposition Zapu was incorporated into the government. From 1987 up until the year 2000, the ruling party, Zanu PF dominated the political affairs of the country as opposition political parties that could challenge it remained too small and fragmented to mount a sustained challenge to the ruling party. Support for the ruling party started to shift in the mid 1990s as some of the negative effects of the economic reforms that the government had introduced in 1990 started to be felt by the majority of the population. Sachikonye (1991) has pointed out that these problems were underlined by “unfulfilled expectations symbolized by rising unemployment, a spiraling cost of living, land, hunger and disillusionment with the tendencies of self enrichment and corruption by some sections of the political leadership” (p.46).

To review, the government’s attempt to address the economic needs of the majority of the Black population through the expansion of the social sectors resulted in the government imposing drastic economic reforms in the 1990s and this had adverse effects on the social and political situation in the country. In 1990, the government

adopted International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank inspired economic reforms as a way of managing some of the economic challenges the country was facing. These economic changes resulted in the government making substantial cuts in services and funding and at times removing some of the economic subsidies that were meant to protect disadvantaged members of society. The removal of government subsidies, amidst increased demands on an economy that was not expanding, resulted in social unrest that manifested itself through workers' strikes, food riots and other forms of political demonstrations.

The government's economic policies introduced in 1990, set in motion different responses from civil society groups in the country. Some of the events included a series of workers' strikes, student demonstrations, and government's payout of unbudgeted funds to veterans of the country's liberation war against the former colonial forces. The government also added a strain to the budget when it got involved in a war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 1998. The war was very unpopular and drained the limited financial resources that the country could have directed to other social services such as crumbling education and health services. Many trained professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers and university professors started to leave the country in large numbers. Meanwhile, the economy continued to shrink as many companies found the economic environment too harsh to continue their business operations.

With increasing social unrest and the government failing to meet most of the challenges, the country started to witness heightened levels of heavy handedness as evidenced in the repression and the violent treatment of individuals regarded as oppositional to government policies or voicing criticism of the government. Journalists,

leaders of the labor movement, university student leaders, government critics, and members of the opposition were all targeted. This can be explained by Mandaza's (1991) argument that "the post colonial state is so weak and dependent that it develops anti-democratic tendencies, as it is confronted with its own inherent failure to deal with popular demands; that the post colonial state remains the terrain of contest, particularly between the various factions and fractions of the petty bourgeoisie" (p. 40). As government repression intensified, different aggregates of groups that were opposed to the ruling Zanu PF party started to coalesce into an opposition movement; the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) that was officially launched in 1999.

In summarizing the post independence political situation in Zimbabwe, there are key events in the history of the country that help paint a picture of the landscape that started to unfold from the beginning of 2000 and is still unfolding. The first ten years of independence were largely characterized by the government's attempts to consolidate political power. This was evidenced by the government's initial expansion of social services such as health and education that were meant to serve the majority of the population that previously had been excluded from these services. Expansion of these services was not commensurate with the country's financial resources as there was no corresponding expansion of the country's economy.

The first ten years also witnessed the government's attempt to introduce a one party state. The 1990s can be described as the years when opposition to the ruling party's dominance of politics in the country gelled together as a result of the economic problems the country started to experience. This culminated in the formation of the opposition

MDC in 1999. This eventually set the stage for the struggle for democratization that has been going on since then.

In addition to historical, political and economic influences, the struggle for democracy can be further understood by examining the role of civil society groups and the media from the 1990s to the present. Discourses from both the media and civil society groups played a role in how cultural identities were reorganized and constituted.

Civil Society Groups in Zimbabwe

In a country where the ruling party dominated almost every conceivable political space and where the distinction between state and civil society is difficult to establish, it can be complicated to fully account for the formation of civil society organizations in Zimbabwe especially in the post independence period. In the first decade of independence, the euphoria of political independence meant that many institutions that ordinarily would be considered as falling within the realm of civil society, were co-opted by the ruling party. Alexander (2006) has pointed out that civil society “included capitalist markets and its institutions, but it also denoted voluntary religion (non established covenantal denominations), private and public associations and organizations, and virtually every form of co-operative social relationship that created bonds of trust” (p. 4). The civil society organizations that are given attention in this research fit into this definition.

The formation of civil society groups must be considered in the larger context of the social and political upheaval that started to unfold in Zimbabwe as a result of the economic problems that the country started to experience in the 1990s. As the

government tried to address the social and economic difficulties, it resorted to repression to contain the demands of an increasingly frustrated and restive population. This in turn resulted in the formation of civil society organizations as different groups either tried to advance their causes or protect their members from the violence that was largely orchestrated by the security forces or members of the ruling party.

Generally, other than the trade union organizations, most of the civil society organizations that are part of this study were formed either in the mid 1990s or after the violent elections of 2000 and 2002. These organizations are largely made up of professional associations for teachers, doctors, lawyers, journalists. There were also other organizations that represented the interests of women, and workers especially as represented by the umbrella body – the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU). In examining the role of civil society groups in Africa, the question becomes how these groups “are explicitly engaged in attempting to define and redefine the rules of the political game” (Harbeson, 1994, p. 5). The underlying concern with civil society in this study then, is based on the goals to build knowledge about the possibilities for creating enduring democratic values. Furthermore, Harbeson has argued that “a civil society orientation shifts the emphasis on economic reform from policy change to formation of basic political values underlying such reforms” (p.14).

In the first decade of independence, that is from 1980 to 1990, the ruling party occupied many spaces that otherwise would be organized as part of civil society. This blurred the lines or distinctions between the state and civil society. The reason for this could have been initial attempts to establish a one party state by the ruling party. On the other hand, it can also be explained as resulting from the government’s expansion of

social programs that in some way managed to temporarily contain or postpone attention to some of the structural problems in the economy. In addition to this, the independence euphoria that swept through the country resulted in many individuals identifying with the ruling party.

Civil society must be considered as the space between the state and economy allowing individuals to organize and address problems they might be facing. In Zimbabwe, the involvement of civil society groups were ushered in by the labor movement, university professors and students, especially in the period around 1988 when the ruling party was working toward establishing a one party state. The nascent civil society in Zimbabwe was formed in the backdrop of the ruling party's attempt to form a one party state government. The leading opponents of attempts to establish a one party state included a trade union movement, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) that was at the forefront of opposing the ruling party. This galvanized other workers to oppose the government through job stay-aways, and strikes. University professors and students were also involved.

Leaders of the main trade union organizations were detained without trial. University students became more visible in their criticism of the government. Their criticism was aimed at government corruption and the establishment of the one party state. The turn into the 1990s decade can be characterized as having laid the foundation upon which other civil society organizations were to be formed. The formation of civil society organizations was therefore responding to the circumstances that many Zimbabweans encountered as they dealt with political, social and economic challenges in the country.

Most of the organizations that are the subject of this research were formed either before the June 2000 elections or in the years immediately following these elections. This can be taken as an indication of how the formation of these organizations was closely tied to political and economic events as they unfolded in the country. The period from mid 1990s up to the 2000 election saw further deterioration of the economic situation. The extent of the social upheavals that were taking place in the country can be evidenced by the numerous strikes that took place between 1995 and 2000. There were food riots and strikes by university students across the country in 1997. Among the 12 organizations that are part of this study, half of these were formed between 1996 and 1999 and the remainder was formed after 2000. Civil society organizations that were formed before 2000 were pushed by the erosion of limited freedoms that were orchestrated by the ruling party.

As economic problems in the country mounted, the government responded by using coercive measures. A combination of social and economic problems spawned political problems that ended up forcing teachers to form their own associations as evidenced by the formation of the Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe (PTUZ) in 1997. The Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights was formed in 1996 to offer legal services to the increasing number of people that were now being arrested or detained by the government as a result of its heavy handed approach to contain social unrest. Other organizations like the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe and the Women's Coalition were formed in 1999, just before the elections in 2000.

The 2000 elections were the first elections since independence that the ruling party almost lost had it not resorted to violence to intimidate voters especially in the rural

areas. Most of the groups that were formed after 2000 were largely responding to the violence and killings that characterized the 2000 and 2002 elections. Examples of these organizations include the Zimbabwe Peace Project formed in 2000, Bulawayo Agenda formed in 2002, and Women of Zimbabwe Arise and Zimbabwe Doctors for Human Rights, both formed in 2003. The imperatives that informed their formation were to broaden the engagement of the people and also to address some of the direct consequences of the actions of the ruling party such as violence that accompanied elections. Focusing on the involvement of these particular civil society organizations and community groups is consistent with the goal of building knowledge about cultural identity negotiation in the democratization process.

Information on the funding of these organizations is not readily available. It must be highlighted that most of these organizations were largely formed to directly deal with the context in which they found themselves as professionals or as individuals committed to the democratization process. Many foreign donors were heavily involved in helping to fund a lot of non-governmental organizations as well as the civil society organizations but this funding was not made public due to allegations of being funded by colonialist interests.

In conclusion, the role of civil society organizations must be understood as directly linked to the context of the unfolding political, economic and social problems in Zimbabwe. Larger institutional practices, such as media discourses also form another part of the picture of the struggle for democracy.

The Media in Zimbabwe

The history and ownership structures of the media are relevant to understand the influence of the media in the struggle for democracy. Zimbabwe's media is still largely structured along the same ownership patterns that existed during the colonial era. Other than a few changes that were made in the early years of independence, the role of media in the social, political, and economic development of the country can be regarded as a continuation of the colonial legacy in many respects. "At independence, the Zimbabwean nationalist leadership, wittingly or unwittingly, failed to broaden democracy but embraced the oppressive institutions and legal instruments" (Moyo, 1991, p. 98) that had been used by the colonial government.

At independence, the government took over the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company that was directly owned and controlled by the colonial government. The publishing company owned and controlled two daily newspapers published in the two biggest cities, and three weekly papers, all published in English. In addition to these, the government also owned two other weekly papers published in two of the main local languages. One of these papers was published in Shona and was based in Harare, and the other one was published in the second largest city of Bulawayo, in Ndebele. This same ownership structure still exists in present day Zimbabwe with the main change being that these newspapers are now owned and controlled by the post independent government. Historically, the colonial press is best described by Saunders (1999) when he said that "for most part, the newspapers put across the views of whites and consolidated their political and economic privileges, reflecting the interests of Rhodes and other

businessmen” (p. 3). The ownership pattern was therefore a direct inheritance from the colonial government.

During the colonial era, there were also some privately owned newspapers and magazines. Some of these continued keeping the two tier ownership pattern where there were privately owned yet also government owned. Most of the privately owned newspapers that continued into independence were weekly newspapers and the government was the only publisher of daily newspapers, controlling that market.

The print media’s coverage of issues in the country can largely be understood as reflecting these ownership patterns. The government controlled media tended to report favorably on government officials. The coverage of events in most cases was in line with the ruling party’s policies and programs as enacted through the government ministries. Through the government’s Ministry of Information, the government was also responsible for setting up editorial policies for all the newspapers under its stable. Saunders said “the new government soon came to see the public media as important tools in consolidating its political authority. It went about setting new boundaries and guidelines for the state media” (p. 18). In Zimbabwe after independence, it was customary for senior editors of the government controlled newspapers to be summoned to the ministers’ offices to make sure that they towed the government line. As Saunders has pointed out “from the early 1980s, for example, Ministry of Information officials regularly met Zimpapers editors and senior journalists in what became known as ‘prayer meetings’ – meetings in which they were told what the government wanted to read and hear in the media” (p. 18).

The government's overbearing presence in the print media also extends to broadcasting where they did and have continued to own and control the only television station in the country and the four radio stations. This structure was also inherited from colonialism where the colonial government controlled and ensured that the television and radio stations followed government policies in not only defending government positions but also in attacking opposition figures. In most situations, the government controlled media chose not to give coverage to those views that were considered contrary to government policy positions. Even in present day Zimbabwe, the government still controls broadcasting media as laws were enacted at the height of the political and economic crisis that made it difficult for foreigners to start television or broadcasting stations in the country. This was achieved by putting in place stringent regulations that were meant to shut out any foreigners from owning the media. The control of both print and broadcasting media has meant that the government has played a strong role in influencing the discourse that has helped to shape political developments in the country.

The post independence media structure resembles the colonial media structure in terms of ownership and the role the media play in the social and political affairs of the country. Government owned newspapers have been consistently partisan in their support of government policies. The history of the media in Zimbabwe, especially in the post independence era, has been characterized by numerous stories of editors and journalists from government controlled media being fired or suspended for being critical of the government. While the government controlled media have been strident in their support of the ruling party and its policies in government, the privately owned media have tended

to be supportive of the opposition and generally for policies that meet the interests of private capital.

The number of privately owned newspapers in the country has generally remained low. Most of the privately owned newspapers have been weeklies. Daily newspapers have had a very difficult history in Zimbabwe for a number of reasons. The first privately owned newspaper in the mid 1990s became a victim of the economic depression that started to affect the country in the 1990s. It closed as a result of the economic problems that were being experienced in the country. The daily newspaper had high circulation figures but could not attract advertising because of the economic problems in the country. As a result of this, the daily newspaper shut down in 1994.

Another daily newspaper started publishing in 1999. It was very critical of the government as it exposed corruption and commented on the use of violence by the ruling party to attack members of the opposition. The newspaper experienced numerous attacks as its journalists were constantly arrested and detained on charges, that in most cases, were later dismissed by the courts. The newspaper also endured numerous attacks. First its offices were bombed twice in 2000 but it continued to publish. The printing press of the same daily newspaper was also bombed and all but destroyed in 2001. It still defied the odds and continued to publish with robust criticism of the government. No convictions were made for the series of bombings that the newspaper experienced; leaving room for many commentators to speculate that the government was involved. After repeated attempts to stop the newspaper from publishing failed, the daily newspaper was finally closed down in 2003 as a result of media laws that had been recently passed by the government. In the absence of a privately owned daily newspaper,

the country has largely depended on three other privately owned weekly newspapers for alternative news.

In providing the background information on the media in Zimbabwe, it is also important to conclude by highlighting that the coverage of events in the country has been affected by the ownership patterns of the media. The government owned and controlled media has tended to reproduce discourses that are supportive or consistent with the ruling party's ideological positions. On the other hand, the privately owned media have tended to be supportive of opposition political parties and groups and individuals that are critical of the government. Privately owned media also gave coverage to issues and people that are not given space in government controlled media. Understanding the media discourses and the different conceptualizations of democracy that emerged can be achieved by research on both government controlled and privately owned newspapers.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND RESEARCH METHOD

This study seeks to understand how power relations and ideological struggle over democratization are constructed in media and civil society organizational discourse in Zimbabwe. This is achieved, in part by researching how cultural identities have been constituted and positioned in the struggle for democracy. In order to answer the research questions, the research includes texts from newspapers and interviews with representations of civil society organizations or groups that are involved in the democratization process. This chapter presents the research methods that were applied in order to answer the research questions. The chapter first outlines my approach to the key concept of discourse as it is central to the study. Key philosophical assumptions that inform the research methods are also highlighted. The methodological considerations emanating from the philosophical assumptions are presented next. Finally the chapter outlines how discourse analysis was carried out.

The concept of discourse has to be defined because applying it to the object of study entails certain theoretical and philosophical assumptions. There is need to position the research with respect to the specific definition of discourse that is going to be applied in this study. Different scholars from Foucault (1973), Van Dijk (1997a, 1997b), Fairclough (1992, 1995), and Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) have defined discourse analysis in differing ways. In the context of this research, the starting point is that humans' access to reality or the world of meaning is through discourse. Discourse can therefore be defined as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or

an aspect of the world” (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 1). As Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) have pointed out it can also be regarded as the “fixation of meanings that have unstable relations to one another” (p. 143). Fairclough’s definition of discourse as “a form of social practice” where discourse analysis is “analysis of how texts work within socio-cultural practices” (1995, p. 7) is also relevant to this dissertation.

From the definitions presented above, discourse as language use should not be separated from the wider social context in which it is used. Discourse must be analyzed in relation to the distribution of power in society because meanings that circulate are affected by and produce power relations. For example, in Zimbabwe, the discourse that is used to describe violence especially from the government controlled *Herald* newspaper is aimed at naturalizing it and making it an acceptable part of political discourse. Consequently, this study must take into consideration issues of power relations and how society is structured. Discourses that are used in particular situations are also characterized by ideological struggles; meanings are in most instances not permanent because different groups are always vying to establish dominance. The discourses that are in use at any particular moment also have consequences to the forms of representations existing within a social environment. For example, portrayals of democratization by ruling party spokespersons may position democracy as a ploy by western countries to impose their own values and interests on Zimbabwe.

The use of discourse analysis in this research must therefore be considered as giving attention to how discourse is connected with power differences and how they are ideologically constructed in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Discourse analysis as a method is consistent with the goals of the research related to understanding the

constitution/reconstitution of cultural identities in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. With regard to philosophical assumptions, this research is premised on the understanding that social reality is both constitutive of and constituted by discourse. In order to identify the constitutive forces and uncover how identities are constituted by different institutions and structures, it is important to carry out a discourse analysis of both media and interview texts. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) aptly captured this when they pointed out that “actions are concrete, individual and context bound, but on the other hand, they are also institutionalized and socially anchored” (p. 18). The goals of this research can therefore be achieved by examining not only individuals’ experiences working in civil society organizations but also public texts such as newspapers and other public documents. The latter can show policy and practices and reveal information about how organizations’ actions have been shaping political developments in the country and how at the same time they have also been shaped by the same political developments.

This study is informed by a critical orientation to discourse. As pointed by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), the critical perspective “involves an ethically heightened and politically reflective study of the relationships between power, knowledge, and discourse, that are produced in contexts of historical and cultural struggle” (p. 47). This study’s research questions entail understanding how historical and cultural experiences are constructed in discourse, in particular, the colonial legacy and the post independence political, social and economic challenges that have prompted the ongoing struggle for democracy. One goal therefore, is aimed at bringing out how political influences shape different agendas of different groups.

Beyond interpreting the discourses in relation to contextual factors, it is imperative to search for emancipatory possibilities in the discourse and the community organizations that have mobilized various cultural groups in the country. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) have pointed out, the critical approach is concerned “with communication as a medium through which social actors produce and deliberate knowledge claims, and realize their potential for self understanding and determination” (p. 49). The research method of discourse analysis is therefore informed by the critical perspective. With respect to this research, it is important to anchor it in the critical perspective and discourse analysis given the political, social and economic problems that many Zimbabweans have faced over the course of the post independence period. It becomes imperative to carry out this research in order to theoretically understand the situation and point to possibilities for creating more democratic conditions in the country. The first step is to give attention to various discourses related to historical and cultural context of social relations in Zimbabwe.

A second step beyond the focus on democracy is informed by the need to search for possibilities that can help to overcome the economic, political and social problems that many Zimbabweans have faced over the years. This research must be based on an understanding of how different cultural groups have negotiated these experiences thus far. These goals are based on the understanding that “power in discourse or behind discourse is not a permanent and undisputed attribute of any one person or social grouping” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 68). How power relations and differences in access to resources and influence between groups involved in the struggle for democracy have influenced the constitution or reconstitution of cultural identities is therefore also

addressed in the research. Power, whether examining particular situations, institutions, or a whole society, must be “won, exercised, sustained, or lost in the course of social struggle” (Fairclough 1989, p. 68). In the case of Zimbabwe, the social and political struggles that the country has witnessed over the past two decades have largely centered on the struggle for democracy.

The discourses that different groups have drawn on in the struggle for democracy have to be analyzed to bring out power relations between and among different groups; this sheds light on the understanding of democracy in the country. The discourse shows the specific interests of the different groups. Focusing on discourse is important because discourse plays an important role in understanding “realities” or the meanings that different people create within a specific environment. Discourse in this instance must be considered as “both a site of and a stake in” (Fairclough, 1989, p.35) social struggles.

Discourses give individuals, groups or the newspaper subject positions. The same discourse is constructed from subject positions. For example, in this study the *Herald* uses discourse that positions the opposition as puppets of the West. Fairclough (1989) has argued that “occupying a subject position is essentially a matter of doing or not doing certain things in line with discursive rights and obligations” (p.38). Power relations and ideological positions that are central in understanding how cultural identities are constituted must be considered as relations of struggle over subject positions. Defining democracy in specific ways has a consequential effect on the actions and positions that different groups have taken with regards to social, political, and economic events in Zimbabwe.

The approach to discourse analysis employed in this study is social constructionist. Phillips & Jorgensen (2002) have pointed out that in carrying out research that employs this approach, there is need to question the taken for granted in social life. If the taken for granted ideas are not questioned, they entrench themselves in society because they are considered to be commonsensical. Since “our knowledge and representations of the world are not reflections of reality ‘out there’, but rather are products of our ways of categorizing the world” (Phillips & Jorgensen, p. 5) there is need to understand how this takes place. The social, political and economic events that have taken place in Zimbabwe must be considered as underpinned by existing social relations. Discourse analysis can therefore help in unraveling power structures and different ideological positions that inform the actions that different cultural groups have taken.

The use of discourse analysis as a method to analyze both interview and newspaper texts is also informed by the philosophical assumption that discourse in society, in general, is historically and culturally contingent; that is why it is important for this research to be anchored on the accounts of the people that have been directly involved in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. The “ways in which we understand and represent the world are historically and culturally specific and contingent: our worldviews and our identities could have been different, and they can change over time” (Phillips & Jorgensen, p. 5).

It is therefore imperative to understand the historical and cultural situatedness of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe taking into consideration the colonial experience, the early years of post independence and how these local events must be contextualized within the global context. There is need to link context and discourse

because “discourse is a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations” (Phillips & Jorgensen, p. 5). The different cultural identities that have emerged over the period of this research must therefore be seen within the wider context of Zimbabwe as a postcolonial country that has tried to deal with all the challenges that come with such a historical experience.

Another key philosophical assumption that informs discourse analysis as a method here is based on the fact that “knowledge is created through social interaction in which we construct common truths and compare about what is true and false” (Phillip & Jorgensen, p. 5). In focusing on newspaper and interview discourses on democracy, the thrust is to find out how two newspapers and civil society groups created knowledge of what it means for Zimbabwe to be democratized. Experiencing the political, social and economic problems that have taken place in Zimbabwe can be assumed to have affected social relations in the country. In focusing on the positioning of different cultural groups and their involvement in the democratic process, the study also identifies the relationships between knowledge and social action. As Phillips & Jorgensen have pointed out “different social understandings of the world lead to different social actions, and therefore the social construction of knowledge and truth has social consequences” (p. 6).

Method

In order to bring out the role of discourse in the constitution of cultural identities, the research will apply an adapted version of Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis. The concept of order of discourse is very central in understanding what democracy and democratization mean to different groups in Zimbabwe. Order of discourse is defined as “the complex configuration of discourse and genres within the same social field or

institution. It can denote different discourses that partly cover the same terrain, a terrain which each discourse competes to fill with meaning in its own way” (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 141).

Focusing on the order of discourse, especially related to democratization, makes it possible to consider a wide range of discourses such as those dealing with politics, the economy, the role of colonial history, and how they are related to cultural identities and democratization process. These discourses such as freedom of the press, globalization and valorizing Western approaches to democracy emerged in both newspaper and interview texts. The order of discourse is regarded as open to change, and the analysis considered discourse changes over time from voices within different civil society groups or within newspapers. The order of discourse was also analyzed in relation to the subject positions of various individuals and groups and levels of influence across Zimbabwe in order to establish discourses that were dominant at any given moment.

Orders of discourse were examined to find their relationship to cultural, political and organizational groups and how groups were positioned within the wider context of the struggle for democracy. In other words, the struggle for democracy and the discourse surrounding it was analyzed to pinpoint group identity positions and relationships. Orders of discourse were also analyzed in relation to ideological considerations of different cultural groups. Finally orders of discourse were seen as being materially and institutionally anchored, and embedded in wider social practices.

In the context of this research, examination of orders of discourse entailed uncovering competing discourses of democracy. I gave attention to competing discourse

through discussing how the two newspaper texts and the interview texts were positioned to specific groups in society. I looked for how ideologies manifested themselves in the ways the different groups defined democracy and their involvement in the democratization process.

In applying critical discourse analysis in this research, analysis is text oriented. In the media analysis texts were drawn from the two newspapers' coverage of key selected political and social moments that appeared to have defined the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. These included the constitutional referendum and parliamentary elections in 2000, presidential elections in 2002, parliamentary elections in 2005, combined parliamentary and presidential elections in 2008, and the formation of a government of national unity that followed after the disputed election. Newspaper articles were selected with the following search terms: "democracy, elections, ZANU PF, MDC, land reform, sanctions, constitutional referendum and crisis" as these are the terms around which political, economic, and social struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe have been organized.

Events that have unfolded in the country have largely been influenced by the relationship between the ruling party and its supporters on the one hand, and the main opposition political party and other groups in civil society opposed to the government, on the other. It is by analyzing how these issues have been covered in the two newspapers that it becomes possible to understand the issues around which the struggle for democracy have been talked about in Zimbabwe. It is from focusing on how newspaper articles address issues referred to above that the order of discourse on democracy was identified and analyzed in relation to theories on ideology. Issues related to democracy were drawn from the newspapers' coverage of the political activities of the different

political parties, and coverage of civil society groups that are part of this study. Analysis of interview texts was informed by theories of democracy. The participants were asked questions that allowed them to bring out their perspectives on democracy. Given the goals of the study, discourse analysis was informed by the theories on democracy, ideology and identity described in Chapter 1, and contextualized through the lenses of a post-colonial perspective.

Cultural identity positions in both newspaper and interview texts were identified in the texts by uncovering how different groups are represented in the discourse. The analysis included how members of different groups described themselves and were described by members of other groups. For example, representations about cultural identity groups were analyzed in newspaper texts and in interview texts. Social actors were pinpointed along with their subject positions and relationships. The order of discourse was identified in how the different newspapers and interviewees covered the political parties, civil society groups and democratization. Additionally, discourse analysis brought out how the discourses implicate ideologies that are either supportive or challenge the social order as represented by the ruling party or opposition political parties and civil society groups. The analytical steps are detailed below.

In summary, the main aim of using discourse analysis as a method to analyze texts in this dissertation was to examine democracy, representations of cultural identity groups, subject positions and relationships, and discourses showing social order, ideology and hegemony. These are situated within the historical and social context where the texts are produced and consumed. This entailed focusing on the social and discursive practices that accompany the discourse and applying Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

Fairclough (1992) pointed out that there is no one way of doing discourse analysis; it is therefore possible to modify some of the critical elements in Fairclough's writings in order to come up with methods that are specifically suited to this research.

The elements and concepts that have been chosen for this research and how they are applied are highlighted below. Separate chapters are devoted to analysis of editorial texts from each newspaper and to interview discourses. The analysis began with several descriptive steps. The description focused on the linguistic features of the texts. The ideational focus of textual analysis utilized here was aimed at bringing out constructions of democracy. Fairclough (1992) also provided further description of social actors who speak and who are spoken for in the discourse, and examining their group identities. This step was met by selecting out examples of representations of cultural groups and noting subject positions. For instance the *Herald* constructed the ruling party as patriots and protectors of the post-colonial state and called the opposition imperialist. The next descriptive step called for by Fairclough is to note relations between groups. After describing the social actors, their subject positioning in relationships to each other was compared. For instance, the interviewees constructed the ruling party as anti-Western, anti-democratic and frauds in relation to the Zimbabwean people who were oppressed, struggling economically, and unable to express their views. Cultural identities were examined through selecting out representations of social groups and analyzing salient identities and when particular identities emerged as central to the democratization. These salient identities were analyzed with regard to their ideological and hegemonic force.

In focusing on how the identities emerged in relation to each other, it was possible to bring out the systems of knowledge and beliefs that informed the discourses on

democracy from the two newspapers and interview discourses. A continuing level of analysis brought out the elements of history, social events and contextual factors that were included and excluded in the texts. Analysis of each major construct such as democratization or positioning of Blacks and Whites in relation to each other was contextualized and related to historical and present political events and social conditions. The specific attention that discourses put on specific social actors at particular times and in particular conditions helped to build understanding of salience of cultural identities, relations between groups and the implications of these on the democratization process.

More specifically, the relational aspects of the discourse were analyzed in the following way. The voices that were highlighted or given prominence and those that were absent or did not speak for themselves were described. The analysis of how different voices speak or are silent was utilized to bring out the relationship between the different groups that are referred to in the text. As well, attention was given to discursive positioning of groups in relation to each other such as the ruling party positioning the opposition as imperialists, and themselves as protectors of the people. Relations were also pinpointed through constructions of the role of institutions such as government and those who dissent, and justifications for government sanctions and police actions.

As Philip and Jorgensen have highlighted, “the main aim of critical discourse analysis is to explore the links between language use and social practice” (p. 76). The analysis included attention to historical, contextual and structural factors because the production of text does not take place in a vacuum. While Fairclough (1992) emphasizes the need to analyze both production and consumption of text, this research focused more on production, the ownership and political alignments of the different media

organizations and the implications for the discourse that they produced. Production was also featured in the analysis of the interview discourses from civil society organizations with regard to their funding and political alignment. The funding structure, which involved international sources in some cases, and the political environment in the country, provide the contextual situation through which the discourses from civil society organizations were therefore analyzed.

In addition to history, contextual and structural factors which were addressed throughout, the analysis also focused on intertextuality. Intertextuality can be understood as the links and connections that the media and interview texts make to other texts other than themselves. Fairclough (1992) has defined intertextuality as “the property that texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, or ironically echo.” (p. 84). The inclusion of intertextuality into the critical discourse analysis is important as it shows that texts draw from history as they make their own history. Intertextuality in critical discourse analysis shows that texts respond to other texts before them. The newspaper and interviews cannot be treated in isolation to the historical context under which they are produced. Intertextuality also speaks to the context of discourse production; the aim is also to highlight how the contextual factors influenced the production of discourse. Intertextuality also enables analysis of ideologies in the final chapter in that intertextual chains reveal discourses through which ideologies emerge and are contested.

Part of analysis of production and context includes the need to specify the genre that is analyzed. In the context of this research, one focus was on editorial comments. Editorial comments were chosen because they reveal the opinions of the influential

voices and funders of the two newspapers. The editorials contained views as well as impacted readers' views of social, political and economic developments in the country that had implications for the democratization process. Editorial opinions were chosen because they capture the salient events in the country and how the newspapers and civil society organizations positioned themselves in relation to events in the country. The representatives of civil society organizations were chosen because the missions of their organizations dealt with democratization and political and human rights, and many included international funders and supporters.

The last analytical steps were comprised of pinpointing implicated ideologies and hegemony in the struggle for democratization. Because ideologies are produced through multiple discourses, texts and structures, it was important to look across both sets of newspaper editorials and the interviews with civil society organizational representatives, and construction of democracy. Evidence of hegemony and counter hegemony was also sought; for instance while the *Herald's* reports of the ruling party's call for support due to their supposed anti-colonial stand was widely disseminated and earned votes in the rural areas, the *Zimbabwe Independent's* reporting of human rights violations earned support for the opposition in urban areas. The order of discourse and interdiscursivity enabled analysis of how various discourses about democratization and the role of each political party was constructed in the contested public space.

Discourse analysis here examined how interview and media discourse address the theoretical constructs that inform this research such as democracy, representations of cultural identity groups relationships and ideology. As pointed out by Phillips and Jorgensen (2002), I focus on "the points on which there is an open struggle between

different representations and any understanding naturalized in all of the discourses as common sense” (p.145). I bring out the consequences of the use of particular discourses within various historical, social, political and economic situations. Discourse was constitutive of the social environment “by representing reality in one particular way rather than in other possible ways, creating boundaries between the true and false, and making certain types of action relevant and others unthinkable” (p. 145).

Selection of Newspaper Texts

Two newspapers were purposively selected. Unlike the broadcasting media in Zimbabwe where all the radio stations and the only television station are directly owned and controlled by the government, it is only in print media where there are newspapers that are privately owned. It is for this reason that two contrasting newspapers were chosen for this research. One set of editorials were selected from *The Herald* which is a government owned and controlled newspaper and a second set from *The Zimbabwe Independent*, a privately owned newspaper. *The Herald*, as pointed out earlier, has its historical roots in colonialism. It was owned and controlled by the colonial government and then taken over by the government after independence. *The Zimbabwe Independent*, on the other hand, started publishing in 1996 after the attainment of political independence. 342 editorial articles were selected from the *Herald*. A total of 114 editorial articles were selected and analyzed from the *Zimbabwe Independent*. The *Herald* yielded more articles for analysis than the *Zimbabwe Independent* mainly because as a daily newspaper, it had higher frequency of publication compared to the weekly *Zimbabwe Independent*.

The Herald was selected, because it is the only daily newspaper that is widely distributed throughout the country. Second, as a government controlled newspaper, *The Herald* can be considered as providing official government position on many issues. Third, considering that the government and the ruling party have been central to the political, economic, and social events that have taken place in the country, inclusion of *The Herald* makes it possible for government perspectives on democratization to be accounted for in the study. *The Zimbabwe Independent* was included because; it is the leading privately owned weekly newspaper in the country in terms of circulation and coverage of both political and economic news. Second, *The Zimbabwe Independent* appeals mainly to middle and high income groups. Thirdly, the newspaper gives coverage to both government and opposition political figures that are not normally covered by the government controlled *Herald*. Including both newspapers in the study therefore provides the broadest possible range of discourses regarding the democratization process and events that have unfolded in Zimbabwe over the ten years of newspaper coverage that are the focus of this research.

The selection of the two contrasting newspapers captures as broad a range of discourses as possible. The two newspapers have contrasting editorial policies. This is indicated by the varying coverage of the government, on the one hand and individuals opposed or critical of the government, on the other. Politics in Zimbabwe have largely become polarized between those that support the ruling party power since 1980 and opposition political parties especially those that were formed in the last decade. The media have also tended to be polarized with government owned media fully supportive of

the ruling party while privately owned newspapers have broadened their coverage to include both government and opposition political figures and issues.

The choice of newspapers enables analysis of competing discourses related to the struggle for democracy. The analysis specifically concentrated on editorials that focused on democracy. Editorials for analysis were purposively selected based on coverage of major political events beginning with elections in 2000. Articles that covered elections and other key political events were chosen because they reflect competing discourses about political and social practices; elections or announcements of policy decisions are accompanied by heightened political activity. Issues of democracy, social, economic and political participation were likely covered in the media during these events.

The specific timeframe for newspaper coverage covered the period from 1999 to 2009. This period was chosen as it represents heightened political confrontation between the ruling party and the opposition. During this decade the ruling party resorted to the use of both physical and ideological control of many state institutions in order to protect their interests. This included the use of violence through security forces to force people to support the ruling party. As well, laws were passed to ensure that government controlled media could operate without competition, and outline consequences for privately owned media who challenged the ruling party's policies. These contested times therefore contained different and competing understandings of democracy, which was analyzed by focusing attention on the editorials.

Interviews

Interviews also generated discursive texts that revealed the role of identities in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Interviews point to information and experiences of people involved in the struggle for democracy. Therefore these texts may be considered as part of the discourse that can help build knowledge about power relations and ideological differences among different groups.

To review, immediately after independence many people's participation in public affairs was circumscribed by their membership to political parties. The period from the mid 1990s up to the year 2000 however, saw many groups advancing their interests through various cultural groups ranging from women's groups, professional associations for teachers, doctors, lawyers, and journalists to human rights groups and media reform pressure groups. As most of these civil society and community groups were formed, there was a marked deterioration in the political, social, and economic status of most Zimbabweans as evidenced by increased political violence, repression and weakening of the country's economy. The corollary to increased repression in the country was different groups' increased involvement in the country's politics.

It is in light of the above context that interviews were carried out with members of civil society and community groups in order to understand the constitution of identities and group relations in Zimbabwe and the extent to which these have been affected by the struggle for democracy. Interviews provided a means to get information from people who participated and have been directly involved in the political developments that have been taking place in Zimbabwe for several decades. As Lindlof and Taylor (2002) have pointed out, "qualitative interviewing is predicated on the idea that interview talk is the

rhetoric of socially situated speakers” (p. 172). While an analysis of media texts can help to bring out some of the discourses that have been central to portrayed understandings of democracy in the country, this might not capture individuals’ views of their cultural identities and democratization as a result of involvement in the civil society groups that were formed over the last decade. Understanding the experiences of these individuals as they have participated in the democratization process is warranted. Situated understandings of specific historical experiences and cultural identities are only possible through interviews. As Lindlof and Taylor have pointed out, interviews “tell us about events, processes, or objects that exist outside the immediate interview context” (p. 172).

Individuals were selected for the interviews based on their membership in organizations that have been identified as involved in the democratization process, as evidenced in the goals and mission statements of these organizations. The groups were selected from a directory of civil society groups based on their visibility on issues related to democracy. This meant selecting organizations whose missions and goals cover broad areas of politics, social, economic issues and consequences of the actions of the major political players, such as the government; and advocacy such as human rights and work for media reform and freedom.

The different organizations were selected based on the specific actions that they have actually carried out or participated in over the last decade. Additionally, in the context of this research, members of different civil society and community groups referred to above were selected as their experiences helped in understanding how cultural identities have been constituted as a result of the struggle for democracy. Organizations whose membership is associated with different forms of identity such as gender,

professional affiliation, social causes, geographic or regional location, and religion were included. In addition to this, organizations large enough to have public recognition were selected. Find included IRB approval on Appendix A. A list of organizations is included on Appendix B.

Members from civil society groups were interviewed to elicit information about their identities, stories and involvement in the struggle for democracy. The researcher conducted 19 interviews with individuals from 18 civil society and community organizations. Of the 19 participants, 13 were male and six were female. With regard to racial composition of the participants, I interviewed two white male and two white female representatives. Participants were invited to participate via email. See Appendix C for invitation. The interview guide (see Appendix D) contained questions about the organizations and their involvement in the democratization struggle. Also attached is the consent form (see Appendix E) that interviewees signed to agree to participate in the study.

In conclusion, newspaper and interview discourses were analyzed in relation to the research questions in order to understand the role of power and ideology in constituting different identities in the country. Discourses play an important role in the constitution of social reality and in order to understand events that have taken place in Zimbabwe, it is important to incorporate both interview and media discourses in the study. These discourses must be considered as complementing each other. Interview and media discourses have been combined in order to have a comprehensive understanding of Zimbabwe's post colonial experience and what this says about the potential for democracy in the country.

CHAPTER 4:

THE *HERALD*

Introduction

This chapter presents results from the research beginning with discourse on democratization in the government controlled newspaper; *The Herald*. As Van Dijk (1998) has pointed out, public discourse in these newspapers was chosen because “public discourse, such as that of politics or the media, usually features institutional speakers or representatives who have more authority and hence more credibility” (p. 265). As highlighted in the research methods chapter, the analysis is largely dependent on Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis.

The discourses on democratization are framed around other broader issues emanating from the country’s political, social and economic history. Politics formed the overall trope around which issues on democratization were addressed in the government controlled newspaper; *The Herald*. Under the realm of politics, the *Herald* addressed many other issues related to democratization such as land, opposition political parties, economic and travel sanctions on the ruling elites, political violence, elections, media and human rights. The coverage of these issues and the discourse surrounding them help to shed light on the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. The above categories have been chosen because they regularly appear in relation to editorials, capturing the political, social and economic changes that have been unfolding in Zimbabwe. These issues have also been highlighted because they are intertwined with the political process in the

country either because they affected people's lives or because they commanded so much importance and currency in the country's public discourse.

The broader analysis of the democratization process is also informed by the theoretical framework on which this research is based. It is therefore important to point out how discourses on democracy in Zimbabwe approximate or deviate from the theoretical foundations that have been highlighted earlier. Among many other attributes, the definitions of democracy address issues of the public sphere and the role of civil society. These theoretical concepts emphasize citizens' ability and access to means of communication, and rights of individuals and communities to associate without fear of reprisals from authorities. It is in line with this view that media discourses from the newspaper are presented below.

This chapter is organized into five different ways of conceptualizing democracy that emerged from the *Herald*. These are history and colonialism, sanctions, land redistribution, elections, and lastly human rights and the media. After presenting the five themes above, I highlighted the social actors and relationships that were implicated in each of these discourses. Lastly, I presented the salient identities that were associated with each of the five ways in which democratization was conceptualized in the *Herald*.

The analysis of media discourses begins with the *Herald* and a brief description of how democratization is constructed and identities and representations emerge. The next stage emphasized production and involves analysis of context structures, histories and intertextuality. The third phase of the analysis is addressed in chapter 7, bringing out the implications for power relations, ideology, interdiscursivity and counter discourses. This

is because this level of analysis requires looking across discourses and acknowledges that ideologies are produced by institutional discourses, historical discourses and individual texts. Ideologies as well as hegemony require multiple discourses and some degree of longevity.

Revisiting Past History and Anti-colonialism as key to Democracy

Zimbabwe's electoral map significantly changed in 2000 when a strong opposition political party emerged and challenged the dominance that the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (Zanu PF) had enjoyed for two decades. The opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), came close to winning parliamentary elections in 2000. Their loss was largely attributed to political violence. In commenting on the use of violence in Zimbabwe, Chiware (2010) has noted that:

During election periods, the law is applied selectively. Political rallies by opposition parties and movements are normally disallowed; when they are permitted, they are normally disrupted violently. Supporters of the opposition have had their homes destroyed and physical violence visited upon them and their families, though such attacks are often aimed at the leadership (p. 21).

It is within this historical context that the discourse on democratization must be considered. In an attempt to tout Zimbabwe as a democratic country, the *Herald* resorted to publishing discourses that were meant to not only tarnish the image of the opposition but to project the ruling party as being solely responsible for bringing democracy to the country in the first place because of its involvement in the anti-colonial struggle. It is for this reason that the frames of anti-colonialism, struggle for land, sanctions and elections, together with the violence that accompanied them are addressed in the following section.

Anti-colonial discourse appeared frequently in the *Herald's* editorials and functioned as evidence of the ruling party's democratic credentials. This is another reason why this frame is so important in this analysis. After the international condemnation that Zimbabwe received for the violence that accompanied the 2000 elections, the *Herald* presented the ruling party as a victim of attacks from foreign countries especially Western countries. This is clearly illustrated by the following editorial comments which first appeared in the *Herald* of May 4, 2000:

It is true that relations between the governments of Zimbabwe and Britain are at their lowest ebb. It is the British who should be blamed for this. They still think that Zimbabwe is a British colony which they can toss the way they feel. Relations between the two countries should not have been allowed to go to such an extent. The history of the two countries has been inextricably linked and intertwined for a century when Britain occupied, ruled and exploited Zimbabwe. That left many scars and injustices for which Britain is responsible; hence Britain cannot run away from that responsibility. Zimbabweans know it quite well that sanctions or no sanctions, the land reform program is irreversible and the economic empowerment of the people through land acquisition and apportionment has become key to the success of the country's overall economic emancipation. (*Herald*, May 4, 2000).

Britain is held accountable for the economic and political challenges the country was facing. Colonial history, evident above, comes out as a construct that was invoked in most of the *Herald* editorials. The ruling party employs it to justify most of its actions especially in attacking the opposition. In another editorial, the *Herald* was more pointed in its attribution of the political problems in the country to Britain as indicated below:

The land has been a simmering problem for decades. Its resolution has been delayed far too long. The British government, in its quest for glory and world domination, created the land problem, in complete disregard for 'native' human rights. People had expected that with independence, land would finally be redistributed to the people. Twenty years later, however, people are still waiting for land. (*Herald*, August 1, 2000).

History is also invoked as rationale for land reform evidenced by the following editorial:

The lack of land reform has created enough suffering over the past 110 years and there must be no more violence once the issue is resolved. The farm invasions have put land reform right at the top of the national agenda and have introduced a sense of urgency that was sometimes lacking. (*Herald*, May 12, 2000).

Consistent with the critique of colonial history and its injustices that characterize editorials in the *Herald* especially in the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 evidence is offered below of how the country's colonial history included massacres and looting and apportioned blame to the Western colonial powers:

In the name of democracy, leaders of the MDC will walk the streets of Harare as free men and women having set the stage for the Western World to massacre their own people. Tsvangirai and his crew within the MDC must now be congratulating themselves for successfully assisting Whites in their MDC, Britain and America who were fighting to fix the ruling Zanu PF government for daring to reclaim land that was looted from black Zimbabweans by white colonial settlers. (*Herald*, December 7, 2000).

The other example is clearly provided by the following editorial from the *Herald* that argued:

The EU should know that we are not in Rhodesia. We are in Zimbabwe-a free and democratic country that will never be a colony again. It is absurd for the European governments to think that they can save what they perceive as a deteriorating political and economic situation in this country by slapping sanctions. It is complete colonial logic for the European parliament or governments to think that they have the right and means to freeze President Mugabe's assets, which he has repeatedly said, are in Zimbabwe and nowhere else. (*Herald*, June 30, 2001).

The examples above show that the government controlled newspaper presented the struggle for democratization from the perspective of the ruling party that wanted to project itself as the victim of the former British colonial power. Democratization is presented within the context of the country's colonial history, history that is appropriated only in as far as it serves the interests of the government and the ruling party. In these editorials and others, the West, especially Britain and European Union and the United

States, are presented as bent on working with the opposition political party, to reverse what had been fought for in the struggle to end colonialism.

Having offered a brief description of how the struggle for democracy is framed in the *Herald* in connection with colonial history, it is also important to offer more in-depth analysis and link this to the broader political discourse in the country. The context of this discourse includes the ruling party's background in having fought in a protracted struggle for the country's independence. This is constructed as entitling the ruling party to remain in power because of that involvement. The anti-colonial posture had previously resulted in the ruling Zanu PF party enjoying unparalleled support, especially in the first two decades of independence. With the dawn of the new millennium, this support began to wane leading to the challenge of a new opposition political party.

With increasing economic disenchantment, the opposition managed to take a lot of support away from the ruling party. Despite highlighting its role in the struggle against colonialism, the ruling party's message did not dominate. As Fanon (1963) points out, "For 95 percent of the population in developing countries, independence has not brought any immediate change. Any observer with a keen eye is aware of a kind of latent discontent, which like glowing embers, constantly threatens to flare up again" (p. 35). In the face of growing economic problems that the ruling party was failing to address, and which, were threatening its hold on political power, it resorted to highlighting its anti-colonial credentials in order to win back lost support.

While the basis for the ruling party's previous widespread support and hegemony had been built around the struggle against colonialism, this also meant that any political

challenge was going to be seen as an attempt to bring back colonialism. Hence the ruling party attempted to connect the opposition political party to the former colonial government. In terms of not only intertextuality but also interdiscursivity, memories of suffering associated with colonialism were also part of the country's collective memory on which the ruling party wanted to capitalize. It must be pointed that collective memory can be understood as a "highly contested sense-making process that shapes the present through a selective appropriation of the past in order to support cultural identities and political goals" (Drzewiecka, 2003, p. 189). Anti-colonial discourse was therefore a part of this collective memory.

In short then, in the editorial texts, democratization is conflated with those actions that guaranteed or furthered the political interest of the ruling party. A challenge to the ruling party is interpreted as bringing back the former colonizer; hence any attempts by the opposition to criticize the ruling party are viewed as bringing back colonialism with all its negative aspects.

Social Actors and Relationships Related to Colonial History

The above discourse shows that democracy has different meanings for different social groups depending on where they positioned themselves in the country's political divide. Discursively, it means that democracy was appropriated by the ruling party to entail anti-colonial history. The ruling party supporters and the government controlled media construct of democracy to mean preserving the status quo. In the preservation of this status quo, history becomes a discursive tool that is harnessed in order to achieve the wider goals of the ruling party to remain in power. It is marshaled and employed strategically for the purposes of portraying the opposition as individuals that are being

used by foreigners to pursue interests that are presented as inimical to the needs of Zimbabweans. The struggle for independence is not presented as a democratically informed process of collective effort involving different social and cultural groups cutting across cultural differences. In the *Herald's* editorials, the ruling Zanu PF government is projected as singularly responsible for the end of colonialism and attainment of political independence.

This has larger implications to how history is utilized to serve the interests of those with political resources and influence, and indicates that interpretation and understanding of history may not be the same for different groups within a given political environment. The interpretation of history informs social practice and becomes ideological. As van Dijk (1998) has posited:

ideologies serve to protect interests and resources, whether these are unjust privileges, or minimal conditions of existence. More neutrally and more generally, then, ideologies simply serve groups and their members in the organization and management of their goals, social practices and their whole daily social life (p. 138).

The interpretation of the country's history offered in the *Herald* is totalizing and used as a mobilizing force in the service of the ruling elite. This fails to capture the plurality of the Zimbabwean polity. This further leads to questions about which voices are presented and which ones are absent in the anti-colonial history as projected through the lenses of the *Herald*. The *Herald's* discourse in its totalizing effect has the effect of drowning other voices, especially those that are not considered as significant to the maintenance of political power. This shows that "by controlling the access to public discourse, only specific forms of knowledge and opinions maybe expressed and widely circulated, and these may persuasively lead to mental models and social representations that are in the

interests of the powerful” (van Dijk, 1998, p. 162). The question then becomes what are the voices that are left out of the *Herald's* discourse on colonialism? Despite historical evidence that the anti- colonial struggle was built around a coalition of different groups such as labor, youth and women's movements, the early educated African elites and other political parties, the *Herald's* discourse does not show the multiplicity of voices that contributed to the struggle for independence and presented the position of the ruling party as if it was the only voice.

In addition to positioning Zimbabwe and Britain (and other Western countries) as adversarial, there are also other group relations that are represented in the *Herald's* editorials. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is represented as an agent of Western governments and for advancing foreign interests. The ruling Zanu PF government is portrayed as standing for the interests of Zimbabweans. In the *Herald's* editorials commenting on the opposition, the leader of the opposition is represented as an outsider with no relations with the local people. The casting of the leader of the opposition as being more attuned to foreign interests is consistent with the descriptions presented above of the struggle for land as being the struggle between Zimbabwe and foreign countries. It is within this context that the leader of the opposition is presented as if he is a foreigner who shouldn't be allowed to participate in the country's political processes like any other Zimbabwean.

The other relationships that are highlighted in the editorials quoted above are the racial characterizations of the land issue where the White population is represented as not belonging to Zimbabwe and for being responsible for the problems in the country. In this regard, the *Herald's* representation of the land issue in racial language portrays White

commercial farmers as against the interests of the majority of people. The discourse therefore creates an adversarial relationship between the White population in the country irrespective of whether they owned land or not. Black people are represented as victims of the actions of members of the White community in Zimbabwe. The discourse then creates a 'them' versus 'us' racialized relationship where one group is cast as the 'enemy' and the ruling party is on the side of the 'people'.

The discourse on how land is important economically, portrays the relationship between Zimbabwe and Britain as a colonial one. In this colonial history, the United States and the European Union are also mentioned as accomplices of Britain in wanting to maintain a colonial relationship by stopping Zimbabwe from redistributing the land. Land ownership is characterized in the *Herald* as central to Zimbabwe's democratization process. In describing Zimbabwe's colonial history and its relationship with Britain, Zimbabwean nationality linked with land ownership are invoked as a contrast to Western interests and land. The discourse in the *Herald* positions Zimbabweans as being in an unequal relationship with Britain and other Western countries as a result of colonialism. The above examples from the *Herald* highlight how international relations between Zimbabwe and Western countries, especially Britain were unequal as Britain was bent on perpetuating colonial imbalances that the ruling party was seeking to address. The *Herald* therefore supports the government's action in taking away land from white commercial farmers.

Refuting Sanctions and Attacking Foreign Governments Protect Democracy

The government sought to deflect attention away from some of its political actions that had resulted in many Western governments, such as the European Union and

the United States, imposing sanctions on the country. As a result of the widespread violence that accompanied elections in 2000, 2002 and 2005, the issue of sanctions became central in the *Herald's* texts. The *Herald* in most of its editorials, pointed to the sanctions as evidence of how foreign countries were allegedly interfering in the affairs of the country. Some of the attacks from the *Herald* editorials were very direct and were presented as if the foreign governments were the direct political protagonists of the ruling party. This section presents examples of these discourses and then explains further what they meant in terms of understanding the democratization process in Zimbabwe. The MDC were accused of inviting sanctions to the country, a *Herald* editorial pointed out:

We particularly hope that the MDC, hitherto notorious for inviting sanctions and Western interference upon Zimbabwe, will learn something from this rich message. In Britain, the Labor and Conservative parties strenuously oppose each other but they keep their fights within the confines of their country. When threatened from without, the British will set their internal political differences aside and unite into one formidable force in defense of their sovereignty. The Americans do the same. Republicans and Democrats will oppose each other but will unite in defense of their country. (*Herald*, September 26, 2003).

The opposition political party, Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is associated with foreign governments and is accused of having called for the sanctions. The sanctions that were put in place were travel restrictions imposed on the leaders of the country because of human rights violations that had occurred in the 2000 elections.

Blaming Britain colonizers for scars and injustices is evidenced below:

It is true that relations between the government of Zimbabwe and Britain are at their lowest ebb. It is the British who should be blamed for this. They still think that Zimbabwe is a British colony which they can toss they way they feel. Relations between the two countries should not have been allowed to go to such an extent. The history of the two countries has been inextricably linked and intertwined for a century when Britain occupied, ruled and exploited Zimbabwe. That left many scars and injustices for which Britain is responsible; hence Britain

cannot run away from that responsibility. Zimbabweans know it quite well that sanctions or no sanctions, the land reform program is irreversible and the economic empowerment of the people through land acquisition and apportionment has become key to the success of the country's overall economic emancipation. (*Herald*, May 7, 2001).

The thrust of the above quotation is on blaming the British for imposing sanctions on the country. It incorporates discourse on colonial history and alludes to the injustices of the colonial era, and presents Britain as treating Zimbabwe as if it was still its colony.

Further evidence of this is shown in other *Herald* editorials:

The issue of sanctions against Zimbabwe has popped up again with some sectors of society welcoming it with glee while most progressive citizens feel outraged by this continued blackmail of our sovereignty by people who have no moral authority to lecture us on human or political rights. There are however, various reasons which have led to the latest hysteria. These reasons hinge largely on the forthcoming presidential elections to be held next year and the continuing fast track land reform exercise. (*Herald*, June 30, 2001).

In the above quotation, just as in many other editorials addressing the issue of sanctions that were imposed on the country, the *Herald* does not offer explanations as to why the sanctions were imposed in the first place. The discourse on sanctions is presented as interfering with the presidential elections scheduled during the following year. It is also evident that the discourse on sanctions is presented as if it was part of a larger grand plan by foreign countries, in this instance Britain, to make sure that the government would not be able to carry out its land reform program. It is notable that progressive citizens in Zimbabwe are constructed as advocates for sovereignty and allies of the ruling party.

Some of the discourse on sanctions is also tied to the opposition MDC party that is accused for calling for sanctions against the country. This is evidenced in the following quotations from two consecutive *Herald* editorials:

The call by the leader of the MDC, Mr. Morgan Tsvangirai, for South Africa to effect a blockade shows a serious lack of judgment in the “wannabe” President of Zimbabwe. Mr. Tsvangirai might just be shooting off his mouth before he thinks, saying things that he hopes will impress the audience of the moment. In most cases, his audience is made up of those who listen to the BBC. So whether he is plain simple minded, twisted or incapable of rational thought, is not immediately clear. His history of irrational statements cannot, however, possibly impress even the most partial observer. (*Herald*, January 15, 2002).

This was followed by another editorial that sought to provide evidence why the leader of the opposition was not fit to be leader of the country. In this instance, the discourse on sanctions is employed in order to discredit the leader of the opposition as unfit to occupy public office:

Here is someone who is aspiring to become a president of this country. Asking another country to impose sanctions on his motherland is beyond any reasoning. Mr. Tsvangirai is supposed to project Zimbabwe’s sovereignty and independence in his campaigns. This is not the first time that the MDC has supported imposition of sanctions against Zimbabwe. Last year in August he endorsed a United States proposal for targeted sanctions against Zimbabwe which are now in force. (*Herald*, January 16, 2002).

Similarly, groups in civil society that were largely viewed as against the ruling party were also blamed for the imposition of sanctions by foreign governments while not being explicitly named. This is exemplified by the following editorial:

Reports that certain sections of Zimbabwean society are actively campaigning for the continued imposition of economic sanctions on the country make very disturbing reading. There is no justification on earth or under the sea for the continued imposition of sanctions on the people of Zimbabwe. (*Herald*, April 30, 2009).

A brief description of the above editorials shows that the issue of sanctions was central in how the *Herald*, and by extension the government, viewed sanctions as connected to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. In broader terms, the discourse on sanctions is employed in order to attack the former colonizing country and the opposition party that is considered as furthering the interests of Britain.

The *Herald's* attack on the imposition of sanctions must be considered within the broader context of the editorial support the *Herald* gave to the ruling party. The discourse on sanctions fits in with the common thread of the appropriation of anti-colonial history discourse. The ruling party is therefore presented as the custodian of anti-colonialism, and as will also be shown further, as having brought democracy to the country. The clamor from the opposition for the political space to be opened up is not considered as important in the struggle for democracy. This shows that there is a sharp contrast in the way democracy and the democratization process is viewed. Democracy especially as shown in the *Herald* editorials is presented as the unchallenged rule of the ruling party. Political contestation for public office is presented as inconsistent with the interests of the country and those that advocate for equal opportunity to participate in the political affairs of the country are portrayed as advancing the interests of foreigners.

It is under this environment that discourse on sanctions must be considered as a ploy to discredit the opposition political party that was posing a challenge to the ruling party. The process of democratization is therefore more about self preservation for the ruling party. From this perspective, the *Herald* advocated the ruling party's position about maintaining political influence, and diminishing others' positions along the way by casting aspersions on others' suitability for public office. This is evidenced by the way the leader of the opposition was treated as a puppet of the West, especially the former colonial power, Britain. The editorials can also be interpreted as projecting the ruling party as more nationalistic than the opposition. The ruling party's form of nationalism appears to be in complete disregard of what Appadurai (1996) points out about nation states when he says "nations especially in multi-ethnic settings are tenuous collective

projects not eternal natural facts” (p. 162). For these editorials, inclusion of particular peoples’ voices is being constructed as natural, especially those advancing the interests of the ruling party.

To conclude the analysis of The *Herald*’s discourse on sanctions, there is an overall thread that seeks to associate the ruling party with anti- colonial struggles. Anything else that seeks to challenge the ruling party’s position is presented as irrelevant, as if to highlight that once independence was achieved, democracy was established and there was no need for further political contestation in the country. Political independence from colonialism is presented as the ultimate expression of the struggle for democracy and actions by the opposition can only be considered as attempts to bring back colonialism. The *Herald* presented the ruling party as the sole custodian of Zimbabwe as a sovereign nation.

In the above editorials focusing on the travel restrictions and the sanctions that were imposed against top government officials and members of the ruling party, the relations that are brought out mainly focus on the opposition MDC, its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, and Western governments who are blamed for the imposition of the sanctions. In addition, relations between the leader of the opposition and other groups are variously referred to as ‘some sectors’ or ‘certain sections’. The relationships described above have implications for how each of these groups is perceived in the country. This is mainly through the characterization of the opposition and its leader as outsiders serving the interests of foreigners such as Britain and the United States. The *Herald* editorial discourses delegitimize these groups. In situating the opposition as working against the interests of the country, the *Herald* also isolates or delinks the opposition from the

general populace by constantly making them appear as a cover for foreign interests, thereby not representing the aspirations of Zimbabwean people.

In the *Herald* editorials, the voices of the opposition are absent. The opposition party appears in the editorials as the contrast to positive-self and negative other comparisons, enabling the *Herald* to dismiss them and their positions (Van Dijk, 1998). The claims made in the *Herald* editorials are also very consistent with the ruling party campaign platforms or policy positions of the government such as the castigation of international sanctions or endorsement of the land reform program. Finally, the opposition political party is cast as advancing the interests of foreign governments; this is also consistent with how the ruling party characterized the opposition.

National Identity as Salient

The *Herald* put a lot of spotlight on national, racial, and political groups at the center of its texts on political developments in the country. The *Herald* texts touted the issue of national identity. This can be exemplified by the following editorials:

A sovereign state is exactly that, one that possesses sovereignty to do pretty much what it wants, at least within its borders, without having to refer to anyone else. Generally speaking, so long as a state has a government that reflects the will of the majority of its people and enforces basic human rights there should be no question of anyone interfering in its internal affairs. (*Herald*, February 21, 2000).

In the above editorial, a reference to the country's sovereignty is summoned in order to position the ruling party as nationalistic. This can be construed as an attempt to claim the mantle of nationalism in order to gain political support and by so doing cast doubts on the opposition as more committed to foreign interests than Zimbabwe. Other editorials as cited below also confirm how national identity was summoned in most of the *Herald's* editorials.

We believe if the opposition party is genuinely interested in the development of this country; it would embrace President Mugabe's advice and adopt a more nationalistic approach to politics than playing to the tune of the British. It is important for the opposition party to be introspective and realign its ideology to the aspirations of the majority and to articulate what independence means to Zimbabweans who vote governments into power. Under the leadership of President Mugabe, these 24 years of independence have seen the completion of the liberation agenda as Zimbabweans now have access to the major means of production, education, health as well as new opportunities in commerce and industry, while the very existence of the MDC and private newspapers testify to the political and other freedoms a free nation should enjoy. (*Herald*, April 19, 2004).

In the above editorial there is an attempt to put into stark contrast the differences between the ruling party who are positioned as more 'nationalistic' as compared to the opposition who are positioned to play to the interests of the British. The existence of the opposition and private newspapers is presented as evidence of the existence of democracy. Irrespective of the violence and previous demonization of the opposition, their mere existence is taken as evidence that there was freedom in the country.

Every nation has founding values and ethos that all in leadership are expected to uphold and defend and these values constitute the bedrock of the nationhood the leadership pledges allegiance to when taking the oath of office. Zimbabwe is no exception. Ours is a country that was born out of protracted liberation struggles culminating in the Second Chimurenga War (1966-1979) that ushered in majority rule. Though the MDC-T has some Rhodesian forces personnel in its ranks, and is led by a man who deserted a liberation war camp within hours, the party's leadership must remember that they are free to form such a party today because of the democracy accruing from the liberation struggle. The sacrifices of the men and women who risked life and limb to win us freedom made it possible for the MDC-T leadership to participate in issues of governance. It is that democracy that enables even those who fought against majority rule to stand for elective office today let alone having the black component of the MDC-T rub shoulders with the Roy Bennets and Eddie Crosses of this world who constituted a privileged class in Rhodesia. (*Herald*, November 2, 2009).

The editorial is more direct in its criticism of the opposition and linking it to the former colonial government, by reference to the country's colonial name 'Rhodesia'.

There is also reference to the war of independence (Chimurenga) which can be

interpreted as an attempt to whip up emotions against the opposition. In evoking national identity in its editorial, one can also observe a specter of racism in the editorial, as the members that are dismissed as belonging to the colonial government are white (Eddie Cross and Roy Bennet) as if to imply that they should not participate in the country's politics.

National identity is therefore invoked in order to malign the opposition as trying to reverse the supposed achievements of the ruling party. The ruling party's understanding of national identity involves use of violence against opponents and those constituted as not belonging to the 'imagined' (Anderson, 2006) nation at the present moment. Through both discourse and violence, the ruling party as exemplified in the *Herald* editorials sought to regain lost political ground. As Appadurai (1996) has pointed out "remembering and forgetting are vital to nationalism, but they are even more vital to its brutal embodied politics" (p .155). In the case of the *Herald* discourse, writers only remember those aspects of history that are convenient in advancing the interests of the ruling party.

Consistent with the *Herald's* approach to bring out issues of national identity are its attack of the opposition and the attack on foreign governments, especially Britain and the United States, who are presented as interfering in the internal affairs of the country. In this respect, national identity is invoked in the face of what is regarded as attempts by the former colonizer to exert influence on the country. This can be illustrated by examples below:

It is obvious that the British establishment has made the unseating of President Mugabe a personal crusade and they have demonized the Zimbabwean president to such an extent that he can no longer have rational discussion with any British official. No-one in this country is seeking British approval for every Zimbabwean

policy and action. Britain is not the colonial power any longer and its approval is neither needed nor desired. (*Herald*, March 9, 2001).

African Union summits have become the latest hunting ground for western-sponsored agents seeking to condemn Zimbabwe for alleged human rights abuses by smuggling ill-conceived and scandalous reports for adoption by African leaders. Every time, the same organization, the western-sponsored African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights (ACPHR), is involved. It is common knowledge that the Government of Zimbabwe was marked for elimination after launching the land reform program and one would expect African leaders, whose countries still bear the scars of colonialism, to know better and condemn attempts to compromise the continental body. For now the West has targeted Zimbabwe but the next target will obviously be any country that tries to dispossess whites to empower the indigenous majority. (*Herald*, January 25, 2006).

The *Herald* text attacked foreign governments especially the United States and Britain. Outsiders' attacks on the president of the country and also leader of the ruling party, are taken as attacks on the national identity of the country. Zimbabwe is constructed as no longer under colonialism and capable to determine its own affairs. The issue of national identity is asserted in the face of what is described by the editorial to be meddling attempts by foreign countries. The foreign countries, and their alleged support by the opposition, civil society organizations and members of the white community, are presented as the 'other' or outsiders who were not part of the collective national identity.

The discourse on national identity must be connected to other wider discourses on colonialism, history and the post colonial transition. The *Herald* in its editorials taps into the collective memory of colonialism in order to advance the interests of one specific political grouping. The discourse appropriates national identity in order to marshal support for the ruling party. National identity becomes a contested terrain because of the demands that are exerted by members of the opposition and other groups that had appeared disenfranchised by the ruling party. In explaining the problem of modern nation states, Appadurai (1996) pointed out that this happens because:

Modern nation states have subscribed to and contributed to the idea that legitimate polities must be an outgrowth of natural affinities of some sort. Thus, even as many nation – states enter a crisis of legitimation and face demands they work within a legacy in which a national self-rule must rest on some sort of tradition of natural affinity (p. 157).

National identity then becomes not only a means for the ruling party to gain support but also an attempt to exclude the opposition as it is considered as not part of the country's collective or national community. In the case of Zimbabwe, the 'natural affinity' resorted to is race as evidenced by the demonization of members of the white community who are presented as not belonging to the country.

National identity can be defined as inclusive of different groups that form Zimbabwe as the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) of a Zimbabwe nation. Discourses in the *Herald*, excluded those not agreeable to the ruling party. In this case, the ruling party constructs the members of the nation. In its bid to remain in power, national identity became an ideological tool that it used to advance its interests.

Justifying Land Redistribution as Democratic

Themes of Land Redistribution

The land issue has been part of the Zimbabwe public discourse for most of its post independent period since 1980, but became more prominent after the constitutional referendum held in 2000. The referendum was about whether the country should adopt a new constitution to replace the one that had been adopted when the country attained independence in 1980. The ruling party supported the new constitution because of a provision that allowed it to forcibly take land from commercial farmers without paying compensation. After the failure to pass the new constitution, the ruling party started using land as a political campaigning tool. It was within this context that land became a central

part of the discourse on democratization both as a way for the ruling party to appear as if it was delivering on one of the key grievances in the fight against colonialism, and as an economic resource that people could use to fight poverty. In both instances, the land became a battleground issue and a prism through which the struggle for democracy can be understood.

In order to fully understand how the land issue is a key frame in interpreting the discourse on democratization in Zimbabwe, examples are drawn from the *Herald* from 2000-2002. The *Herald* framed the land issue as part of the broader struggle for democracy as exemplified by the following editorial:

This leads us to ask why the private sector, which supports and funds democracy throughout the world, is refusing to support the democratic ideal of equitable redistribution of land and minerals in this country. Instead, we find them, in the name of democracy, rallying behind opposition political parties that they actually use to resist economic democratization. Black economic empowerment must be seen as a logical extension of the democratization of the political sphere. It cannot, therefore, be anathema to those who love democracy and development. True democracy can only be realized when indigenous Zimbabweans also own the land and mineral wealth of their country. Stability, peace and security can only be guaranteed if the process of democratization embraces both the political and economic spheres (*Herald*, June 22, 2000).

The *Herald* also went further to argue that land reform is central to the country's political processes and trumps everything else. It pointed out that:

Zimbabwe could not have sacrificed the need for land reforms on the altar of political expedience. In other words, Zimbabwe could not have ignored the need to address the land issue for fear of upsetting the British and Americans whose interests were being threatened by the program. (*Herald*, April 26, 2000).

The land issue is also invoked as a way to defend the government actions from alleged criticism both in Zimbabwe and outside of the country. This is evidenced through

the way land acquisition is linked to the country's independence. Below is a quotation from one of the editorials:

Zimbabwe is facing stiff opposition to its land reform program which seeks to give land to its landless sons and daughters. Zimbabweans have been tried and tested before. Sanctions will, in fact, invoke that spirit of nationalism and unite the country in their bid to preserve their hard-won independence. (*Herald*, January 16, 2002).

The *Herald* also projected the ruling party's approach to land reform and the manner in which it was being carried out by its supporters. Below is an argument that land imbalances needed to be addressed immediately with acquisition. This is evidenced in the following quotation from one of the editorials describing how war veterans were forced to occupy commercial farms:

The painfully slow pace at which the land redistribution exercise was being implemented forced the war veterans to occupy large scale commercial farms to force an immediate resolution of the land imbalances in this country. (*Herald*, May 19, 2000).

The land issue is also deployed in order to establish a wedge between supporters of the ruling party and those of the opposition. This is achieved through discourse that seeks to counter discourses critical of the manner in which the government was acquiring land. Out of many examples, the one below aptly captures this discourse:

True and patriotic Zimbabweans, regardless of race should close ranks and support the government's efforts in redressing colonial land imbalances. We should never allow ourselves to be divided and allow a small minority group to own vast tracts of land when the majority of the people are cramped in some natural region five rural areas suitable for wildlife only. (*Herald*, January 25, 2000).

From the *Herald's* editorials, it is evident that the land issue was at the center of Zimbabwe's political discourse. In some instances, the repossession of land is considered as actually part of the process of democratization as it is presented as an important

economic resource that could empower people. In another vein, repossession is deployed in discourse as an attempt to project the ruling party as fulfilling the promises of independence. There is, however, need to add that this call for endorsing repossession was being made two decades after the achievement of independence.

In analyzing the discourse on the land reform program, it must be contextualized within the larger political events and the political situation that the ruling party found itself in. With the failure to adopt the new constitution that the government wanted to use to regain lost political ground, the government decided to forcibly take away land from mostly commercial white farmers who were accused of supporting the opposition. As will be indicated later in other discourses, especially with regards to violence perpetrated against commercial farmers, it is probable that violence was instigated against the commercial farmers almost as punishment for supporting the opposition Movement for Democratic Change political party.

The intertextuality of the land issue with regards to democratization can therefore be considered to be multi-pronged. Land repossession is connected to the way the government was punishing commercial white farmers for their supposed financial aid to the opposition. In so doing, the government was waging a political battle with the opposition in terms of discourses that portrayed the opposition as not only sympathetic to the white commercial farmers, who were losing their land, but also advocated for stopping financial support the opposition was alleged to be receiving from the farmers. The discourse was aimed at positioning the ruling party as more 'patriotic' and nationalistic as it was trying to fulfill the promises of independence that had remained unfulfilled. This is mainly because the land issue was one of the main grievances in the

struggle against British colonial rule. As Fanon (1963) has pointed out “for a colonized people, the most essential value, because it is the most meaningful, is first and foremost the land: the land which must provide bread and naturally, dignity” (p. 9). The ruling party was therefore deliberately bringing the land issue as way of repositioning themselves in the face of a strong opposition.

In exploring the interdiscursivity of the discourse on land, it is also important to highlight that it was closely connected or linked to issues of colonial history and its legacy. This can be taken as evidence of how unresolved historical issues can be politicized. In this instance, the ruling party wanted to bring the former British colonizer into the discourse in order to bolster its image of having contributed to the achievement of independence. In so doing, they projected themselves as the party defending interests of the majority of Zimbabweans and an opposition political party that is portrayed as either working with outsiders, or with commercial farmers resisting government’s attempts to redress an historical imbalance.

The discourse on democratization that incorporated the land issue then became the means by which the ruling party attempted to regain lost political ground by first using an unresolved historical issue for its own advantage despite the fact that the party could have addressed it within the first two decades of independence. A possible explanation is that during the same two decades, there was no strong opposition in the country. The ruling party’s hegemony went unchecked for the greater part of that duration. It was only in the political context of a new and strong opposition political party, and the rejection of the government supported constitution, that the issue of land became the center of political discourse in the country. It is for this reason that the land

issue cannot be divorced from the ruling party's need for political preservation. In a nutshell then, the land issue became both a means for the ruling party to galvanize waning support and also project itself as the more 'authentic' political party of the people.

The discourse on land can also be linked to the broader problems with which postcolonial governments are faced when viewed from the actions of the ruling or political elites, who especially after independence, appeared to be interested in personal enrichment and populist discourse when faced with a stronger opposition. Much as this research is based on political developments in Zimbabwe; it cannot be divorced from the general experience of many independent African countries, where the achievement of political independence is paradoxically marked by deterioration in the standard of living and increased exclusion from international connections for the majority of people. This is aptly captured by Ferguson (2006) who pointed out that:

For what is most striking in the recent history of much of Africa is not the breakdown of boundaries, but a process in which economic decline and political violence have produced new political and economic exclusions that distance Africa from the rest of the world and destroy the sense of connection with, and membership in, an imagined world community that so many Africans experienced during the early years of independence (p. 166).

In Zimbabwe, much as the emergence of a strong opposition political party at the turn of the millennium contributed to the context for some discourses on democracy to emerge, it must also be highlighted that economic factors were also part of the context. The year 2000 can be considered as a culmination of the steady deterioration of economic well being for most Zimbabweans; this, in turn led to the formation of an opposition political party. The backdrop to the formation of the opposition was numerous strikes,

food riots and general erosion of the people's disposable incomes. Chiware (2010) clearly captured this in saying "the ruling party and the government it led had been losing popularity owing to mismanaging of the economy, mass unemployment, growing poverty levels, corruption and high-handed treatment of dissenting voices" (p. 17).

It was within this context that the ruling party could only resort to using the land reform issue as a way of regaining lost ground. Needless to say, that before the year 2000, a lot of people, especially the rural poor, had advocated for the need to redress land imbalances in the country. These voices were never supported by the ruling party whose popularity then was relatively high. This context helps in highlighting the contradictions that confront postcolonial governments especially in an increasingly connected world where decisions inside the country are influenced by events outside the country. In trying to address some of these contradictions, the government resorted to the use of populist discourse that, in a way, can be construed as aimed at diverting people's attention from the economic challenges they were facing.

Instead of directly addressing these economic challenges, the ruling party responded by taking an unresolved historical issue, land ownership, where a lot of people were emotionally invested. This can be considered as ideological strategy which as van Dijk (1998) has pointed out is used when:

elite ideologies are largely inconsistent with relatively strong and known ideologies of dominated groups, the elites have the special means of media access and control, and discursive strategies of manipulation of knowledge and opinions, for example by emphasizing the ideological implications that are less inconsistent with the interests of the dominated groups, or de-emphasizing those that are inconsistent with these interests, for example nationalism (p. 185).

Ultimately, positioning the ruling party as the party responsible for independence, and the one trying to defend the interests of the country in the face of threats aimed at stopping democratization and stopping land redistribution, the *Herald* can be considered as obfuscating the problems in the country. The obfuscation can be considered as serving the interests of the ruling political elites. This had wider implications to power relations in the country as the land issue was used as a mobilizing tool to ensure that they could maintain their political influence. The land issue and how it was used as a key component in the debate on democratization shows that the ruling party, and its government controlled media, could deploy both discourse and physical force to achieve its goals. White commercial farmers lost their farms, their source of livelihood. As van Dijk (1998) has pointed out “those who have persuasive, ideological or discursive power, also usually have the coercive powers to take care of those who won’t comply with the directions of symbolic power. Economic and physical means may then be applied where less blatant power means fail” (p. 163).

Social Actors and Relationships Related to Land Redistribution

The *Herald's* discourse on land also reveals particular group positions and relationships. In the first editorial on the land reform program, the key social relations that are brought up are those referring to the private sector and ruling party. The editorials point out that the private sector was not supporting the land reform program but was funding the opposition. This characterization of the private sector positions them as opponents of the ruling party. The *Herald*, being a government controlled newspaper, advanced the interests of the government and the ruling party. The discourse in this respect helps in creating the political platform through which entities that are regarded as

opposed to the ruling party are, by implication, considered as supporting the opposition MDC.

The discourse can, therefore, be considered as creating a wedge between the electorate, and the opposition in the sense that the opposition was described as getting support from private sector entities that were not supporting the land reform. This positioning of the private sector and the opposition implies that the *Herald*, and hence the ruling party, was the only one supportive of the interests of the majority of people. Again, the editorial creates an adversarial relationship between the general population and the opposition. In doing so, the discourses, in addition to offering support to the ruling party, also presented the ruling party as aligned to the interests of the people. The ‘people’ are appropriated to serve the interests of the ruling party.

The other key relation that is brought out in the *Herald*’s discourse on land focuses on the veterans of the country’s war of independence. They are presented as championing the cause of the majority of the people, as opposed to White commercial farmers who are presented as protecting and maintaining colonial privileges by refusing to give away the land to the government’s land redistribution program. Again, the relationship that is brought up is that of positioning the war veterans as justified in their actions of forcibly taking land away from white commercial farmers. White Zimbabweans are presented as outsiders who do not belong to the country and for that reason the actions of the war veterans against them are presented as justifiable. Casting members of the White community in Zimbabwe as outsiders justifies the taking over of the land without the government compensating them for their losses. The relationship between the war veterans and the White community raises the issue of belonging and not

belonging. In editorials addressing the land issue, White commercial farmers are further characterized as a 'small minority'. This suggests that their interests and concerns were probably not as important as those of the 'majority' Black population in the country.

In commenting on the relations portrayed in the *Herald's* editorials, it is evident that there are some groups in the country whose voices are more privileged than others. Groups that are supportive of the ruling party have more voices in the *Herald's* editorials as their actions are supported and commented on. Those groups and individuals that are perceived as opposed to the ruling party are either absent, or when they appear, are mentioned to give contrast to the ruling party. The voices of the ruling party and other groups, such as war veterans, who are supportive of the ruling party, are included. Excluded are the voices of the opposition political party, its leaders, White commercial farmers, the private sector, and foreign governments, such as Great Britain and the United States.

Racial Identities as Salient

Zimbabwe can be considered to be multiracial although the overwhelming majority of the population is black. The colonial legacy meant that the country had a large white settler population that lived in the country and continued to live there after independence. There is also a significant population of people of Asian descent especially from India and Pakistan that settled in the country during colonialism who have remained in the country since then. Given the historical context and especially during the period under study, racial differences between blacks and whites became more accentuated within a politically charged environment beginning in the year 1999.

While the post colonial politics of the country after independence had ensured that there was very little discourse that put race at the top of political campaigns, this changed dramatically in the aftermath of the government and ruling party's defeat in the constitutional referendum of February, 2000. The other factor that can be attributed to the introduction of race during the 2000 parliamentary elections was that the opposition became a serious competitor to the ruling party's hold on resources and control, and land redistribution was a contested issue. After the 2000 elections, the government took over vast tracks of land from mainly white farmers, marking the beginning of the racialization of politics in the country. Racialization is defined in this analysis as "the extension of racial meaning to previously unclassified relationship, social practice, or group" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 30). This racialization must be seen as ideological and also taking place at a specific historical and political moment. The racialization of politics was further confirmed by the *Herald's* demonizing Britain, the US and other European countries as calling for a return to white rule. See the example below:

There is now a better understanding that what the country has been going through such as the closure of factories, the shortages of fuel, the hiking of prices and so on, was being deliberately manufactured to push for an uprising against the ruling government. These machinations may have served to confuse city dwellers who were gravitating towards calling for the return to white rule judging by the election of white MDC MPs, some of who were members of the notorious Rhodesian security forces that killed and maimed their own people to preserve white rule. (*Herald*, December 14, 2000).

Events that took place in the country, many businesses being closed because of shortages of fuel, and other conditions that made doing business in the country difficult, were all blamed on the opposition and their allies, members of the white community. The opposition was accused of wanting to bring back colonialism through white rule. White people were accused of participating in politics and being elected to office, the

implication being that they should not have been involved in politics at all. This is despite the fact that some of them were elected in districts with predominantly black voters. In the editorial below, White people are being singled out by closely associating them with colonialism. Considering the colonial history of the country, the *Herald's* editorial acted to spark fear of whites and the opposition.

Almost the entire leadership of the MDC either fought against the struggle for freedom or ran away from the war front with none of the leaders having any real liberation credentials, even though most of them were old enough to actively participate in that struggle. They have, however, declared that they are willing to pay the highest sacrifice for “change” in Zimbabwe’s politics. While they have no such courage to fight against white colonial oppression and even abetted it, they have become so brave that they are now prepared to die in the name of democracy, rule of law and freedom of expression among other popular clichés. (*Herald*, September 13, 2008).

In later editorials, oppression is presented as synonymous with white colonialism.

Also there is an implication that independence ended all forms of oppression in the country. The struggle for democracy and all the freedoms associated with it, at least as represented by the opposition, is downplayed in the editorial. A singular view of history is invoked in the above discourse in order to malign a racial group. This appears calculated to deny them the right to participate in the country’s politics on the basis of race, thereby taking away their rights as citizens of the country. This is further exemplified by another editorial from the *Herald* that is presented below:

To this end, we urge Zimbabweans and the progressive world to see MDC-T and its Rhodesian Rottweilers for what they are: blood-sucking neocolonialists who are not concerned about the welfare, let alone fortunes, of the generality of Zimbabweans. (*Herald*, January 3, 2009).

Since Rhodesia is Zimbabwe’s colonial name, referring to people using the term Rhodesian is associated with all the negative experiences and effects of colonialism. In

the context of the above editorial, the association is evidenced by the demonization in the language that dismisses them and takes away their rights as citizens with an equal chance to participate in the political affairs of the country.

Given the above context, it can be observed that racial identities are employed in the *Herald's* editorials as a way of demonizing or scapegoating members of the white community given the political, economic and social problems that were attributed to them. Besides the loss of their farms, they were also targeted as supporting the opposition and attacked in most of the texts from the government controlled newspaper. As Bonilla-Silva (2001) has pointed out, race became “an organizing principle of social relationships that at the micro level, shapes the identity of individual actors and, at the macro level, shapes all spheres of social life” (p. 30). Racial identity in this instance can be connected to the wider discourses of national identity that had been appropriated by the ruling party. This resulted in the racialization of national politics.

In the face of waning support for the ruling party and continued strength of the opposition, the editorials advanced a combination of racialized history and the demonization of white Zimbabweans who continued to be associated with colonialism. It is also important to repeat that prior to the formation of the opposition, racial identities had not been part of the political discourse. In employing race in this manner, one can therefore conclude that the ruling party and government controlled media were engaged in what Flusty (2004) has referred to as “strategic deployment of othering, through the command and commodification of difference, and simultaneous silencing, subordination, suppression, and exclusion of the different” (p. 198).

Free Elections and Minimal or Justified Violence as Part of the Democratic

Landscape

Elections are another textual theme in the struggle for democracy. The *Herald's* editorials on the electoral process and some of the elections that have been held in the country are relevant. Violence has been framed together with the elections because almost every national election in the country has been accompanied by violence. The violence has been intense, especially during elections that have been held since 2000. Most of the editorials in the *Herald* addressing elections also commented on violence. Some of these examples are shown below:

The argument that the election in Zimbabwe won't be free and fair is nonsensical. There is no country where there is no violence. There is much violence in those countries which are lobbying for the suspension of Zimbabwe from the group. Only last year on the eve of Britain's general election, there were running battles between police and some residents in the northern English city of Leeds. Earlier there was unrest in Oldham. Yes, violence cannot be stopped overnight since it's something perpetrated by hooligans from all sections of society. (*Herald*, March 2, 2002).

Reports of violence are underplayed or dismissed on the grounds that there is no country that does not experience violence when it holds elections. Examples from Britain are used as evidence for this argument. Much as the editorial admits to the existence of the violence, it still dismisses violence as insignificant to make the elections any less free or fair. The above thrust of the editorial is consistent with the editorial below:

There is no doubt that some political forces are seeking to cause disorder in the country and engage in acts of violence in the name of democracy. It is simply the Western world in the midst of supporting and sustaining these acts of violence. The only safe campaign that can be successfully carried out is that of the people of Zimbabwe coming together to rebuild their economy by focusing on production. They must ignore the colonial hand and embrace the homegrown efforts to turn around the economy. It is only a dim mind that can possibly believe

that those that oppressed us for 90 years can all of a sudden become our benefactors and champions of our freedom. Given the failure of the violent campaigns in the past, it is likely that the West will tighten its squeeze on the economy. (*Herald*, February 2, 2008).

From the above *Herald* editorial, “some political organizations or entities” that are involved in the struggle for democracy are also associated with violence. This acts to discredit them. Besides discrediting them, the opposition and other groups in civil society are associated with Western influence which is presented as enabling or encouraging the violence. The issue of elections and violence can also be further exemplified by the following *Herald* editorial:

The truth is that, contrary to sensational reports and wishful doom-prophecies, things are not falling apart. The center is compact and holding strongly. No one seriously disagrees about the basic principles. There was a manifest historic injustice to the indigenous people of Zimbabwe. That has to be corrected. (*Herald*, April 21, 2000).

In the above editorial, the *Herald* denies the existence of widespread violence in the country and insists that the country was ‘holding strongly’ despite ‘sensational reports’ that set to show that things were falling apart. The editorial confirms the *Herald*’s support for government and ruling party policies and valorizes indigenous Zimbabweans. This must also be considered as consistent with other editorials that portray those opposed to the government policies as spreading falsehoods. This is also further confirmed in the *Herald* editorial below:

It is true that there have been some disturbances on some farms but these have been few and isolated and were caused by lack of communication and misunderstanding between some war veterans and some farmers. But lines of communication have recently been established to avoid future misunderstandings. (*Herald*, April 26, 2000).

Where the *Herald* acknowledges the existence of violence, it underplays it as too insignificant to warrant wide publicity. In this respect, it acknowledges it in order to dismiss it.

Social Actors and Relationships

Having highlighted some of the texts on elections and violence, it is important to point out the broader context. Most of the violence was perpetrated by supporters of the ruling party and the law enforcement agents cast a blind eye on the victims of the violence. The content of the *Herald* editorials therefore must be considered as consistent with the government's "policy or ideal" of giving equal protection to everyone before the law, but not the practice of law enforcement agents. In assessing the government controlled media's coverage of elections the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (2002) argued that "the public media downplayed and/or largely ignored incidents that showed the government supporters in a bad light. They actively fabricated stories of violence by opposition supporters, as well as muddying or misattributing actual violent incidents" (p. 88).

Members of the opposition are either linked to foreign countries or are presented as serving the interests of individuals and organizations bent on undermining the interests of the Zimbabwean government. Therefore the texts in the *Herald* position them as individuals unworthy of the protection of the police. The texts on violence and elections are therefore consistent with the other texts that undermine the opposition as agents of foreigners. The ultimate goal of the texts appears to be self preservation for the ruling elites. Ruling party actions are excused in one way or another or are presented as isolated incidents.

To summarize, the relationship between the ruling party and the opposition MDC is oppositional, as is the relationship between Zimbabwe and Western countries such as Britain, the United States and other countries in the European Union. It can however be added that the *Herald* blames Western countries for fueling political violence in the country. Zimbabwe is presented as the victim of the actions of foreign countries that are presented as working with the opposition MDC to change the Zimbabwean government. The texts on elections and violence accentuate the differences between the two political parties. The *Herald* texts set the stage for the strained and negative political relations between the ruling party and the opposition.

Media Freedom and Human Rights as Present in Zimbabwe

The process of democratization can also be analyzed through texts about media human rights as they are central to the realization of democracy from both a communicative point of view and also from the perspective of according people rights that are necessary for democratic participation. Some of the examples of the *Herald's* discourse on the role of media and human rights in a democracy can be shown below:

Of all industries in Zimbabwe, the media is one of the most vibrant sectors that have recorded significant growth over the past couple of years. Some of the media houses even thrive on rubbishing the government, its ministers, judges and anyone connected to it day in and day out. Any attempt to make them accountable for some of their vitriol is immediately regarded as a threat to Press freedom. This is another attempt to tie the government hands while the private media takes pot shots at it with half-truths, twisted facts and outright lies in order to discredit the ruling Zanu PF party in the eyes of Zimbabweans and the international community at large. If there were any media curbs in Zimbabwe some of these newspapers would not be in circulation today and some of the local journalists who write fictional stories would be imprisoned. (*Herald*, June 30, 2001).

The media environment is presented as characterized by growth and freedom as evidenced by the ability of the privately owned media to criticize the government and the

ruling party. The editorial, in an almost prescriptive manner about the role of the media, appears to be suggesting that Zimbabwe had a very free media environment that allowed private media to criticize the government and the ruling party. The *Herald* also addressed international commission appointment related to human rights.

The election of Zimbabwe to the influential 15-member Geneva-based Commission on Human Rights is an intrepid demonstration of the international community's confidence in the country and its role in international affairs. The election is recognition of Zimbabwe's respect for human rights and democracy. It has also over-ridden the erroneous impression of a pariah state that has been portrayed by the western media and some governments. The latest British defeat means that alleged human rights abuses in Zimbabwe will not be used as a weapon to tarnish the image of the country. (*Herald*, May 2, 2002).

The thrust of the above editorial provides rebuttal to accusations of human rights abuses that seem to cast the country as a pariah. The editorial then dismisses or underplays the accusation and gives as evidence the country's election to the United Nations' Human Rights Commission as clear evidence that the country is upholding human rights. The editorial content is consistent with most other editorials that are supportive of government actions. The *Herald's* position on human rights is also revealed in the following editorial:

The ban of political rallies by police in response to the skirmishes which broke out in Kambuzuma, Highfield, and Glen View when rowdy MDC supporters turned violent, stoned shops, burnt cars and barricaded roads over the weekend is justified and came just at the right time. The police action is not only justifiable in a democratic society, but is also in accordance with provisions of a law passed by a Parliament comprising members from both the ruling party and the MDC. Ironically, it is the same people in the MDC who campaigned for sanctions to be imposed on the country who are now inciting people to take to the streets to protest against the economic challenges. (*Herald*, February 23, 2007),

In the above editorial the *Herald* is supportive of police actions to stop members of the opposition MDC to exercise their right to assemble as part of the democratic

process of political participation. There is also more evidence of directly linking the opposition to the sanctions that had been imposed against the country based on human rights abuses. In the editorial, the *Herald* argued that the actions of the police that are presented as punishment to the opposition supporters are justifiable.

Some of the negative attacks from the *Herald* editorials are directed against foreign-owned media institutions reporting on the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe. Foreign-owned media are presented as working against the interests of the government. They are also criticized as agents of imperialism. This is illustrated by the following editorial:

Though we have always known that the Western media are embedded with forces inimical to the development path our country has chosen - that of moving beyond mere flag, to full economic independence – we cannot help but feel shocked by the media’s hysteria over Zimbabwe. To the Western agencies, the chequebook violence that rocked Highfield and its environs last week at the instigation of the MDC and its allies, ranks higher than the instability rocking Baghdad, Kabul, Mogadishu, Darfur and many other places that are suffering the West’s depredations supremacy. Flushed Western correspondents – some of whom cannot even identify Zimbabwe on a map – rattle off gory reports that portray the notion of a holocaust in Zimbabwe. (*Herald*, March 23, 2007).

The above editorial can be considered together with the following editorial to help illustrate the *Herald*’s commentary related to human rights:

It has become predictable, before every election or major international summit that the Morgan Tsvangirai-led MDC faction and its coterie of civil society hangers-on go into overdrive alleging violence, intimidation and even murder of their members by Zanu PF supporters or state security agents. And, with the countdown to the EU-Africa Summit and next year’s historic harmonized elections, as if on cue, MDC and its allies are singing the usual song of alleged government repression, intimidation, violence and murder of their members and supporters. What makes us skeptical of the allegations, however, is that we have heard them, and seen the pattern before. Similar allegations were made and always went unsubstantiated, but not before the duplicitous Western media, keen

for any bite that can taint the government, had circulated copious copy using the ruinous allegations. (*Herald*, October 26, 2007).

The actions of the Western media are portrayed as tied together with the opposition political party. The opposition political party is presented as if it is working together with foreign media organizations in order to draw the world's attention to the country in a negative manner. The editorial positions the opposition as making unsubstantiated allegations over and over.

From the above editorials, the discourse on the role of media in general and human rights in the political discourse in Zimbabwe revolved around presenting the opposition, private and Western media organizations as working to undermine the democratic process. The discourse on the role of the media and human rights fits in with what appears to be a grand narrative of the ruling party as the political party defending the country in the face of threats from the opposition and Western colonizers. The challenge to the ruling party's dominance of the country's politics by the opposition is conflated with a threat to the interests of the country. The ruling party substitutes itself as the embodiment or representative of the interests of the country. Positioning the opposition MDC with foreign countries is meant to delegitimize them in the eyes of the general electorate. The *Herald* insists on defending the ruling party by arguing that it was upholding human rights even in the face of evidence such as the government stopping members of the opposition from exercising their rights to assemble or to demonstrate. The *Herald* is supportive of the use of violence by police especially when it is directed to constrain the actions of the opposition political party.

Members of the opposition are considered as not worth the protection of human rights that are expected in a democratic country; they are delegitimized by being associated with foreign countries. The discourse also associates opposition members with violence thereby making them an unlawful organization that uses illegal methods to express themselves. The discourse on media and human rights is connected to the discourse on land, sanctions, colonial history and attacks on foreign countries; the ruling party names foreign interference in the country as justification for the actions the government is taking against its adversaries. The discourse on democratization in the *Herald* revolves around issues that the government could use to regain more support as it projected itself as more nationalistic than the opposition, and to counter the increasing popularity of the opposition.

The frames and issues described are linked to the struggle for democratization, because they were introduced in political discourse as a way for the ruling party to contrast itself with the opposition and position itself as the champion of the nation. This resulted in the opposition incorporating these issues into its own political discourses regarding the democratization process. These issues then became part of the discourse on the struggle for democracy. The *Herald's* approach of echoing discourse from the ruling party allowed the discourse on the struggle for democratization to be fought over on terms that the ruling party wanted, thereby, at times, sidestepping some of the issues that were directly affecting people in their day-to-day lives. For example, when it came to increased economic problems in the country, the *Herald* repeated the ruling party's arguments that all the problems could be resolved with the takeover of commercial farms

and the removal of sanctions that had been imposed on the country because of human rights abuses.

In analyzing the above discourse especially in terms of its implications for power relations, the *Herald* editorials were critical of private and foreign media. The targeting of private and foreign media adds to attempts to position the ruling party as more nationalistic. The discourse delegitimized the opposition political party which in turn established the ruling party as the legitimate political formation. This also appears to be the case with discourse on human rights. The *Herald's* discourse on human rights not only delegitimized other groups opposed to the ruling party, but also denied members of the opposition protection that should be accorded to all individuals within a democratic political dispensation. Discourses on human rights as presented in the *Herald* were geared towards protecting the interests of the ruling party.

The key relations that come to the fore in the *Herald's* editorials on human rights and their relationship to the struggle for democracy include the following. First, the private media are presented as being in an adversarial relationship with the government and the ruling party. The private media are accused of distorting facts. The editorials also pointed out that even as the private media were complaining about the absence of media freedom, their existence was cited as evidence that there was freedom of expression in the country. The discourses describing the private media organizations cast them as working against the interests of the government. In this regard, private media are positioned as opponents of the government while on the other hand; the government is presented as upholding human rights by allowing the same media organizations to criticize the government. In short then, the relations that are represented in the *Herald's*

discourse are that the private media were not being monitored, their constant criticisms were evidence of journalistic freedom, and their criticisms functioned as attempts to undermine the government.

The other relational aspects that are highlighted in the editorials above pertain to Zimbabwe's relationship with the international community. The country's election into the United Nations' Human Rights Commission is cited by the *Herald* as evidence that the country was observing human rights. In the same editorial, the *Herald* dismisses the argument that Zimbabwe had become an international pariah.

The *Herald* also paid attention to Western media in its comment on the media environment and human rights situation in the country. Western media are presented as propagating and instigating lies in the manner they were reporting events in the country especially violence that was directed against members of the opposition by ruling party supporters. In the same editorial, Western media are accused of advancing interests of foreign governments and these interests were described as 'inimical' to Zimbabwe's interests. Western media are presented as part of an agenda to change the government in the country. Western media are described as supporting the opposition MDC as their reporting is characterized as tarnishing the image of the country. Again, this implies an adversarial relationship between Western media and the government of Zimbabwe.

Social Actors and Relationships

Lastly, the above editorials also bring out the relationship between the opposition political party and the ruling party. The editorials show that the relations were adversarial as evidenced by the manner in which both the opposition and its leader are criticized.

Some of these aspects have already been highlighted above but what needs to be added is the justification of the banning of rallies for the opposition on the basis that the opposition was a violent political party. The relations that are therefore brought out by the above editorials are that the opposition was not genuinely interested in advancing the interests of Zimbabweans especially when compared to the ruling party, which is positioned as advancing the interests of the people through the land reform program.

The *Herald* editorials also dismiss claims by the opposition that there was repression in the country and that their supporters were being attacked by ruling party. The dismissal of the opposition political party's claims is further evidence of how the *Herald* supported the government and the ruling party. The manner and the language in which the MDC and its leader are dismissed is further evidence of the unequal and strained relationship between the two major political parties in the country. On one hand, the ruling party was given wide ranging positive coverage in the *Herald* which is a publicly owned media, while on the other, the opposition MDC is frequently dismissed and castigated. This is despite the significant number of parliamentary seats that the opposition had won in 2000 which can be taken as an indication of their widespread support in the country. The representation of the opposition in the manner pointed above shows the unbalanced nature of its relationship with the ruling party.

Political Party Identities as Salient

The increased polarized political environment in the country led to affiliation with any one of the two major political parties trumping other forms of identity. After the attainment of independence, most people in the country identified with the ruling party as it appeared to enjoy a lot of support especially in the first fifteen years of its rule. It was

in the mid 1990s that support for the ruling party began to wane in the face of biting economic problems that coincided with the government's adoption of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) induced economic structural adjustment programs. These were marked by high unemployment precipitated by the closure of many companies and downsizing in government employment. As previously described, the economic environment in the country continued to deteriorate culminating in the formation of a strong opposition political party in 1999. The opposition political party's strength in 2000 was shown by its ability to successfully campaign against the government sponsored draft of the constitution.

It is under these circumstances, that the *Herald* pushed political affiliation to the center of its editorial comments and this was underpinned by its strident support for the ruling party. Most of the editorials in the *Herald* equated support for the ruling party with being more 'patriotic' and for the opposition as being an 'enemy' of the country. As demonstrated in many previous examples of discourse as well, the *Herald* presented a stark contrast between the ruling party and the opposition. Another example is presented below:

Interparty dialogue between the ruling Zanu-PF and opposition MDC will provide the perfect opportunity for the MDC to redeem itself from the stigma of being a puppet political party and become a patriotic opposition that has the interests of the people at heart. Being a new player on the political scene, the MDC misunderstood its newfound power as the country's major opposition party to mean that it should form the government. It also misunderstood its acceptance by governments in America, Europe and other places to mean that it was the government in waiting. The party does not need western superpowers to tell them what to do. The opposition party is now part of this country's governance with its substantial parliamentary representation and control of urban municipalities. The opposition party has the power to call off its Western masters, who are threatening not only Zimbabwe's political and economic stability but also pose a threat to the entire African region. (*Herald*, April 6, 2002).

The opposition was presented as being more interested in getting approval from Western countries whereas the ruling party was presented as being in tune with the wishes and interests of the people in Zimbabwe. The editorial also appears to be suggesting that for the opposition to be part of the country, it must advocate for the same policies as those advanced by the ruling party. The labeling and demonization of the opposition continued. As shown in earlier examples, being a member of the opposition was associated with being in league with Western countries. From the perspective of the *Herald*, members of the opposition political party are dismissed as ‘puppets’ of foreign governments. This provides justification for the use of violence against its members.

It also became justifiable for their members to be denied the protection of the law. In the broader contest for the construction of identities and the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, the discourse, especially from the government controlled *Herald*, newspaper was also central in building an environment where violence against opposition appeared to be condoned as there were no persecutions of the ruling party supporters who were the attackers. The groups that were at the receiving end of these negative treatments were White Zimbabweans, opposition supporters and human rights activists, especially in civil society, and other members of professional groups, such as teachers. All these groups were targeted in the violence that has characterized each election held in the country since the constitutional referendum in 2000. The extent to which political identity affiliation with either the ruling party or the opposition became important in the political discourse in the country is further shown in the example below:

The ruling Zanu PF and opposition MDC do not share common values, with the former which is driven by the quest for sovereignty, integrity and total and economic independence while the latter is obsessed with acceptance by the West

and jobs, among other peripheral issues. The difference between the two parties stem from the very foundation of the liberation struggle, with the ruling party belonging to the pioneers of independence and the opposition being made up of forces that fought against black majority rule. (*Herald*, September 13, 2008).

In the above editorial, the ruling party is associated with sovereignty and economic independence while the opposition was linked with what is dismissively referred to as ‘peripheral issues’ such as jobs, implying that the opposition was not worth of support. The country’s anti-colonial history is incorporated into the discourse that portrays the ruling party as the custodian of the country’s anti-colonial values with the opposition presented as bent on reversing the gains that the country is alleged to have made. This made political affiliation a salient identity as evidenced by the casting off the opposition as an illegitimate political player in the country.

Editorial texts in the *Herald* were also characteristic of the broader political discourse in the country where the ruling party criticized the opposition as being foreign sponsored and bent on advancing the interests of the former colonial government. This had the effect of polarizing the country along the lines of party affiliation. Political identity in the country then became very salient in the country’s political discourse with various influences in the interaction between the two political parties but also in the public’s interaction with each other. This can be further evidenced in the following the *Herald* editorial:

Most of these countries, together with other members of the European Union and the white Commonwealth, had painted a bleak picture of the country in the hope that this would assist the opposition MDC win either the parliamentary elections or presidential poll. Having lost both elections, the Western countries perpetuated their campaign against Zimbabwe and even included travel and other so-called smart sanctions in the hope that this would aid an uprising against the Zanu-PF government, which again failed to materialize. These Western countries were in essence making a political statement meant to create the impression of an

increasingly isolated and volatile Zimbabwe in the hope that this would create international pressure against the ruling Zanu-PF government. (*Herald*, May 22, 2002).

The discourse in the editorial is consistent with other forms of discourse that presented the opposition as a foreign supported entity. Political affiliation with each political party became the basis of defining political discourse in the country. As well, these examples show intersectionality of identities since political party affiliation, nationality and race are all intertwined in the editorial representations.

CHAPTER 5:

THE ZIMBABWE INDEPENDENT

In this chapter, themes of democracy that emerged from analyzing the *Zimbabwe Independent* are presented. The major themes addressed are history and anti colonialism, free media and human rights and lastly rule of law and need for a new constitution. Discussion of group positions and relationships are added for each theme and each theme is presented with the analysis of context. In this chapter, analysis of cultural identities is presented at the end, as the texts of the *Zimbabwe Independent* reveal intersecting positions of political, racial, and national identities and contested positionings.

Democracy Requires Countering Ruling Party's Calls for Anti-Colonialism

The *Zimbabwe Independent* critiqued the ruling party's invoking of history as if conditions were the same as twenty years ago. A *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial points out that:

President Mugabe's claim to be fighting British colonialism, the center-piece of his address on Wednesday, is regarded by most Zimbabweans as a rather pathetic throwback to an earlier era when he enjoyed some popularity. The fact is Mugabe and his cronies are directly responsible for the mess this country is in. They have misused, lost and squandered the country's rich resources and are now looking for somebody to blame. Everybody seems to know this except Mugabe himself who appears to inhabit a fictional country lost in time. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, April 20, 2001).

The view of the country portrayed by Mugabe is no longer relevant. In keeping with its criticism of the president's public statements that tended to attribute most of the problems in Zimbabwe to Western countries, the *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed out that:

Mugabe's plan is two prolonged. Firstly he wants to portray himself as a victim of an imperialist conspiracy to re-colonize the country. This is clearly designed to

weaken the West's moral authority in calling on the government to be accountable for its acts of economic sabotage and human rights violations. The other dimension to Mugabe's strategy is to portray himself as a revolutionary fighting to roll back the frontiers of colonial encroachment on the African continent by appearing to champion the cause of the whole developing world. In this way the world can be divided between the West and the Rest. It could well be asked of course why all of a sudden whites are being portrayed as enemies of African progress when Mugabe himself used to sup with the likes of Tiny Rowland, Tony O'Reilly and Pierre Schori. The reason is simple: The birth of the MDC has shocked him to the core and the fact that it has support among whites has turned it into a convenient object of nationalist abuse. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, February 22, 2002).

In the above editorial, the *Zimbabwe Independent* highlights that the president and the ruling party were using dated anti-colonial rhetoric in order to remain in power. The editorial also highlights the insincerity of attacks on white people as the president himself used to get support from them before he started to blame White Zimbabweans for the political and economic problems in the country. The editorial points out that the nationalistic discourse and attacks on the opposition became too apparent and more visible after the formation of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change.

More evidence of the *Zimbabwe Independent's* criticism of the anti-colonial discourse and evidence of suffering caused by Zanu PF policies is shown below:

Let us remind ourselves, the sanctions currently in place are designed to prevent prominent Zimbabweans with a record of support for a delinquent regime from enjoying the benefits of travel to European and US centers. The only sanctions that hurt ordinary Zimbabweans are those imposed by Zanu PF: the sanctions against the private import and sale of grain; the sanctions against business that cannot operate normally; the sanctions against commercial farmers forbidden to produce food for the nation; and the sanctions imposed on civil society and the opposition which are prevented from exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of expression and association. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, August 29, 2003).

In the above editorial, the *Zimbabwe Independent* contests the claim that the country is experiencing economic problems because of Western sanctions, and it argues

that the problems can be directly attributed to the ruling party and the way it was limiting people to exercise their constitutional rights. The editorial is not only a rebuttal of the government's discourse on the causes of the economic problem in the country, but also repudiates the ruling party's discourse, and by extension, the echoes of the same discourse in the *Herald's* editorials. This is further confirmed in the editorial below where the president's call to have talks with the British prime minister is presented as hollow:

The clear message which came out of the president's plea for talks with Blair is that he does not trust Zimbabweans - the MDC and all its voters as well as other citizens. It is now crystal clear that Mugabe would rather engage former colonial masters, who by the way gave him an honorary knighthood when he was still playing ball, than his own compatriots who have genuine grievances against his failed leadership. It is clear Mugabe's anti-British rhetoric was contrived to generate a false fight between Harare and London while cultivating his persecution complex as a victim of a former colonial power. Mugabe's remarks that he would rather talk to Blair than Zimbabweans exposed his double standards. He will happily talk to "imperialists" when it suits him but it is not acceptable for anybody else to do so! (*Zimbabwe Independent*, August 12, 2005).

An analysis of the above clearly shows that the *Zimbabwe Independent's* editorials are in direct contrast to the *Herald* in terms of who bears responsibility for the country's social and political problems. In this respect, the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial discourse addresses the same issues that were addressed by the *Herald* with the only difference being that its perspective is in sharp contrast to the *Herald*. The *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses address wider discourses of the struggle for democracy by articulating contemporary issues that were affecting the country. Key to the discourse is an attempt to unmask what can be characterized as the ruling party's duplicity in attacking foreigners for supporting the opposition when prior to the formation of the opposition, the ruling party had that same support.

The editorials also place the economic, political and social problems in the country at the doorstep of the ruling party which in contrast was blaming outsiders especially Western countries. The editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* can be considered as putting pressure on the ruling party by highlighting alternative views not covered in the government controlled *Herald*. This ensures that the government perspectives were not going unchallenged and contested the government controlled newspaper's attempt to monopolize the communicative space in the country. The editorial comments contextualize the problems in the country, and place blame for the problems in the country on the ruling party. *The Zimbabwe Independent's* discourse on the struggle for democracy also repudiates the totalizing discourse of nationalism from which Zanu PF appears to claim its mantle. *The Zimbabwe Independent* emphasizes issues of failed leadership and the emptiness of the government's anti-colonial discourse.

The Zimbabwe Independent introduces new issues it considers as fundamental to the struggle for democracy; this is in sharp contrast to the *Herald*. The discourse is linked to the wider issues of what constitute a viable democratic political dispensation and also who is responsible for the problems in the country. *The Zimbabwe Independent* points out the need to have constitutional rights in order to entrench democracy. It blames the country's political and economic problems on the misuse and squandering of resources, as opposed to the sanctions that were regularly cited by the ruling party as the cause of the country's problems. *The Zimbabwe Independent* can be considered to be negotiating the struggle for democratization by highlighting the weaknesses of some of the arguments proffered by the ruling party. In addition to this, it provides attributes that constitute the newspaper's understanding of democracy.

Intergroup Relationships

The above editorials from the *Zimbabwe Independent* construct a number of particular group identities and relationships between groups. There is common reference to the president. The editorials portray the president and the ruling party as positioned against Britain and Western countries. The president is described in negative language with the supporters of the ruling party and those in government leadership characterized as ‘cronies’. The ruling party is accused of hoodwinking the general populace to believe that there was a problem between Zimbabwe and Britain which suggests that relations may be more open or potentially cooperative than represented. The ruling party is accused of creating the impression that there were serious problems in Zimbabwe’s international relationship with Western countries. In making these claims, the *Zimbabwe Independent’s* editorials point out that while the ruling party was blaming Western countries and describing a Western conspiracy; the people knew that the ruling party was responsible for the problems in the country.

In the editorials above, the *Zimbabwe Independent* points out that the ruling party was portraying itself as a revolutionary force against ‘Western imperialists’. In this respect, the editorial discourses bring out how the ruling party wanted the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe to be about Zimbabwe’s relationship with Western countries. The editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* persist in pointing out that the struggle for democracy had nothing to do with foreign countries but were a consequence of internal relations in the country as opposed to external ones. The editorials also highlight the tensions in racial relationships in the country as evidenced by the comments about the ruling party’s double standards regarding the country’s relationship with foreign

countries and Mugabe's relationship with whites. This can be understood in the context of how the ruling party accused the opposition MDC of advancing the interests of foreign countries. The foreign countries are racialized as evidenced in the way the ruling party associate foreigners with White Zimbabweans.

In commenting on these issues, the *Zimbabwe Independent* points out that these were double standards on the part of the ruling party as the president had relationships with White people. Two examples of people with close ties and links to the ruling party such as Tony O'Reilly and Pierre Schori are mentioned. In pointing out these contradictions on the part of the ruling party, the *Zimbabwe Independent* highlights that there were relationships between foreign countries and Zimbabwe across racial lines but these were now being manipulated by the ruling party. In summary, the above editorials critique the representations of the intergroup relations between Zimbabwe and Western countries, and offer historical evidence that the ruling party's anti-white sentiment is recent and convenient to land redistribution policies. In this relationship, the *Zimbabwe Independent* challenges the ruling party's portrayal of Zimbabwe as a victim of Western countries.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* reverses or challenges the discourse on sanctions that the ruling party was attributing to Western countries. The *Zimbabwe Independent* points out that the government and ruling party had actually imposed sanctions against the private sector, businesses, commercial farmers, civil society and the opposition. The *Zimbabwe Independent* positions itself on the side of these other groups that it argues were being negatively affected by the ruling party. In this instance, there are clear lines of

political division and relations emanating from that division. The relationship is characterized as antagonistic.

In these editorials, the *Zimbabwe Independent* puts emphasis on highlighting how the ruling party exaggerated the effects of the sanctions and blamed Western countries for the economic problems in the country. The weekly newspaper also highlights the hypocrisy of the ruling party in criticizing Britain, United States and other foreign countries, when the leader of the ruling party was insisting on having talks with then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair. The newspaper argues that the president did not trust Zimbabweans and could not be trusted by Zimbabweans as he was opting to talk to foreigners whom he had consistently criticized as supporting the opposition. The *Zimbabwe Independent* further argues that the ruling party's anti British rhetoric was contrived as the ruling party was seeking to do the same things it was condemning in the opposition. International relations and relations among the different political groups in the country are therefore given prominence in the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials though contesting the representations of these relationships by the ruling party.

Free Media and Human Rights are Essential to Democracy

The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials also discuss the role of media and internationally sanctioned human rights in the struggle for democracy. Most of the editorials were influenced by events taking place in the country. These events resulted in the newspaper appealing to universal values such as human rights especially as enshrined in organizations such as the United Nations and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Given the polarized political environment in the country, where privately owned media were regularly attacked by the government, an appeal to universal human rights

was a form of defense that the newspaper used. This section, therefore, highlights some of the specific forms of human rights that the *Zimbabwe Independent* referred to in its broader discourse on the democratization process. Below are some of these examples:

Not content with abduction, unlawful detention and contempt of court, Zimbabwe's authorities this week added assault and torture to the list of crimes they will be held to account for. *Standard* editor Mark Chavunduka and journalist Ray Choto were on Tuesday and Wednesday beaten and tortured by agents of the state acting on the direct orders of their political superiors. It is not the patriotic duty of the media to keep a lid on such reports. We long ago realized that patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrels at the helm who are now so unashamedly abusing power in order to retain it. This episode has, however distressing to Chavunduka and Choto's family and friends, been salutary in many ways. First it has shown us the real face of President Mugabe's errant regime – bullying, absolutely contemptuous of the rights of others and beyond the reach of the law. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, January 22, 1999).

The above editorial was written in the context of the arrest of two journalists from the *Zimbabwe Independent*'s sister paper. They were allegedly tortured by the country's secret police for a story that covered an alleged coup attempt by some officers in the army. The *Zimbabwe Independent* then used the opportunity to criticize the government's actions and highlight what they considered to be the role of the media in a democracy. In the editorial, the weekly newspaper connects its discourse on the role of the media to wider political discourse in the country about patriotism. The issue of patriotism had also been used by the government and the ruling party to accuse all opposing groups such as the opposition, civil society and private media of being unpatriotic. In the above editorial, it is evident that the *Zimbabwe Independent* not only defends itself from those attacks, but also outlines what it thinks patriotism means. The government is presented as contemptuous of the rights of others and rule of law, aspects that are considered as central to achieve a more democratic political dispensation in the country.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* is also consistent in highlighting what it considers to be the role of the media in the struggle for democracy as seen in the following editorial:

President Mugabe has now placed himself firmly and irrevocably on the side of those who violate human rights and hold the law in contempt. By castigating the judiciary for doing its duty and for calling on him to do the same - he has precipitated a constitutional crisis to match the economic one his rule has spawned and done more to sabotage the stability of this nation than any imaginary British conspiracy could have done. Nobody in Zimbabwe is safe now. Mugabe has given the military carte blanche to punish anybody who criticizes its role in the Congo. It is a recipe for anarchy. It goes further than that. Mugabe's purpose is clearly to intimidate his critics. By making offensive and frankly defamatory remarks about certain newspaper proprietors and civil rights activists he is targeting them for punishment. And independent newspapers, despite intimidation, will carry on performing their task as a public watchdog. Who else is going to stop the looters? (*Zimbabwe Independent*, February 12, 1999).

The above editorial was prompted by the president's attack on the judiciary that was considered to be even worse than the presumed interference in the country by the British. This attack is presented as severe as the attack on newspapers and civil rights activists that the ruling party had orchestrated as well. In this context, the judiciary, private media and civil rights activists are cast as the defenders of the struggle for democracy in the face of a government that is averse to criticism and bent on either silencing or curtailing the work of these institutions and individuals. The discourse on the democratization process is positioned on the side of specific individuals, those opposed to the government. These individuals and institutions are considered to be the bulwarks that stand for those rights that are being denied by the government and the ruling party.

Over the period of study, there were numerous editorials where the *Zimbabwe Independent* highlighted the role of the media and human rights in the struggle for democracy, a position that is evidenced in the editorials below:

The right of the people to speak out through a free press is the hallmark of a democratic society. It is one of the few public watchdogs we have. By imposing controls and limiting investment from abroad - the only source available - the government is restricting that freedom and arguably abridging the right to freedom of expression guaranteed by the constitution. (*Zimbabwe independent*, September 10, 1999)

The right to receive and impart information is contained in article 19 of the United Nations Declaration of Rights. It is a right that has been denied to Zimbabweans because ZBC has a broadcasting monopoly. This year alone we have witnessed shocking evidence of media manipulation ahead of the constitutional referendum and the June election. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, September 29, 2000).

The crackdown on press freedom in Zimbabwe is a clumsy response to the role independent newspapers have played in exposing villainy of a regime that has impoverished all except its own oligarchs and is now attempting to beat the opposition and civil society into submission. It won't happen. The thirst for freedom is universal. Zimbabweans have voted not only for democracy but also, in the pattern of their purchases, for a press that keeps them informed. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, May 11, 2001)

There are numerous other editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* that seek to highlight the role of media and the importance of other rights in the struggle for democracy in the country. From the above editorials, the media's right to freely publish information, without any restrictions, is considered as fundamental to democracy. This is evidenced in the discourse on the freedoms that are enshrined in the constitution. The insistence on these rights is defended and juxtaposed to the accusations leveled against the government for its crackdown on press freedom. In addition to highlighting the role of media, the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent*, also comment on the only state broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, in the country. The editorials above point out that print and broadcast journalists were partisan and compromised in their ability to fully discharge their role of advancing people's rights to access information, and their ability to contribute meaningfully in the struggle for democracy in

the country extremely constrained. The state broadcaster, the *Zimbabwe Independent* argues, was being used as a channel for propaganda by the ruling party.

The discourse in the *Zimbabwe Independent* counters the discourse from the government and the media affiliated with it such as the *Herald* and the state owned and controlled broadcaster. The thrust of the discourse describes the critical role of media and civil rights in the struggle for democracy. There are also other key institutions that are highlighted as important and these include the judiciary, civil society and the media. Nagengast and Velez-Ibanez's (2004) have argued that human rights go beyond individual rights to group positions:

individual human rights, as important as they are in protecting dissidents and non conformists and in guaranteeing civil and political rights, are insufficient because they cannot address the discrimination, ethnocentrism, or racism suffered by minorities, indigenous people, the poor, the malnourished, or those who have endured the depredations of inappropriate development (p. 8).

In the editorials, group positions and human rights are the focus and are presented as threatened by government attacks on the judiciary, journalists, owners of private media and human rights activists. What also emerges in the discourse is the belief that observation of these rights is central to the realization of democracy in the country. In the discourses cited above, the ruling party is portrayed as cracking down on groups opposed to its rule because of the need to maintain status and influence. The ruling party's actions to constrain alternative media and to remain in control, limits the ability of individuals and institutions to expose the government's weaknesses and to provide counter discourses to the government and its controlled media organizations.

Related to human rights discourses, the government, president, the military and government controlled broadcasting organizations are positioned against ordinary Zimbabweans, private media, journalists, the judiciary and government critics. In these relationships, the government and the military are characterized as abusing their position through abduction and torture of government critics. The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials cite this as evidence of the ruling party's contempt for the rule of law. In addition to the above characterization of the ruling party, the president is also portrayed as a violator of human rights as evidenced by the government's control and restrictions as evidenced by the monopoly the government was exercising by not allowing other private broadcasters to operate in the country. The private media, journalists, government critics, judiciary and the generality of the population comprise opposition to the government and the military. All these groups are presented as suffering at the hands of the ruling party. The editorials highlight how these sectors were being intimidated, castigated and manipulated by the government. In addition to these actions, the editorials point out that the government was also taking away people's rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

The portrayal of the different groups shows unequal power relations between the government, ruling party on the one hand, and groups opposed to the government on the other. Groups that are opposed to the government are portrayed as weak in the face of government repression as exemplified by the description of the torture of two journalists, crackdown on the media, and castigation and intimidation of the judiciary. It can be seen that the institutions that are described as under attack from the government are described

as important in protecting people's freedom and the struggle for democracy. The actions of institutions such as the judiciary, however are being constrained by the ruling party.

The struggle for democracy, as represented in the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials then, is between a government that is suppressing the rights of the majority of Zimbabweans, and institutions that are seeking to protect the rights of the Zimbabweans. The relationships as described by the *Zimbabwe Independent* are characterized by violence and acrimony, showing that the government and the ruling party have more control. The editorials resort to appealing to the government to respect human rights and adhere to the rule of law. The editorials highlight how these appeals, in the face of physical violence, were not enough, as repression and use of violence persisted. In this respect, relations between the government and groups in civil society are characterized by distrust. With regard to the voices that are featured in the editorial discourses, the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials focus on the political actions of individuals in leadership positions in the ruling party and institutions such as the judiciary, media and civil society organizations that are perceived as able to represent the interests of ordinary Zimbabweans. Ordinary Zimbabwean voices are thus implicated in the editorials.

Free Elections and Lack of Violence are Essential to Democracy

Democratic elections are supposed to be, by definition, an expression of the will of the people and a means to enable people to change their governments without resorting to violence. In the case of Zimbabwe, elections, from 2000, have been accompanied by violence. It is because of this close relationship between elections and violence that most of the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* on elections commented on violence as well. The texts addressing these issues condemn the violence that is largely attributed to

the ruling party. Elections are described as compromised because of violence. Because of the violence, elections fail to serve a democratic purpose. This position can be illustrated by the example below:

Democracy and human rights were indeed at the forefront of the struggle for Independence as Moyo points out. But tens of thousands of innocent Zimbabweans were tortured and killed by government forces in the 1980s. Countless others were detained without trial. The same Zanu PF government is now attacking citizens who manage businesses. It has already attacked opposition candidates, farmers, their workers, teachers, nurses and district council officers. It has suspended the law which makes it an offense to commit assault or unlawful detention. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, April 27, 2001).

In the above editorial, the *Zimbabwe Independent* chronicles the history of violence in the country beginning with when the country achieved its independence. In doing so, the editorial links the violence taking place at the turn of the new century as a pattern that had been entrenched in the country's politics. The groups of people attacked by the government are highlighted and are mostly those that have been opposed to the ruling party's policies.

What this tells us is that Zanu PF is not prepared to give up power. But the party's bloody strategy is costing it more voters than a Movement for Democratic Change campaign could ever achieve. By engaging in violence it is succeeding in alienating many people, making itself a most hated party than the much maligned opposition. Voters are likely to vote against this violence. Zanu PF needs to learn a very basic lesson of democracy: violence will not win it votes. Crude propaganda will not wash either. Zanu PF did not bring democracy in this country. It only brought majority rule and still has a long way to go before it can appreciate what democracy is. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, July 20, 2001).

In the above editorial, violence is directly linked to the ruling Zanu PF party's bid to remain in power. Violence is characterized as having the opposite effect of generating supporters for the ruling party. The use of violence is also closely linked with the ruling party's use of propaganda for it to regain lost support. Both these strategies are

characterized as alienating people from full participation in the country's democratic processes. Editorials such as the one above characterize most of the *Zimbabwe Independent* commentary on elections and violence. Below are further examples:

There is mounting evidence that in the face of electoral defeat the ruling Zanu PF party is mounting a campaign of violence, intimidation and lawlessness that is designed to make the country ungovernable by all except itself. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, March 10, 2000)

They (referring to the ruling party) are now resorting to open intimidation to thwart the people's right to a government of their choice. The attempt to prevent farm workers from registering as voters is testimony to this. Violence must never be allowed to have a place in our national politics regardless of who is perpetrating it. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, March 17, 2000).

In the editorials above, the *Zimbabwe Independent* directly criticizes the ruling party for denying groups perceived to be opposed to it from voting. For farm workers, this was mainly because they were perceived to be bitter as most of them had lost their source of livelihood after farms where they worked had been acquired by the government. The new owners, most of whom were members of the ruling party, did not utilize the farms to the same levels as the previous farmers and for that reason did not retain the services of most of the farm workers. This context is important because the farm workers were now being denied the right to vote as they were regarded as supporters of the opposition. The editorial concludes that violence has no place in national politics.

Every time the country held or prepared for elections, the issue of violence and elections was featured often in the *Zimbabwe Independent's* editorials. Some of these examples can be drawn from the 2002 presidential elections and the 2005 parliamentary elections.

But of all measures taken to prevent a free and fair poll, the most egregious is the displacement of people through political violence. Tens of thousands of people – nearly all of them opposition supporters – have been forced out of their homes and away from their constituencies by armed supporters of the ruling party. This is a policy clearly designed to distort electoral outcomes. As we report today National Youth Service trainees have been confiscating identity cards of suspected MDC members at roadblocks and elsewhere to prevent them voting. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, February 2, 2002)

The Zimbabwe Election Support Network listed some gross irregularities: disenfranchisement of voters through a restrictive voter registration exercise; registering (Zanu PF) voters beyond the final closing date; a flawed voters' roll; partisan voter education and lack of independent monitoring; banning of postal ballots; unequal access by candidates to the public media; confiscation of IDs; illegal roadblocks; selective enforcement of the law; and political violence. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, March 15, 2002)

In the above editorials, the focus is on disenfranchisement of voters positioned by the ruling party as opposition supporters being denied opportunities either to register to vote or to cast their votes. On the other hand, those perceived to be supporters of the ruling party were given opportunities to register beyond the registration deadline.

The *Zimbabwe Independent's* discourse on democratization then speaks to the wider political processes that were taking place in the country. The discourse must be connected to interests within the opposition. The struggle for democracy in the discourses is marked by instances where the newspaper exposes the actions of the ruling party that are inconsistent with their descriptions of democracy. Many of the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* offer evidence of how the ruling party was thwarting the democratization process through violence and cheating in elections. The understanding of democracy that is constructed in these editorials is holding of free and fair elections, absence of violence, observance of human rights and respect of institutions such as the judiciary. These aspects are linked to the wider discourses on the rule of law and need for new constitution.

In its editorials on elections and violence, groups are positioned into particular relationships. On the one hand, the government, the ruling Zanu PF party and national youth service are positioned as aligned. In addition to some of the issues that have already been highlighted, the ruling party and government were accused of being bullies through torture, detaining supporters of the opposition MDC without trial, intimidation and violence against the opposition.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* also pointed out that because the ruling party was engaged in restrictive voter registration, partisan voter education, unequal access to public media and selective enforcement of the law, they were positioned against opposition supporters, citizens, workers, teachers, nurses, voters and farm workers. The editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* indicate that the struggle for democracy was fought among groups that were unevenly balanced with the ruling party using the advantage of political incumbency and control of law enforcement agencies together with the military to thwart attempts by groups advocating for the democratization of the country's politics.

The editorials also reveal that the struggle for democracy was characterized by unequal power relations among the different groups, individuals and organizations involved. The discourses show that the government and the ruling party had more resources and influence as compared to groups in civil society. This meant that the ruling party and government were in a commanding position to influence the political direction of the country. It is also for this reason that most of the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* are direct commentaries on the action or policies of the government and the ruling party. In short, it can be argued that the dominance of the ruling party in the

editorial discourses emanated from it being the government in control of institutions and entities such as the police, legal system, and political policies. As such this was bound to be the focus of attention for the media. The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials became appeals to the ruling party to stop actions that the newspaper considered to be human rights violations. This also reveals the unbalanced nature of the relations between the government, ruling party and its supporters on the one hand, and the opposition supporters, voters in general and civil society organizations, on the other.

Rule of Law and New Constitution as Fundamental to Democratization

The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials are also characterized by reference to the need for observance of rule of law and a new constitution. The appearance of these discourses must be considered within the political environment in Zimbabwe that was precipitated by events such as the rejection of the government sponsored constitution which in turn led to political violence and the take-over of white owned commercial farmers by the ruling party. These events started unfolding in late 1999 and precipitated many of the social, political and economic problems that the country still faces.

The whole purpose of a democratic constitution, in addition to addressing national needs, is to protect citizens from the populist impulses of a demagogic leadership bent on purchasing popularity. The problem here is that our constitutional reform process was not driven by people with any clear idea of what a democratic constitution looked like. It was designed to preserve in power a regime which has proved itself markedly hostile to democratic rights and to make necessary adjustments that would provide an impression of reform while denying its substance. The absence of free debate in the dominant state-owned media, indeed the manipulation of opinion by the rump commission and embargo on contrary views, makes a mockery of democratic decision making. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, January 7, 2000).

The only rights people have today are those the government chooses to accord them. This is the antithesis of a law based society and demonstrates clearly enough why the public was right to be skeptical of assurances from government

spokesmen that the proposed constitution would provide protection from arbitrary rule. Zimbabwe has been held up to international scrutiny as a society where a frustrated president with a long record of misrule exacts his revenge upon law-abiding citizens by first demonizing them on the basis of race, then inciting his followers to occupy their property, and jeopardizing their livelihoods even though they keep the country fed. Those who purchased their farms under his government after 1980 have been subjected to the same treatment as those who inherited theirs. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, March 3, 2000).

The need for a new constitution is the main focus of the above editorials. This is presented as important in addressing the problems in the country. The role of the constitution in protecting citizens from the whims of any government is highlighted. The first editorial also criticizes the constitution making process for not involving the people. In the second editorial, the newspaper criticizes the denial of rights to people as the government was operating in a paternalistic manner by deciding what rights the people could have.

Having summarized some of the key issues addressed in the editorial above, it is important to analyze them further by showing the extent to which they are connected to the wider discourses in the country and the democratization process. The concentration on the rule of law and the need for a new constitution must be connected to the position of the newspaper especially in championing the interests of private business who in most cases were affected by the government's disregard for the law. One of these was the government's forcible takeover of commercial farms. It is within this context that government actions were taken as posing a threat to other businesses as there was no way of knowing what types of business were going to be targeted next. Much as the call for the rule of law is made in the name of the people, it can also be pointed out that the struggle for democracy became a means of defending interests of specific groups who had been targets of ruling party actions. The discourse fits in with the newspaper's calls

for strong institutions such as the judiciary and the media, institutions that are considered important in defending marginalized members of society.

The implications of the *Zimbabwe Independent's* discourse on democratization is that the struggle for democracy became an arena for different groups vying for political influence to argue for specific issues that were consistent with the interests of groups that they represented. The ruling party is presented as an historical relic standing against groups that were on the side of democracy. In challenging the ruling party and criticizing it, the newspaper also implicitly and explicitly advances interests of the opposition and groups aligned to it.

The democratic process in Zimbabwe is under siege. So is the rule of law. "Friendly" countries which extend Zanu PF's shelf life condoning its career of corruption and misrule are obstructing and distorting efforts by Zimbabwe's civil society to resolve the national crisis of governance. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, April 7, 2000)

The ruling party's biggest contribution to this country was its role in securing us political Independence. Its track record since Independence is dismal. It has presided over the virtual collapse of the economy, suffocating poverty, endemic corruption and the flagrant abuse of human rights. The Movement for Democratic Change represents the future. It stands for democracy, human decency, and a better future. It stands for a pragmatic land reform program that seeks to protect the agricultural sector's contribution to the economy and attend to rural poverty alleviation. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, June 23, 2000).

The choice this weekend couldn't be more simple: between the fist on the one hand and the outstretched palm on the other. Between violence and peace. This is a choice between two diametrically opposed systems. Between a blind and malignant nationalism rooted in the past, and a future full of promise based on democracy and respect for human rights. Nobody will be free again if Mugabe wins. It cannot be seriously suggested that having breached the constitution to withhold justice and free speech he will have a change of heart after the election and restore our rights. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, June 8, 2002).

The editorials above were published just before the 2000 and 2002 elections two of the most divisive in the history of the country, and from which the country is still

reeling today. Issues of democracy are described as under siege from the ruling party. Foreign countries friendly to the ruling party are alleged to be interfering in the affairs of the country. Civil society organizations are positioned as working toward the establishment of democracy and working to address the national crisis.

The three editorials speak to the wider divisions in the country where the opposition is presented as ushering in a new era of democracy as opposed to the ruling party that is largely portrayed as interested in self preservation and as undemocratic. The struggle for democracy is presented as a choice between the ruling party, portrayed as undemocratic and retrogressive, and an opposition that is bringing hope and peace to the country. The opposition, together with civil society groups stands on the side of democracy as opposed to the ruling party that is more interested in remaining dominant. The contrast is then presented in binary terms as the editorial discourse clearly identifies with the groups that are opposed to the ruling party. The president of the country, the leader of the ruling party, is described as defying the country's constitution, making him an unsuitable individual for restoring the rights of the majority of the people.

The discourses on the struggle for democracy must therefore be seen through the lenses of the differences of the two main political parties in terms of what they stand for and the interests they sought to preserve and protect. This political context becomes very important in understanding the implications of such a discourse to the wider understanding of democracy in Zimbabwe. One of the major consequences of this approach is that the discourse got enmeshed in the partisanship between the two parties. In many instances, the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourse on the democratization process in the country also resembles that of the opposition. As a result of this, its position end up

being drowned in the partisan differences that characterized the political environment in the country.

The above editorials focusing on the rule of law and the new constitution construct the incumbent Zanu PF government and the opposition MDC as extreme adversaries. The Zanu PF government is characterized as hostile to democratic rights. The ruling party is characterized as corrupt and violent. The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials further claim that the ruling party's main contribution to the country was to officially end colonialism twenty years prior. In contrast to the government and the ruling party, are representations of the general public or in some instances 'people' as described in the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials. Positioned together with the general public were the opposition MDC and its supporters. The MDC is described as standing for the future, democracy, peace and human decency. In addition to these positive attributes, the MDC is also characterized as being pragmatic about land reform when compared to the ruling party.

It can therefore be pointed out the editorials bring out the strained relations between groups. Accusations about the government and ruling party are frequent in the editorials. The opposition and its supporters are sometimes included and positioned as victims of the actions of the ruling party and government. This shows that in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, the opposition and civil society groups did not have much leverage other than the support and coverage they received from private media organizations such as the *Zimbabwe Independent*. In this respect, the MDC receives positive coverage from the private newspaper. The ruling party on the other hand is portrayed as being in a more dominant position in as far as it controls most of the means

of communication such as newspapers, radio and television. This enabled it to use these channels of communication which were distributed much more widely and were more accessible. The control of these channels of communication was enhanced by the ruling party's control of other arms of government such as the police and the army to perpetrate violence against opposition supporters and other groups. The uneven control of media institutions, police, army and other government agencies meant that there were unbalanced power relations between the ruling party and groups opposed to it such as the opposition MDC, commercial farmers, private media journalists and other civil society groups.

Representations of Cultural Identities

The *Zimbabwe Independent* was not immune to the prevailing political environment. Whereas the government controlled *Herald* addressed issues of national, racial and political identity through the need to counter a colonial history, the discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* were presented as a rebuttal to the *Herald*'s narrative of history. The discourse in *Zimbabwe Independent* also presented an alternative understanding of racial identities in the country. The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials speak to the same issues that are covered in the *Herald*, but with a different reading of the country's history and the cause of the economic, social problems. Some of the examples cited below clearly show this perspective:

His sinister promise to show whites the way to leave the country will not be lost on international opinion – especially at a time when he (Mugabe) is refusing to allow the country to show him a way to leave! Heads of state who attack minorities because they wish to divert attention from their own misdeeds soon find themselves isolated. In his desperate attempt to cling to power Mugabe has successfully sabotaged the necessary conditions under which a free and fair

election could be held. An atmosphere of terror and intimidation will take its toll on voters. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, May 5, 2000).

The above editorial addresses the president's attack on the country's white community. The white minority in the country became the target of the ruling party as they were accused of supporting the opposition. In an apparent retributive manner, the ruling party blamed the white community for creating the political environment in which the ruling party found itself being challenged by a strong opposition. The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial argued that the ruling party was racializing politics in the country in order to justify its policies. Unlike the *Herald*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial accuses the president for being responsible for problems in the country instead of the racial minority that it was targeting. The editorial points out that it was not befitting for a head of state to attack minorities in order to advance his party's political interests.

Several editorials point out how the racialized political discourse was meant to serve the interests of the ruling party by blaming the white minority in the country for a historical land problem that had remained unresolved during the first two decades of independence. The editorial discourse addresses the issue of power differences. The attack on the white community then became a diversion from the inadequacies of the ruling party.

President Mugabe's racist remarks are seen as inciting war veterans to take the law into their own hands leaving Minister of Home Affairs John Nkomo helpless on the sidelines. David Coltart said on Wednesday that it was inconsistent and wrong for the international community to treat Mugabe any differently from Slobodan Milosevic. Mugabe is using racism and violence to hang on to power, Coltart observed, in what seems to have become a national conclusion. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, November 3, 2000).

In a political environment where supporters of the ruling party were committing acts of violence against white commercial farmers, the *Zimbabwe Independent* was direct in its condemnation of the president. It pointed out that it was racist on the part of the government to target white commercial farmers. A member of the opposition, Coltart, is quoted in the editorial arguing that the president was using violence in order to remain in power. Nkomo, a cabinet member is positioned as helpless and Mugabe is linked with Milosevic, notorious ruler accused of genocide in the former Yugoslavia.

The only right whites have in his eyes is the right to support his party. When they attempted to exercise this right to support a party of their choice in February and June they were attacked by government supporters and had their properties confiscated. They continue to be the object of systematic abuse in the public pronouncements of Zanu PF leaders and the state owned media. This vicious campaign is part of a wider attempt to characterize all opposition to Mugabe's rule as western-inspired. Local whites are conveniently targeted as agents of imperialism. A spirited attempt to cloak his land seizures in nationalist regalia has failed to turn the tide of unpopularity that is now engulfing his party. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, November 10, 2000).

The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial highlights the reason why members of the white community in Zimbabwe were being attacked by ruling party supporters at that particular historical juncture, because they had chosen to participate in the country's politics by supporting the opposition. The editorial also points out that the land acquisition that the government had embarked on had been couched in nationalistic discourse in order to mask the ruling party's culpability in failing to solve the problems that the country was facing.

The issue of how cultural identity issues were raised in Zimbabwe must be broadly connected to the context and ruling party's quest to remain dominant. It is for this reason that national and racial identity were always intertwined. Issues of belonging and

who constitutes the post colonial state in Africa from both a national and racial point of view become salient. It is important to note that members of the white community who became the target of the ruling party were either third or fourth generation Zimbabweans, with citizenship rights just like any other Zimbabwean.

In the context of the historical legacy of colonialism and some of the economic and social imbalances that characterize post colonial Zimbabwe, racial identity surfaced in editorials and political discourse at points when the interests of the ruling elites were threatened. The ruling party took advantage of colonial history as a way of dividing and also scapegoating a racial group. The racializing of the white community in Zimbabwe in the face of the political and economic problems the country was facing can also be explained as capitalizing on latent racial fissures in the country, where, after independence, there were no clear attempts to bridge racial differences that had characterized racial relations in the country.

Apart from the bigotry of a leader who declares a whole community to be second class citizens on the basis of race and poisons the minds of children with such wicked notions, President Mugabe should be taken up on his call for younger citizens to be taught a correct view of history. That view should include an account of liberation movements that failed through arrogant misrule to deliver the fruits of freedom to their people. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, May 2, 2002).

The *Zimbabwe Independent* continued in its characterization of the government's attacks on the white community in the country as bigotry because it divided people on the basis of race. Discourse on race is addressed in the editorial as an attempt to challenge the ruling party's view of history and teaching poisoned views to children of Zimbabwe.

When the country achieved its independence in 1980, the ruling party espoused a policy of reconciliation that was highly credited for creating a stable political

environment. Once its position was secure, it became possible for the ruling party to later reverse that policy on reconciliation with white commercial farmers. As evidenced in the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial below, however, opposition to the ruling party was a more salient ascribed identity than race.

President Mugabe's government, which is hide-bound in a defensive mode, regards any form of criticism as a neo-colonial plot to undermine the authority of the incumbent. White judges were labeled denizens of the Rhodesian era while black judges who have stood firm in the face of political pressure are treated as instruments of destabilization and puppets of the West. (*Zimbabwe Independent*, July 23, 2004).

White judges were targeted resulting in many of them leaving or being forced to resign.

The attacks on the judges were mostly a result of their judgments related to the land issue. The ruling party accused the judges, the majority of whom were white, of handing judgments that were sympathetic to white commercial farmers. Therefore discourse on race is discursively employed by the *Zimbabwe Independent* to show how the ruling party maligned and targeted a racial minority.

CHAPTER 6:

CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil Society Staff Interview Discourse on Democracy in Zimbabwe

Civil society groups have been central to the political, social and economic changes that have faced Zimbabwe especially since the turn of the new millennium. It has to be pointed out however, that while media are part of civil society, in the case of Zimbabwe, civil society organizations worked in tandem with or in opposition to various newspapers, television and radio broadcasters depending on their political orientation. In the context of this research, interviews were carried out with a wide range of civil society groups in Zimbabwe. Most of the groups were involved in such social issues as media and human rights advocacy, civic education, election monitoring, constitutional reform, peace building and documentation of human rights abuse in the country.

This chapter first presents background information about the civil society organizations specifically focusing on their organizational missions. This is followed by the presentation of the organizations' conceptualization of democracy. The themes of democracy that emerge specifically focus on human rights. Given the broad range of civil society organizations included in this study, various representatives emphasized different aspects of these human rights. Positioning and relationships between groups are presented together with the themes of democracy. Cultural identities are presented separately at the end of the chapter.

The organizations whose representatives provided interview texts included: Media Institute of Southern Africa, Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Election

Support Network, Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe, Center for Peace Initiatives in Africa, Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe, African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings, Zimbabwe Liberators' Platform, Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, National Constitutional Assembly, Radio Dialogue, Sokwanele, Research and Advocacy Unity, Zimbabwe National Students Union, Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, Bulawayo Agenda and Solidarity Peace Trust of Zimbabwe. The civil society organizations that are included in this research were formed in response to the political environment both in Zimbabwe and within the southern African region as well.

The Media Institute in Southern Africa (MISA), was formed in 1992 in the euphoria that accompanied the end of the Cold War. The period was characterized by hopes and the promise of political liberalization in most countries that had been largely influenced by the East-West divide that characterized this period. The media were considered as one of the key institutions to facilitate the transition from the closed political environment of the Cold War era. MISA's mission is to "promote media freedom and enhance independent and ethical journalism for the benefit of society, improve the skills base among media workers and to allow for more effective use of the media by all its citizens" (<http://www.kubatana.net> downloaded 01/29/12). In addition to this, the role of MISA is "to create an environment in which there is dedicated professionalism which promotes openness, independence and pluralism" (<http://www.kubatana.net> downloaded 01/29/12). Central to the objectives and mission of the organization is the idea that the media are important in creating a "pluralistic" society by promoting freedom of expression and media freedom.

Related to the work of the Media Institute of Southern Africa is the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ). The MMPZ was formed in 1999. The mission of the organization is to “monitor the media in Zimbabwe to determine how far they conform to international and constitutionally guaranteed standards of freedom of expression and freedom of information, as well as to generally accepted professional and ethical standards of journalism” (<http://www.kubatana.net> downloaded 01/29/12). Central to the mission of MMPZ are human rights related to freedom of expression and freedom of information. The political context under which the organization was formed was characterized by more partisan coverage of events in the country favoring of ruling party voices and supporters. The monitoring of media was established as a means of encouraging accountability by the various media institutions in the country.

Radio Dialogue is another civil society organization working on issues related to the media. The mission of Radio Dialogue is “to provide an information sharing platform through creating a space where citizens are able to freely express themselves; lobbying and advocating for greater freedom of expression and initiating and implementing programs that promote development (both social and human) and cultural issues” (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/29/12). Radio Dialogue’s mission shares similarities with other media related civil society organizations described above in that a lot of premium is placed on the role of information and freedom of expression as empowering to citizens.

Sokwanele is another civil society organization that also focused on media related issues as its activities involves documenting incidences of human rights abuses and posting them on the internet. The organization seeks to bring attention to human rights

abuses in the country by publicizing them around the world through the internet. The organization's mission is "to embrace supporters of all pro-democratic political parties, civic organizations and institutions and have peaceful transition to a democratic society through non violence" (Sokwanele Representative).

In addition to civil society organizations whose missions are more focused on the media, interviews were conducted with representatives from organizations focusing on human rights, elections, development and the political changes that were taking place in the country. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Non Governmental Organization Forum was formed in 1998 and its mission is "to provide legal and psychosocial assistance to the victims of organized violence" (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded 01/29/12). The organization was formed under a political environment characterized by political violence and general economic hardships. Its mission was geared towards mitigating problems that came as a result of violence. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition, just as the name itself suggests, was established 2001. This was after the 2000 elections that were characterized by widespread political violence and loss of life. Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition's mission is to "enhance civil society's capacity to deal with the socio-economic and political crises through encouraging well coordinated strategic planning and action and to promote freedom and democratic values through encouraging dialogue, tolerance and the shaping of ideas by Zimbabweans from all walks of life" (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/29/12).

Another organization addressing problems of human rights abuses is the Solidarity Peace Trust. It was established in 2003 and was largely influenced by the violence that characterized the constitutional referendum in 2000 and the 2000 and 2002

elections. The mission of Solidarity Peace Trust is “to build solidarity in the pursuit of justice, peace and social equality and equity in Zimbabwe, assist victims of human rights abuses in their efforts to correct and end their situation of oppression”

(<http://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org>, downloaded on 01/30/12). The work of the Solidarity Peace Trust is related to that of the Research and Advocacy Unit that was established in 2006 “to contribute to the right of all victims of organized violence and torture (OVT) to treatment, rehabilitation and redress officially recognized and implemented in practice by the state health and legal services in Zimbabwe”

<http://www.researchandadvocacyunit.org> downloaded on 01/ 30/12. The political, social and economic environment in Zimbabwe especially with regards to political violence and other human rights abuses that occurred during the time of this research can be considered as having been central to the formation of most of these civil society organizations especially those focusing on human rights and the victims of political violence.

Other organizations that are the focus of this research that are also involved in issues related to human rights are National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) and the Zimbabwe Election Support Network (ZESN). The NCA was formed in 1997 to advocate for the drafting of a new constitution. As a result of pressure from the NCA and other organizations in civil society, the government agreed to change the country’s constitution. After a new constitution was drafted in 1999, the NCA was also at the forefront of opposing that draft constitution arguing that ordinary Zimbabweans had not fully participated in its drafting and as such the final document was not different from the existing constitution that it was seeking to replace. The NCA campaigned for the

rejection of the draft constitution and it was rejected in the referendum held in 2000. The NCA mission is “to campaign for constitutional reform in Zimbabwe following a people-driven process” (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/29/12).

ZESN, whose focus is on monitoring the conduct of elections was formed in 2000 and its mission is to “promote democratic elections in Zimbabwe” <http://www.zesn.org.zw> downloaded on 01/30/12. As with the other organizations that had been presented above, ZESN’s formation can also be attributed to the violence that characterized the 2000 elections. Not only were the elections characterized by violence but the results of the elections were disputed by the opposition who went on to challenge them in the courts. ZESN was therefore formed as an attempt to create an open political environment that would produce credible election results.

The Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform (ZLP) was formed in 2000 mainly by veterans of the war that ended colonial rule. The organization was a splinter organization from the main organization, the Zimbabwe National Liberation War Veteran Association (ZNLWVA) which was affiliated to the ruling Zanu PF party. The ZNLWVA was implicated in the takeover of white commercial farms and the violence that characterized the elections in 2000. The ZLP was formed as an attempt to dissociate war veterans that were opposed to the violence against commercial farmers from the ZNLWVA, and to show there were war veterans who were supporters of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change. Its mission is “to help both the nation and the war veterans and the nation refocus on the original ideals of the liberation struggle which were freedom, democracy, social justice, respect for human dignity and peace and in the process hopefully redeem the honor of the war veterans” (Zimbabwe Liberators’ Platform

Representative). Issues of democracy and human rights are central to the mission of the organization.

There were also other organizations in this research whose mission and focus were on development and human rights. These organizations include the Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe and Bulawayo Agenda. The mission for Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe formed in 2004 is “to promote democratic citizen participation in governance and strengthen the capacity of communities to cope with human rights and development challenges through holding civic forums, leadership engagement, research, outreach and mobilization for social change” (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/29/12). On the other hand, Bulawayo Agenda, which is based in the country’s second biggest city, has its mission focused on “providing a platform for different views of people through public meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences” (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/30/12). Freedom of information and the need to have a platform to express one’s views also emerge as important in the organization’s mission statement.

Interviews were also carried out with representatives from Center for Peace Initiatives in Africa, Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe National Students’ Union, African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings and Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe. The Center for Peace Initiatives in Africa was formed in 2001. Its mission is “to contribute towards the attainment of sustainable peace, stability, and security in Africa through conflict prevention, resolution and management” (Center for Peace Initiatives Representative). Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe started operating in 2005. It was formed after the government embarked on a clean-up operation in all the

country's urban areas that resulted in many people becoming homeless as the government destroyed homes that were described as illegal settlements. A representative from Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe explained that:

We gathered together and as churches, we started taking care of these victims and we realized that we were doing it at a provincial level and we needed to have a concerted effort and a national vision on how to deal with such issues but from a faith based perspective so we formed the national organization called Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe. So this was formed out of different groups from all over the country who were doing something about the plight of the weak, the voiceless, and the vulnerable in the country so that we could come together. (Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe Representative).

Zimbabwe National Students Union was established in 1989 “to create a platform for students in the fight for good governance, human rights and empowerment of underprivileged youths” (<http://www.kubatana.net>, downloaded on 01/30/12). Last, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe was formed in 1972. It is involved in “fighting against political, social, cultural and economic injustices faced by society with special emphasis on the poor, down trodden and vulnerable” (Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace). An interview was carried out with the African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings. It was formed in 1972 with the goal “to make Catholics aware of the social teachings of the church. By social teaching we mean the church's tradition in interpreting the gospel values and applying them to the social realm. The social realm is not just social in the narrow sense of the term, it includes, politics, economics, culture” (African Forum for Catholic Social Teachings Representative).

The analysis of civil society representatives' interview texts was aimed at capturing the broadest range of discourses that have characterized the political, social and economic changes in the country. Notably, most of the civil society organizations, whose

discourse was part of this analysis, were formed from around 1998 to 2003, a period where there was heightened political engagement in the country. The different organizations included in this research ranged from human rights organizations advocating for different aspects of civil, political and economic rights, to community and peace building organizations that addressed some of the negative consequences of the political violence.

Conceptualizations of Democracy

Most civil society groups' materials and missions described democracy as political and civil rights. Human rights, media rights to publish news, freedom of information and communication were considered as foundational to democracy. Most organizations argued these rights and freedoms were being constrained.

Well, democracy to us really is respect for human dignity and their liberties. Democracy for us as a media organization is respect for citizens' rights to express themselves, seek, debate and disseminate information, through a wide choice of media, and from which there is debate, they can make informed decisions about the manner in which they want, their lives to be managed, to be governed and as well as participate in the governance of their country. So this is democracy for us; full enjoyment of our right to freedom of speech, expression, and access to information. In addition to other civil liberties, that some of our partners are advocating, this is how we define democracy. (Media Institute of Southern Africa Representative).

The key issues emanating from the above interview included human rights that are considered as a cornerstone of democracy. The interview discourse must be considered within the wider political environment where these rights were described as under threat from the government. A defense of and advocacy for these rights was characterized as fundamental to establishing democracy in the country. Access to information especially from a plurality of media organizations was considered important.

The struggle for democracy was described as being waged through advocacy. In responding to accusations, that the opposition and civil society organizations were furthering the interests of ‘imperialists’ an interviewee advocating for media rights pointed out that:

Of course we have had problems with those in power, some of them have claimed that we are seeking our mandate and defining all these concepts from the lens of western neo imperialists. But our argument has always been, the right to speak in Zimbabwe cannot be said to be a lesser right as compared to the right to speak anywhere else in the world. The pain you endure in Zimbabwe cannot be different from the pain you endure from any part of the world, if you were to be subjected to the same kind of pain anywhere in the world. There is an attempt to redefine democracy from an African perspective, but the truth of the matter is, these are universal ethos and values that cannot be repackaged. I think it means a lot for a number of Zimbabweans. I think for people in the know, people who are aware of their civil liberties, democracy means freedom of association, freedom of speech, freedom to move, and freedom to join any political party or grouping of my choice, freedom to even criticize my leaders. Those that are well versed with what their civic liberty is, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights know what they are. (Media Institute of Southern Africa Representative).

The speaker referenced the context in which organizations opposed to the ruling party were branded as agents of imperialists. This situates the discourse about the struggle for democracy within the broader context of the country’s history. The majority of those interviewed described being on the receiving end of these attacks. Most civil society organizations that were providing counter discourse to the ruling party had to be defensive in the face of discourse that accused them of being puppets of mainly Western governments especially the United States and Britain. With the struggle for democracy infused with discourse about ‘imperialists’ and rebuttals of that, then the overall thrust of the different discourses from both the private newspapers and civil society organizations became a struggle for positioning and influence.

The issue of freedom of expression as a human right was also evident in the discourses from other civil society interviews as exemplified below:

Well, what does democracy mean? It means, in our context freedom of choice, it means elected representatives, it means accountability of those elected representatives, it means freedom to criticize their failures, it means a government that governs for the people and provides the basic essential needs, provides for the basic essential needs for the people. But most of all as far as we are concerned, most of all it means freedom of expression, which of course is not here. (Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe Representative)

The understanding of democracy in the interview text above shared some similarities with the one from the Media Institute of Southern Africa, but included additional aspects such as accountability of public officials and the need for people to have access to basic needs. Again, however, the thrust of the discourse was based on an understanding that these democratic aspirations were not present in the country. The texts fit within the broader political context of the contestation for political power where the democratization discourse became accusations and counter accusations that tended to reify political differences. This had implications for power relations in the country; on the one hand, the ruling party incorporated claims that ensured its continuing influence. On the other hand, the opposition projected itself as the antithesis of the ruling party. The opposition became a foil of the ruling party. Along the way, democracy became a means to gain political power. Groups on both opposing sides invoked discourses of democracy but in different forms. While the *Herald's* editorial texts emphasized anti imperialist views as democratic, the *Zimbabwe Independent's* editorial texts and representatives of civil society organizations called for freedoms and human rights.

Representatives from other civil society groups in Zimbabwe also offered varied versions of what constituted democracy. Most of these understandings like the previous

views above, can be considered aspirations for an ideal form of democracy, as they do not exist in the country. The struggle for democracy then becomes an attempt to reduce the gap between the ideal and the reality of the Zimbabwean political environment.

Examples of these views of fundamental liberties and rights are exemplified below:

“...the layman definition of democracy is government of the people by the people. It must be participatory; it must be generated by the communities that want that kind of government to prevail. It should be premised on the rule of law and the respect for fundamental liberties. We should not have a situation in which the authorities, or the government, or the executive or any arm of government, have superior powers than the powers that are endowed in the Bill of Rights, the rights that citizens have. The governed must have more power than the governors and not vice versa. (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Representative)

Another organization involved in election monitoring and voter education, the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, emphasized the notion of citizen participation in free elections as important to the realization of democracy. Participation and elections were taken as hallmarks of a democratic country. In the context of Zimbabwe, these aspects were considered as missing and hence the need for the organization to be involved in civic education and advocacy work. This is also captured in the interview below:

For us it means the creation of an environment where citizens can participate freely, where elections are held in an environment which is very conducive, where political parties feel that they are at par, they are at the same level; that's what we call democracy as an organization. (Zimbabwe Election Support Network Representative)

Social Actors and Relationships

The definitions of democracy that were offered by the representatives of civil society organizations represent a particular and significant way of representing social actors, relationships and context in Zimbabwe. The quotations above indicate that most civil society groups' views on democracy are consistent with Western notions of liberal

democracy that emphasize individual rights, such as the right to vote and freedom for people to elect leaders of their choice. The discourse on democracy in the interviews was characterized by an emphasis on human rights, drawing from some of the existing United Nations provisions such as the Universal Declaration of Rights. In representing the struggle for democracy as a universal aspiration, representatives from civil society organizations constructed the political struggles in Zimbabwe as similar to, not different from, any other struggle anywhere in the world. In this respect, the struggle for democracy was universalized; interviewees argued that democratization could not be circumscribed by specific circumstances or historical experiences in the country.

As a consequence of viewing the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe as universal, most of the texts cited above made reference to standards sanctioned by multilateral bodies such as the United Nations, the African Union and the regional, Southern African Development Community. They argued that Zimbabwe must adhere to the standards that have already been established by these bodies. The struggle for democracy, then is connected to the standards and principles established by international and regional bodies. These international bodies were then referred to as establishing standards upon which the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe could be measured. For the country to be regarded or considered as democratic, it must adhere to universal principles of democracy. In this instance, there was a strong belief that adopting notions of democracy that focus on individual rights, free and fair elections and the participation of the people in the country's political, social and economic affairs would result in the realization of democracy.

While there are no specific social actors that were directly mentioned in the above interview discourse, there are indirect references to the government, leaders, political parties, international organizations and, or references to ‘those in power’. It can be inferred from these interviews that those in political office were represented as being responsible for the problems in the country. In this respect, the government and leaders of the political parties were represented negatively, while on the other hand, the general populace was referred to as citizens or the “people”.

The understanding of democracy that is emphasized in the civil society interview discourses referred to above defines it in the name of the ‘people’, ‘Zimbabweans’ who are also referred to as citizens. These people were characterized as knowing and being aware of their rights. In this respect, the various interests that these civil society organizations might have were not directly expressed, but were voiced through discourses that emphasize that they were only expressing the interests of the people, or the majority of Zimbabweans, and citizens. In this instance, therefore, the people were presented as lacking systems of representation that could act to advocate for their needs; civil society organizations were created to voice the interests and positions of the ‘people’ who know their rights. In this respect, the civil society representatives appear to be speaking as and advocating for ordinary people who otherwise are not represented by the government or ruling Zanu PF party.

The elements that were featured prominently in representations of Zimbabwean people and conditions of living, are the absence of political rights and other individual freedoms that are consistent with Western notions of liberal democracy. The adoption of this form of democracy was presented as a panacea to the economic, social and political

problems in the country. In this instance, the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe was described as not different from other struggles elsewhere. Democracy was represented as a universal concept that should have the same appeal irrespective of where it is applied. Most of the interview texts from representatives in civil society organizations did not detail the historical and contextual features in the political and economic environment in Zimbabwe.

The representations of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe cast the ruling Zanu PF government as negatively responsible for the absence of democratic principles. However the critique often included more general references to the “authorities”, “the government” and “the executive” who should not have more power than the governed. These positions interpellated the ruling party as outside the people and exercising autocracy.

The interview texts showed that in order for conditions highlighted above to be achieved, Zimbabwe must also conform to international standards on the conduct of elections. This implied that the struggle for democracy in the country was not just a local issue. This was evidenced in the comments below that highlighted what the country would look like when the struggle for democracy was eventually achieved:

I think when Zimbabwe conforms to the internationally accepted standards, which governs elections and democracy, when Zimbabwe is really true, to be really part of, or are to be really true to some of the protocols which it signs and some of the instruments that it is party to, like the SADC principles on elections, the AU principles on elections, governance and democracy, there are a number of them, and I think for us those are the yardstick measures that Zimbabwe is really there. Issues of recognizing and respecting freedoms of association, assembly, expression....” (Zimbabwe Election Support Network Representative)

For representatives from other organizations like the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, democracy was considered as an aspiration with universal appeal. One organizational representative pointed out that:

Democracy means simply what democracy means in any other part of the world. It means people must be involved in the government of the day. It means people must be given the opportunity to express themselves. It means all those fundamental freedoms must be respected. Most importantly it means a limited government. In other words, a limited government, the idea of a limited government or constitutionalism means that we should be able to tell, where does the authority of the executive begin and end. Where does the legislature begin and end and where is the judiciary beginning and ending? It does not mean the rule by one man or one woman, and dictatorship by that particular individual no matter how great they might perceive themselves to be. (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Representative)

The issue of universalism was combined with that of limited government and fundamental freedoms that are considered as central to the democratic process. The basis for highlighting these issues was informed by the argument that the absence of a democracy was responsible for the political, social and economic problems in the country. Adopting limited government, for example, was presented almost as a panacea to problems in the country. Most civil society organization representatives' understandings of democracy were largely infused with the ideal that they wished for. This ideal was fought for in the backdrop of the ruling party's continued stay in power. The discourse on democracy can therefore be characterized as containing elements from mainly Western developed countries whose form of democracy is presented as what the country should be aiming for. These positions had been used as the basis for criticism of civil society organizations as foreign funded, and agents of imperialism. The emphasis on universal rights can also be linked with the general developments taking place especially in an environment of increased globalization. While these civil society organizations

were created to impact the welfare of marginalized groups, their funding raised questions about some of the unintended consequences of outside involvement in developing countries. Harvey (2005) has pointed out that:

Non-governmental and grassroots organizations (NGO GRO) have also grown and proliferated remarkably under neo-liberalism, giving rise to the belief that opposition mobilized outside the state apparatus and within some separate entity called 'civil society' is the powerhouse of oppositional politics and social transformation. The period in which the neo-liberal state has become hegemonic has also been the period in which the concept of civil society - often cast as an entity in opposition to state power – has become central to the formulation of oppositional politics (p. 78).

In pursuing this ideal, most civil society organizations in Zimbabwe ended up being entangled in and having to refute the ruling party's discourse that accused them of being agents of imperialism or working on behalf of the former colonial power. As Harvey has pointed out, because civil society is cast as an entity in opposition to the state, in contexts such as the political environment in Zimbabwe, they can and have ended up being treated violently just as the opposition was treated. This then puts into play competing discourses and different conceptualizations of the democratization process.

Representatives from civil society organizations involved in community development also offered various versions of their understandings of democracy. Most of them highlighted issues of human rights, free and fair elections in one form or another, and different versions of what has already been presented above, for example:

Democracy to us means participation; it means people are being consulted in terms of taking critical decisions about the way they want to be governed. A critical element to that is elections, are people being allowed to campaign freely and to vote for candidates or political parties of their choices? So I would say that's one element of it in terms of our understanding of democracy. But broadly, we are of the view that democracy means that the majority of people are being

consulted by the government in terms of decisions that are being taken. (Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe Representative)

The discourse presented in the interview above emphasized participation and the need for political parties to be freely involved in elections. These elements were seen as central to the achievement of democracy in the country. The sentiments expressed in the discourse above were also shared by a representative from another civil society organization formed by veterans of the country's war of independence.

...democracy is involvement, participation and consultation in all matters that affect their lives and livelihoods. Involvement, participation and consultation; that is the hallmark of democracy. Elections for me are just a form of democracy; I am talking about the content. That is the real meaning of democracy. (Zimbabwe Liberators' Platform Representative)

As mentioned previously, from the year 2000, most elections in the country have been characterized by violence and loss of life. It is within this context that the above quotation was offered. Against this background, civil society organizations such as those above, have "stepped into the vacuum in social provision left by the withdrawal of the state from such activities" (Harvey, 2005, p. 177).

The ideas of democracy were therefore rights based. Democracy was presented as a system that could guarantee people's aspirations and freedoms, absent in the existing political environment. The proliferation of human rights groups addressing the same issues in the country can also be explained by the social and political context of violence. The highly politicized environment, in turn, gave rise to intertextual chains related to democratization emphasizing human rights, opportunities for participation and free and fair elections.

Cultural Identities and Representations

The interviews enabled individuals to be asked specifically about their perspectives of different cultural identities and the role they play in the struggle for democracy. When asked to describe the role of different cultural identities in democratization, interviewees offered detailed views. Most of the interviewees highlighted race, ethnicity, national and political identities, among others as types of cultural identities that had become salient during the period under study. Their responses also highlighted the role of foreign country affiliation especially in the context of national identity.

The targeting of race and ethnic identity by the ruling party emerged as a theme in the interviews. Most individual interviewed argued that cultural identity has been manipulated at different historical moments in the country's post colonial history in order to achieve the political goals of the ruling party. Interviewees from both media and human rights organizations cited the example of what happened in the country in the early 1980s immediately after the country's independence, when members of the Ndebele ethnic group were targeted. During that time the Ndebele ethnic group constituted a strong opposition to the ruling party. Ethnicity was used then in order to divide the country, and this resulted in more than 20, 000 Ndebele speaking people losing their lives in the disturbances that occurred. During the post independence political history of the country, in the views of the next interviewee whenever the ruling party was faced with a strong political opposition, it resorted to using cultural identity issues as rallying tools to regain lost political ground.

If you trace Zimbabwe's post-independence history 30 years, look at the 1980's, such factors particularly ethnicity played a big role. Look at in the 1980's although you had ZANU PF using ethnicity as a model for its political ideology even though they did not publicly say so, they used ethnicity to crush opposition and they used ethnicity to hoodwink its supporters into believing that the problem in Zimbabwe was tribes when actually the problem in Zimbabwe was a party that resented and loathed the opposition. In 2000 they brought up race and they believed that the problem of the last ten years is because white people did not want to share with black people. It could be true, but that's not the problem. The problem is ZANU PF's failure to manage the Land Reform Program after 1987. But what did they do after 1990, then they used race to their own convenience as much as they used ethnicity to their own convenience as a party. So every time ZANU PF feels threatened it whips up emotions around race, ethnicity, sexuality, because right now they are whipping up sexuality issues. Because there is constitutional reform, they want to buy votes to sort of drive debate around sexuality, using their homophobia. (Media Institute of Southern Africa Representative)

The key issues that arise from the above interview are that race, ethnicity and sexuality are used as a way of propping up the waning support of the ruling party. This also appears to tally with the texts in the *Zimbabwe Independent* newspapers that openly accused the ruling party of bigotry in systematic attacks on commercial White farmers in the country. The above interview speaks to the wider issues of political manipulation and power relations based on cultural group positioning. One can therefore conclude that under conditions of political instability or during transitional periods where vested political interests were threatened, minority groups and outsiders were often the first to be victimized. The use of race and ethnicity in the struggle for democratization is further illustrated in the interview cited below:

I think the attitude of the government actually has attempted to poison the people in an incredibly conceited effort to create intolerance and division and incitement against all those sort of issues. (Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe Representative).

The interview cited above adds to the arguments that cultural differences were used for the political ends of the ruling party. Cultural representations were used by

political elites who were not Ndebele, nor white, to cement their influence and control during particular periods of time. Representatives of cultural groups acted to position them as Other.

Other individuals affiliated with civil society organizations pointed out that cultural identity differences based on race had not been a previous problem in the country; anti-white racism was used by the ruling party at particular times in order to advance its own interests. Most of the interview discourses highlighted that there had been coexistence among the different racial groups in the country. One interviewee reiterated that land redistribution was racialized by the ruling party after its loss in the constitutional referendum in February 2000.

So the race issue is very rife when you talk about the land redistribution program but there is a general understanding that the land reform program must be done. What people differ on is the methodology that ZANU PF used, their thuggery method of killing people. But that the indigenous population needs to control the land, and there is common ground everywhere we go, consensus, but they talk about those wide issues. People don't talk about those issues of white, black. They're very clear about who their oppressor is. The oppressor is not white, their oppressor is black and that oppressor is found in ZANU PF, with their head Robert Mugabe, so at a political level, they are very clear; there are no race issues. The race issue is relative to the land issue. (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition Representative)

From the interview, the salient identity positions in the struggle for democracy are political and not related to racial differences. The ruling party was identified as the oppressor, responsible for the economic and political problems. Political identity was also presented as more salient in the following interview:

The leadership of the country must address what happened in the 1980s but the major issue that you find in the political affiliation difference is ZANU, MDC. On the balance the majority of people say that these people must go and I think it is

reflected in the outcome of the election. (Crisis Coalition Zimbabwe Representative)

Political affiliation was described as a form of identity that appeared to have become more salient in Zimbabwe especially in the aftermath of the formation of the MDC. Political identity took center stage as a result of the over-politicized environment. Being identified with the opposition had very negative consequences for some members of society due to the violence. Political party affiliation became conflated with national citizen identities and intersected with racial identities in both the ruling party's public discourse and the critique of these moves by interviewees.

It is this issue of identity that has been to a large extent utilized to marginalize, to vilify, to single out groups and target them either for the hate campaign I talked about for instance. So you would single out a minority group and say okay, these people, they come from this particular area therefore they're this. Then you amplify the political belief in a political circle about that particular group of people to the extent that you make it almost like this is the national position that this group must be exterminated because they don't serve the interests of our nation. This is exactly what happened with Gukurahundi. There are times when people collapse or want to collapse political affiliation and political identity into nationality. You are not nationalistic if you don't support a certain political ideology; you are an enemy of the State if you don't support the land reform, for instance, so your ideological connections, you are with the West.

But I think the political identity; the political affiliation has gained prominence in our country over the years. Which party do you belong to? Who are you? What political ideology are you coming from? I don't want to talk about nationality except to the extent that some people were denied their right to vote on the basis of nationality, to say, aah, what is your ancestry? For example, you must renounce your New Zealand citizenship which you never actually had in the first place but because your great grandparents came from there you have a potential citizenship there. So you are not going to vote. But nationality was used by ZANU PF as a way of disenfranchising a lot of people including those who had their Malawian ancestry for instance, but the very dominant one is political identity and political affiliation. (Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum Representative)

The above interview indicates that issues of identity were multiple, but political identification became the overarching positioning of interest. "Who are you?" was

answered with “which party do you belong to?” The above interview also confirmed that race and national identity linked with certain non-black groups being positioned as not deserving of the right to vote due to non-black and non-Zimbabwean ancestry. The issue of political identity or affiliation is also explicitly named as being more salient compared to the other forms of identity. The other issues of race and national identity are critiqued as problematic representations used by the ruling party to restrict voters to supporters.

Another interview includes more evidence of hate speech being used to target whites.

There is a point that I wanted to make. It’s a question of leadership failure really, where even if you look at the racial overtones that come through, and even the hate speech against certain races coming through the state media you know from high ranking officials in government or outside. That will only fuel tension. But some of it is used for political expediency. Like, for instance, if you appear on national television, you shout at, you throw expletives to certain races, you link it with politics, the history of the country, then what you are doing is you are trying to mobilize people. But that may not be the case with people; it may not resonate with people on the ground. We have had a lot of that, blaming everything on whites and much of it was coming through the land reform program. (Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe Representative)

Besides critiquing the targeting of white Zimbabweans, the previous two interviewees also pointed to the issue of migrant laborers originally from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia who were also attacked by the ruling party. The main reason for targeting these groups came as result of the changes that had taken place on commercial farms. Most of the farm workers lost their source of economic livelihoods as a result of the ruling party’s forcible takeover of white owned commercial farmers. Most of the farm workers who were descendants of migrant laborers were suspected to be sympathetic to the opposition that had criticized the government for the manner in which it had implemented the land reform program. Another interviewee explained below:

Some people have deliberately engineered a race conflict in this country under the guise of fighting for the redistribution of land in this country. (National Constitutional Assembly representative)

Ultimately the main reason the commercial farmers had been targeted in the first place was because they were accused of supporting the opposition. The interview discourses above indicated that the race conflict was an “engineered” move by the ruling party in the struggle for democracy. The extent to which political affiliation became most salient identity is also illustrated in the following quotation:

So I think political labels have gained prominence in the past few years. Certain behavior is associated with being ZANU PF; certain behavior is associated with being MDC. (Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe Representative)

Other civil society organizations argued that racial difference was a salient identity in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. For organizations such as Radio Dialogue that advocated for the licensing of private and community radio stations, race was an issue:

The struggle for Zimbabwe has been about color. If you look at the farm invasions, even when the whites tried to talk, they have been told, you are not Zimbabwean. To us the issue of being patriotic and sovereign and the way even the government of Zimbabwe has labeled foreign organizations, I mean civic societies, foreign funded, opposition, foreign funded, imperialist puppets. It has become a race issue when it is black versus white, when it is African versus the Western. That’s how, the politics of ZANU PF have played to the extent that people are cautious, if you have a white person in your organization, make sure that you don’t make them the spokesperson. Therefore you will be called a white organization. They have to take the backstage. (Radio Dialogue Representative)

The above interview showed that cultural identities were understood by civil society groups in Zimbabwe as intertwined with not only the politics, but also the history of the country. The role of the ruling party in taking away rights of specific groups affected the way civil society groups operated in the country. As indicated above, civil society groups whose membership included white people had to balance how these

members appeared in public because of the public perceptions that had been created by the ruling party and its government controlled media outlets such as the *Herald* newspaper. What is notable is the extent of agreement among the interviewees related to their strong critique of identity politics and how scape-goating of minority groups was enmeshed with power politics. Interviewees argued that members of the white community and other ethnic minorities were targeted in order to cause disaffection and divert the public attention from the economic and political challenges that most people were facing. The targeting of minorities and their demonization suggested that the targeted groups were responsible for the economic problems the country was facing. This also took away the protection of the law from the targeted groups. This was clearly voiced by another interviewee:

Let me explain to you one problem there has been in running this organization and in working with this organization. It's a misconception from outside. It's that an organization like this one which has done its time, it's been around a long time, because of the white perspective, they see a white woman involved and it immediately sets up antipathy towards that organization. That's why it is better for me to just sit quietly and not have a public face. Because you live with the hang up of being a colonial, part of the oppressive regime from, you know, pre-independence and it creates issues and problems. (Sokwanele Zimbabwe Representative)

The comments show evidence that whiteness and political affiliation matter even in a context of long standing dedication and experience in Zimbabwe. The overall implications of the above interview texts with civil society representatives are that colonial history continued to be a salient factor. The struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe also brought to the fore intersections among the different forms of cultural identity such as race, national identity, ethnicity and political identity. In the case of Zimbabwe, the civil society interview discourses, as well as the newspaper discourses, revealed both the

colonial legacy and the post independence challenges of opening up the political environment and negotiating the status of different cultural groups.

The manner in which various groups are represented in the discourses brings out the nature of their positions and the relationships between and among groups, and relationships between various institutions such as the Zimbabwean government and western governments. In commenting on the struggle for democracy in the country, the civil society organization affiliates brought out the representations used by the ruling Zanu PF government related to race, ethnic, and sexual orientation and how these acted to marginalizing particular groups.

The key elements of the social and political events taking place in Zimbabwe that were described in the interview texts showed that racial, ethnic and political identities were represented by the ruling party to advance its own political interests. The manipulation of cultural identities for political ends was achieved through the demonization and marginalization of minority groups for problems in the country in order to score political points. At various stages of the country's post independence period, the ruling party had blamed specific minority groups in order to gain political leverage. This was achieved by blaming an ethnic minority, and then the racial minority, for the country's political problems. It is notable that avowed identities did not emerge in interviews; association with opposition and MDC was presumably so strong and obvious that it was not necessary to explicitly name this affiliation. Examples that were cited included the political violence that was directed against the Ndebele people, an ethnic group found in the mid and southwest part of the country. They were targeted in violence that erupted in the country for the greater part of the early years of independence in the

1980s. One of the main political opposition parties at that time drew most of its support from that part of the country.

To summarize, at the turn of the new millennium when a new opposition political party was formed, the ruling party blamed the White minority in the country for funding the new opposition. This resulted in the White minority being targeted through the land reform program that the government instituted that resulted in most of them losing their land. At the time of the interviews, in July and August 2010, several representatives from civil society organizations pointed out that the ruling party was now targeting people because of their sexual orientation. Most talked about these issues by pointing out that the ruling party's actions were equivalent to incitement against ethnic, racial and sexual minorities. Having before deployed cultural identities such as race and ethnicity when faced by a strong opposition, in 2010 the ruling party resorted to sexual orientation as a way to whip up people's emotions. After the formation of the opposition MDC in 1999, the ruling party continued to lose support as evidenced by each subsequent election held after that.

After the disputed elections of 2008 in which the ruling party lost but refused to concede, it resorted to using social and cultural issues in order to appeal to mostly traditional voters especially those in the rural areas. It is in this context that the issue of sexuality became a rallying point for the Zanu PF government. Comments from various interviewees showed that it was not a key issue for most people, given the poor state of the economy and the high levels of poverty sparked by the land reform program and the subsequent economic meltdown that it spawned. In the competition for political influence, social and cultural issues that tended to tap into people's emotions and

passions became an easy target. In this respect, the positioning of cultural identities and threat and fear tactics were used to marginalize minorities in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe.

Many representatives of civil society groups pointed out that violence and threats of violence had been directed against minorities who were perceived and characterized as enemies of the ruling party. The critique of representations of political opponents as enemies was also a common thread that ran through most of the interview discourses from civil society organizations. The polarized political environment and the new emphasis that was placed on political affiliation shows the strained political relations that existed between the major political parties and their supporters. In this polarized political environment, the ruling Zanu PF was represented as violent as most of the civil society leaders attributed most of the violence in the country to that party. The ruling party was also represented as intolerant of opposition and resorted to violence when faced with a strong opposition.

Interview discourses from civil society organizations also highlighted that the ruling party collapsed political identity with national identity. This is evidenced in the comments from civil society organizations where they pointed out that supporting the Zanu PF political party was regarded as being more patriotic and 'Zimbabwean', while supporting or being perceived as supporting the opposition MDC was considered as being a Western puppet and supporting foreign governments that were alleged to be still interested in re-colonizing the country. Civil society leaders interviewed pointed out that the ruling party deliberately appropriated the anti-colonial struggle in order to gain lost political ground. The ruling party was represented as the oppressor, against which the

opposition MDC and civil society organizations, together with private media organizations were fighting. Examples revealed deep-seated polarization in the country across many levels. For example, there was government controlled media opposed to privately owned media; there was also the opposition MDC and civil society organizations that were aligned with it. The ruling party was also supported by war veterans who had fought during the war that ended British colonial rule.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that the struggle for democracy as reflected in interview texts from representatives of civil society organizations included frequent references to the context of the country's history both before and after independence. The history provided not only the backdrop and intertextuality against which discourses on democratization were based, but was also a terrain where there was a lot of contestation with regard to what should be contained in the history and the different roles that different groups played. On the one hand, the Zanu PF political party and government controlled media claimed ownership of that history and used particular views of history in order to justify their actions. On the other hand, discourses from most groups in civil society and private newspapers took a reactive standpoint and focused on the immediate events that were taking place in the country. In their discourse on democratization, interviewees focused on the economic and social problems in the country in order to gain political leverage over the Zanu PF government that was largely blamed for the economic and social problems. The discourses related to the struggle for democracy were largely affected by the strained political environment in Zimbabwe where violence against opponents was also a commonly employed tool. The strained and acrimonious relations

also gave way to negative representations among the different groups involved in the struggle for democracy.

CHAPTER 7:

IDEOLOGY AND HEGEMONY IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE

This chapter addresses the third research question: What are the ideological implications of discourse and counter discourse in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe? Ideologies emerge from the critical discourse analysis that was carried out in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. These ideologies reflect the assumptions that drive the relations, representations and identity positions in the two newspaper and interview discourses. The chapter is organized to capture five ideologies. The struggle for democracy during the period of this study was a contestation of competing world views. The *Herald* presented the ruling party's ideological positions while the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society representatives presented the positions of the opposition.

The ideological implications of the discourses emerge from the underlying assumptions that inform the representations and positioning of the following issues. Anti colonialism, normalizing status quo, land ownership and democracy, protecting national interests from Western "imperialism" and human rights emerge as the main ideological frames. The *Herald*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interview discourses presented contrasting claims and positioned groups in contradictory locations, which brought out these ideologies.

Historically, diverse people from across the world at different moments of their national history have grappled with different ways of realizing the ideals and the promise of democracy. The struggle for democracy has taken different forms and character

depending on the historical context of each place or country. As is highlighted in this chapter, Zimbabwe is no exception to the interplay between the struggle for democracy and the contextual political, economic and social factors that affect and are affected by it. This chapter brings out the ideological implications of the discourse on democracy from the two newspapers, The *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent*, together with interview discourses from representatives in civil society organizations in Zimbabwe.

In addition to addressing the ideological implications of the discourses on democracy, this chapter also discusses how the discourses were hegemonic at some periods and the counter or alternative discourses that challenged them. Tackling issues of hegemony requires that interdiscursivity is addressed among the different set of discourses. This analysis also shows that the discourses on democracy from the two newspapers and civil society organizations were informed by specific experiences and world views; the interview texts show that world views had material consequences for the people interviewed. The approach linking discourses and social practice is important because “discursive constitution of society does not emanate from a free play of ideas in people’s heads but from social practice which is firmly rooted and oriented to real, material social structure” (Fairclough, 1992, p. 66).

In bringing out the ideological implications of the three set of texts, the analysis connects discourses to the context under which the discourse was produced. In this instance, the political, economic and social context together with the country’s history is brought to bear on the analysis. The chapter first explores the ideological implications of the different views of democratization that are expressed in each of the media texts and then the interviews. The chapter subsequently brings out the common arguments and

ideologies across the three texts that run through the discourses of democratization in Zimbabwe.

This analysis is guided by Hall's definition of ideology in which he defined it as "systems of representation composed of concepts, ideas, myths or images in which men and women live their imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence" (Hall, 1985, p. 103). This can be applied to the texts from the two newspapers as the editorials are representations of events, conditions and relations of groups at particular times in the country. The two newspapers provide contrasting representations, and the interviews illustrate similar and different representations. This can be attributed to different ideas and concepts that are articulated in the struggle for democracy. The discourses surrounding democracy as represented in the two newspapers must be analyzed in relation to the material conditions of people in the country that can be likened to what Hall characterizes as "the real conditions of existence". The ideological influence can be brought out by showing the differences that existed between what was represented in the discourses and events taking place in the country.

The above definition of ideology can be applied to interview texts as well by showing the extent to which the ideas that individuals from civil society organizations advocated for compare or contrast to political, social and economic events in the country. The representations in interview texts can also be considered as ideological when analyzed in relation to how the definition of democracy expressed in the discourse compares to the wider societal discourses. The ideological implications of the discourses from civil society organizations are also analyzed with regard to how their views of democracy were related to the experiences of people in Zimbabwe.

The Ideology of Anti-Colonialism

The period under study was comprised of a media environment and context that was heavily dominated by government controlled media as evidenced by government's ownership of radio and television which remained closed to private or independent broadcasters. This environment allowed the discourses from the *Herald* to be amplified through other government controlled media, such as radio and television after drowning out the limited counter discourses from the few privately owned weekly newspapers whose reach was limited in distribution. As already highlighted, the *Herald's* discourses emphasized issues of colonial history and unjust events for the colonized. From this position, the *Herald* discourses proceeded to highlight the contribution of the ruling party in the attainment of the country's independence. In this instance, colonial history and the anti-colonial struggle that took place are directly appropriated and democratization is constituted as occurring due to the work of the ruling party.

The *Herald* editorials also downplayed and dismissed the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The MDC is represented as a neo colonial creation by outside foreign countries that were only interested in protecting their interests. In invoking colonialism and its attendant history, the *Herald* presented readers, and in turn the electorate, with a stark contrast between the two political parties. The MDC is linked with bringing back that same colonialism that the Zanu PF political party had fought against. Colonial history and how it ended is revisited and retold from the perspective and interests of the ruling party. Thus discourses of colonialism and anti-colonialism are invoked in the *Herald* editorial discourses in order to advance the ideological interests of

the ruling party. In addition, discourses demonizing Europeans and U.S Americans are employed and position the ruling party as patriotic.

The interpretation of colonial history and how it is represented in the *Herald* discourses has ideological implications for what constitutes democracy. From the *Herald's* perspective and the discourses that it presented, the anti-colonial struggles of the 1970s were superimposed on the political challenges that the ruling party faced from the year 2000 after the formation of the opposition MDC. In representing Zanu PF's struggle for political legitimacy in 2000 as if it was the continuation of the struggle against colonialism, the discourses on democratization in the *Herald* froze out both time and space to meet the ruling party's goals for political legitimacy. The year 2000 was twenty years after the end of colonial rule in Zimbabwe. Zanu PF had been running the government for the same number of years, but the discourses on the democratization process were presented as if that struggle was continuing. This was despite the fact that some of the problems the country was facing, especially in 2000, were partly emanating from the actions of the Zanu PF government, after it took over from the colonial government.

The ideological implications of representing the ruling party as the custodian of anti-colonial history, and the MDC as perpetuating colonial rule, set up an adversarial relationship. Zanu PF gained support from most of the people who had very negative memories of colonial rule; especially those in the rural areas who took most of the brunt from the war. In casting the MDC as advancing the interests of the former colonialists, the discourses invoked emotions associated with the suffering that was experienced during colonial rule. At another level, the discourse can also be interpreted as diverting

people's attention from the present hardships that they were experiencing and the economic problems that the country faced especially at the end of the 1990s. There were food shortages and high unemployment in the country. The social environment in the country was characterized by industrial protests by workers disenchanted with the economic problems that were making life difficult for most people. While this was the social and economic environment that prevailed in the country, most of the discourse in the *Herald* focused on the past. This past represented the only success in the face of the newly formed opposition political party. The ruling party therefore found political traction by resorting to the past. In going back to the past and highlighting the ruling party's contribution to the end of colonialism, the discourse in the *Herald* discredited the new opposition in the form of demonizing discourses.

The discourses that touted the ruling party's contribution to the end of colonialism employed totalizing discourses in which the role of the ruling party was represented as the only credible one with regard to the anti-colonial struggle. This had material consequences in that no communication space for other opposing or dissenting points of view was seen, or alternative views were outrightly denied in the government controlled *Herald* newspaper. The government policies described in the newspaper became informed by a view of history in which the ruling party was represented as the sole force that had 'liberated' the country from colonialism. In addition, the *Herald* discourse on the struggle for democracy resulted in violence as members of the opposition were targeted as agents of Western countries supposedly bent on establishing colonialism. In the social and political environment that was created in the country, and the renewed context of anti-colonial struggle, it became justifiable to employ violence as a tool to solve political

problems. When violence occurred especially where supporters of the opposition MDC were attacked or lost their lives, the discourses in the *Herald* either downplayed the extent of the violence or at times explicitly dismissed it. In this respect, not only did the discourses shore up support for the ruling party, they also helped in creating a conducive atmosphere under which the violent actions of the ruling party could be justified.

Related to the *Herald's* discourses that invoked history and the ruling party's contribution to the end of colonialism, was the issue of 'patriotism' that took on new meaning. In the period after the formation of the opposition MDC, being patriotic became synonymous with being a member of the Zanu PF party. In this respect, supporters of the MDC were castigated as foreign sponsored who were willing to forsake the interests of the country to protect the interests of foreign Western countries, especially Britain and the United States. It was under these circumstances that White commercial farmers, who were mostly either third or fourth generation Zimbabweans, were represented as foreigners or illegitimate residents. As well, most of the white commercial farmers lost their land under the government's controversial land reform program through the racialization of nationality.

In the eyes of supporters of the Zanu PF government, it became justified to perpetrate violence against supporters of the MDC as they were characterized as enemies of the state and working with foreigners to undermine the country. The ideological implications of the discourse from the government controlled media can therefore be discerned from the actions of the ruling party and its supporters, represented in the discourses emanating from the government controlled *Herald* newspaper.

Continued discursive reference to the anti-colonial struggle and linking the ruling party with patriotism helped to polarize the political environment and justify violence. This was further buttressed by the failure to arrest or bring to justice members of the ruling party who were accused of perpetrating violence. The discourse in the *Herald* acted to help secure political victory and success for the ruling party. The discourse in the *Herald* helped in making behavior and actions that were violent, discriminatory, and even illegal in terms of the existing laws of the country, appear ‘normal’ and necessary. These circumstances created political impunity especially for members of the ruling party and this political environment benefitted the ruling party compared to the opposition MDC. The *Herald* discourse must therefore be considered as part of a concerted campaign to shore up support for Zanu PF in the face of a strong opposition. In this respect, discourse that emphasized past glory and represented the Zanu PF party as the sole custodian of the anti-colonial struggle, bolstered the political cache of the ruling party.

It must be pointed out that the *Herald*'s focus on the history of colonialism and the struggle to end it only became prominent in the discourse after the formation of the MDC in 1999. During times when the ruling party enjoyed unchallenged political sway in the country, the *Herald* was involved in creating a conducive environment for the ruling party where it provided rallying points that supporters could employ in either showing their support for the government, or in dismissing the opposition MDC as a front for Western interests. This shows that the discourse in the *Herald* continuously protected the interests of the Zanu PF government.

In summary, the discourse therefore directed attention away from the present and lack of action by the ruling party to address failing economic and social conditions in the

country. This was coupled with the casting of aspersions about the opposition MDC's commitment to the country and questioning the opposition's patriotism, while the *Herald* editorials claimed the mantle of defending the national interest. Colonial history evoked the bitter memories that most people still felt, given the racism, injustices, hardships and treatment as second class citizens that they had experienced. Ultimately, it can be argued that these discourses appealed to collective memories that were still strong and influential, and functioned to increase support amongst those whose memories of the anti colonial struggle were very strong.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* provided contrasting perspectives to those offered in the government controlled *Herald* newspaper. The *Zimbabwe Independent* was operating within the same political, social and economic environment as the *Herald*. In some instances, some of the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* read as if they were direct replies to the *Herald*'s editorials. As a reminder, the *Zimbabwe Independent* began publishing in 1996. Their editorials position this newspaper as publishing views independent of the government or ruling party views. In this regard, an analysis of the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses not only offers contrast, but also, additional ways through which democratization was understood in the country.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* addressed issues related to the country's anti-colonial history and accused the ruling party of manipulation in order to advance its own political interests. The *Zimbabwe Independent* characterized the ruling party's continued reference to the struggle to end colonialism as a 'throwback' to the time when it used to be popular in order to divert attention from the current economic and political challenges facing the country. The discourse reveals claims that the problems in the country had nothing to do

with colonialism or imperialism as the ruling party alleged. The *Zimbabwe Independent* in its editorials, further pointed out that bringing out the past was an attempt by the ruling party to divert people's attention from the challenges that they were facing. The conditions in the country, as argued in the newspaper editorials, were a result of corruption and poor policy options that had been pursued by the ruling party after the country attained independence.

The ideological implications of the discourses on democracy in the *Zimbabwe Independent* must be considered at various levels. The discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* were opposed and critical of the ruling party. Instead of attributing the problems to external forces in the past, the newspaper largely argued that the problems were self-inflicted as the ruling party had failed to address the problems when it should have done so. The ruling party was described as now conveniently blaming the opposition and foreign governments that were labeled as 'imperialist', for its own political survival. Secondly, the discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* can also be regarded as being counter to both ruling party and the *Herald* discourses that sought to preserve the status quo. The *Zimbabwe Independent* was not critical of the opposition, nor did they present 'independent' views, but offered views that were in sync with the opposition.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* countered the discourse supportive of the status quo and presented evidence that projected how the actions of the ruling party were responsible for political developments in the country. It dismissed the anti-colonial discourses that the ruling party advanced, and thus positioned the MDC as a more 'authentic' political party. Again, the discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* can be

regarded as counter discourses in that the *Zimbabwe Independent* kept raising issues that were either ignored or downplayed by the ruling party and the government owned *Herald* newspaper. Bringing out issues that challenged the ruling party and presenting facts that were not consistent with the ruling party's descriptions of democracy broadened the communicative space by providing information that otherwise would not have been available. To a limited extent, the availability of alternative means of communication to the government controlled media can be connected to Habermas' concept of the public sphere. It is limited because the privately owned media were only accessible to individuals in urban areas and given the economic environment in the country; not too many people could afford buying the newspaper on a regular basis.

The ideological implication of the discourse was that the ruling party was responsible for the social, economic and political problems in the country. In this regard, voters were called to blame the current government rather than Western countries for problems in the country. The underlying implication was that if the ruling party was responsible for creating problems in the country having been in government for over twenty years, it was not realistic to trust the same Zanu PF government to solve the problems that it had created. The discourses that continuously placed the responsibility for the economic and political problems in the country on the doorstep of the ruling party can also be interpreted as serving the interest of the opposition MDC. The discourse insisted on focusing on the current challenges that were facing the country. Overall, the democratization discourse emphasized the ruling party's culpability in the social and economic problems in the country and pointed out that poor leadership and corruption were at the core of the problems facing the country.

In the interview texts, most of the civil society organizational representatives pointed out that they were being positioned by the ruling party as advancing foreign interests just as the opposition was accused of being political puppets of Western countries. The basis for the positioning emanated from the foreign funding that most of the organizations received from international organizations based mainly in Western Europe and the United States. This further shows that the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe and tensions between imaginary relations and real conditions was an interplay between local interests that had global connections. The argument made by the opposition that democracy in Zimbabwe means the same as democracy anywhere in the world drew charges from the ruling party that civil society groups were working to effect regime change. This resulted in civil society organizations being accused of foreign influence. The ideological implications for the struggle for democratization was that the ruling party positioned itself as being more patriotic in contrast to the opposition, and civil society groups whose representatives were characterized as advocating for international standards were represented as standing in for Western interests.

In advocating for an understanding of democracy based on universal human rights and acknowledging their acceptance of foreign funding, members of civil society organizations in the country reproduced their positioning that they were advancing foreign interests. This provided a justification for the ruling party to suppress the opposition. In acknowledging foreign funding, most of the organizations played into the hands of the ruling party discourses that associated these organizations with colonialism. The ruling party then had justifications for repression, arguing that they were protecting the interests of the people who had fought to end colonialism.

From the foregoing analysis of both newspaper and civil society discourses, the history of colonialism and the role of Western governments in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe emerge as some of the central discourses to understand how the democratization process unfolded in the country. The *Zimbabwe Independent* dismissed the *Herald's* version of the anti-colonial struggle as one sided as it failed to acknowledge the contribution of other groups that were not necessarily affiliated with the ruling party. This shows that there was contestation and negotiation of the anti-colonial history and the role that various individuals and organizations had played. While the *Herald* persisted in constituting the political struggles between Zanu PF and the MDC as a continuation of the anti-colonial struggle, the *Zimbabwe Independent* together with interview voices from civil society organizations challenged the government controlled *Herald's* understanding and interpretation of the country's history. History then emerged as one of the key discourses in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Bringing issues related to the country's anti-colonial history and connecting it to the events that started to unfold after 2000 can be considered as hegemonic struggle.

There are various definitions of hegemony cited in Phillips and Jorgensen (2002). Some define it as domination, while Barret (1991) has viewed it as "the organization of consent – the process through which subordinated forms of consciousness are constructed without recourse to violence and coercion" (p. 54). Fairclough (2003) drawing from Antonio Gramsci's original definition, has pointed out that hegemony must be viewed as "a particular way of conceptualizing power which, amongst other things, emphasizes how power depends upon achieving consent or at least acquiescence rather having the resources to use force, and the importance of ideology in sustaining the relations of

power” (p. 45). The relationships among different groups as evidenced in the discourses are important to probe further as hegemony emerges in relations between groups and institutions. In applying the concept of hegemony to the discourses, focus is given to how consent was encouraged through discourses.

It is through reference to the country’s anti colonial history that the discourse in the *Herald* advanced the interests of the ruling party in a hegemonic manner. This must be understood within the context of the ruling party deriving most of its legitimacy at independence for contributing to the end of colonialism. In that respect, political challenge to its position was likened to the reintroduction of colonialism or the re-colonization of the country.

At the same time, the discourse accused the opposition of working with foreign Western countries. This can be interpreted as attempts to use the discourse on anti-colonial struggle to establish hegemonic influence in the country by appropriating national history to advance the specific goals of a single political party. Hegemony is when historical discourses and events produce identity positions and ideologies as “real” and these become taken up and reproduced by public voices. The discourses in the *Herald* regarding history had resonance especially in rural areas where the ruling party continued to get support. This was evidenced in the voting patterns in the country where people in the rural areas tended to vote for the ruling party. The discourses on land, anti-colonialism and accusations of the opposition for advancing foreign interests resulted in the rural populace identifying with and supporting the ruling Zanu PF party. This can be explained as having been achieved by identity positions and discourses that constituted the opposition as being sponsored by the former British colonizer. The *Herald* discourse

constituted the ruling party as defending the national interests by resettling landless people in the rural areas, where there were strong sentiments against colonialism, because people in the rural areas bore most of the brunt of the war that ended colonial rule.

Hegemony must be understood as a complex process. In the context of this research this is evident in the discourse in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interviews with representatives of civil society organizations that offered perspectives that were counter to those from the government controlled *Herald* newspaper. The counter discourse that focused on history in the *Zimbabwe Independent* insisted that the end of colonialism was a collective effort that involved an aggregate of different groups, some of which were not affiliated with Zanu PF.

This can be considered as counter hegemonic as it rejected some of the claims that were made in the *Herald*. Further in the discursive environment that existed in Zimbabwe where claims and counter claims were made in both the *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent*, discourses from both newspapers can be analyzed using Fairclough's order of discourses. This is important as it can help in bringing out the dominant discourses and how this dominance was achieved and how it was contested. As already highlighted in Chapter 3, order of discourse refers to "the complex configuration of discourse and genres within the same social field or institution" (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 141). Given the government control of most of the media in the country such as television, radio, and newspapers throughout the country, the ruling party had the capacity to have its representations and constitution of events dominate the communicative space in the country. Control of the media coupled with the ruling party's control of many other government institutions in the country meant that its discourses were dominant. In

addition to these factors, by the year 2000, the ruling party had remained unchallenged politically. The ruling party voices were the ones that were commonly heard and seen in the country.

In referring back to the concept of order of discourses, it can be argued that the discourses that defined the struggle for democracy in the country were configured as a response to the actions that the ruling party took in order to protect its own political interests and also the manner through which these actions were represented in the government controlled media. These actions included the takeover of white owned commercial farms, positioning of the opposition as agents of Western governments and valorizing history to end colonialism.

In countering the *Herald's* representations of the discourses that defined the struggle for democracy in the country, the *Zimbabwe Independent* was responding in a discursive terrain dominated by the ruling party. What, however, is significant with the counter discourses and the counter public sphere that was offered by the *Zimbabwe Independent* is that much as they were responding to the dominant order of discourse from the ruling party, the *Zimbabwe Independent* managed to offer alternative viewpoints and a critique of the *Herald* in a manner that had not existed before. By the year 2000, the discursive environment in the country had altered as there existed a strong opposition which provided counter discourses to the ruling party. The year 2000 can be characterized as marking the beginning of the challenge to the *Herald's* dominance. During the period covered by this study, a contrast emerged between the hegemonic influences of the two newspapers. The *Herald* discourses continued to hold sway in the rural areas where the ruling party continued to draw most of its support. On the other

hand, the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses appealed to most people in urban areas where the opposition derived most of its political support. Nonetheless, the *Herald* continued to be published as a daily newspaper and the *Zimbabwe Independent* as a weekly newspaper, enabling the *Herald* to highly saturate audiences.

Towards the end of the period of study, the discourses from the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society organizations could be characterized as gaining momentum in line with the political changes that were taking place in the country. What therefore emerged is a contestation for dominance where both groups involved can be considered as making hegemonic and counter hegemonic bids. The *Zimbabwe Independent*, whose discourses were a critique of both the ruling party and the *Herald*, had hegemonic influence mostly in urban areas where it emphasized issues of economic decline, human rights abuses and rebuttals of the *Herald*'s version of the anti colonial history. In refuting some of the attacks that were directed against the opposition MDC and critiquing the ruling party's governing record after independence, the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses became hegemonic among supporters of the opposition MDC, especially in urban areas where the MDC received most of its parliamentary seats.

In positioning the ruling party as the custodian of the anti-colonial struggle, the discourse simultaneously brought out the contrast with the opposition MDC which was represented as perpetuating colonial imbalances. This can be explained through Fairclough's (2003) concepts of equivalences and differences. This is evident in the way the ruling party was constituted as solely responsible for the end of colonialism and the MDC as bent on bringing it back. The ruling party was represented as equivalent to the struggle that ended colonialism while the opposition MDC in stark contrast, was

allegedly getting its backing from Britain and other Western countries that were associated with the negative experiences of colonialism.

The above analysis therefore shows that one of the central discourses in the struggle for democracy was evidenced by contrasting and competing understandings of the country's history. For the *Herald*, interdiscursivity is illustrated in democracy being comprised of discourses about the end of colonialism, the achievement of independence, and need to continue protection of the nation from Western imperialists. For civil society organizations and the private media discourses about economic decline and disparities since 1980 were linked to the ruling party inaction and harmful policies.

From the perspectives of the discourses from the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society organizations, democracy did not begin with the attainment of independence hence their characterization of the period under study as the struggle for democracy. History then became the interdiscursive trope or prism through which to understand the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. The various meanings that were attached to this discourse can be considered as indicative of the contestation for political space in the country during a period where previous understandings of the past and their influence for the present were challenged.

The Ideology of Land Ownership as Democracy

In addition to the appropriation of national history for purposes of advancing the political interests of the Zanu PF government, the *Herald's* discourse also focused on the land reform program that the ruling party adopted in 2000 when the constitutional reform program that it had initiated was rejected in the referendum. Recall that the rejection

centered on the process of the constitution making and some of the actual provisions that focused on the land issue. The Zanu PF government insisted on a clause in the constitution stipulating that the government would take over White owned commercial farmers without compensating the owners. In the face of the rejection of the constitution as well as throughout the period of research, the *Herald* editorials gave a lot of attention to the land issue.

While land remained a contentious issue over the course of the short post independence history of the country, it had not received as wide of coverage as it received in the context of the period after 2000 when there was a new opposition in the country. This had wider ideological implications to the struggle for democracy. The land issue only started to be prominent in the *Herald* editorials after the formation of the opposition MDC. This had the ideological implication of representing the Zanu PF government as addressing one of the main issues from the struggle against colonialism that had remained unresolved for a long time. The land issue also tended to raise a lot of emotions in the country, and the *Herald* editorial discourses framed it as the main reason why the country had fought against colonialism. This did produce support for the Zanu PF government, illustrating the hegemonic appeal of these discourses.

In the *Herald* editorials, the discourse linked land ownership patterns in the country with the ownership structures that existed during colonialism. Land ownership in the country was racialized as evidenced in the representations in the *Herald* of White commercial farmers represented as remnants of the colonial government who were positioned as not deserving to own or claim ownership of the land. This was despite the fact that most of the White commercial farmers were citizens of the country either by

birth or naturalization. They were, however, targeted and represented as foreigners or part of the colonial past that had to be banished in the country. This is evidenced in the *Herald* discourse that condoned violence that some of the commercial farmers experienced especially from ruling party supporters. The discourses must be considered as part of a pattern built around bringing out issues from colonial history as a means to achieve political objectives of the Zanu PF government. The ideological implication was to delegitimize White commercial farmers' land claims in order to justify violence and repossession of land. The discourse in this instance had material consequences as the commercial farmers lost their land, and some lost their lives.

The discourse on the land reform program that was presented as part of the government's efforts to empower the largely black majority of the country's population disadvantaged by colonial imbalances, rallied support for the ruling Zanu PF government. The corollary to this was to represent the opposition MDC as working to protect the interests of the rich and White commercial farmers. In tying the opposition MDC as working to preserve a status quo that was represented as unjust, the *Herald* editorial discourses also tied the new political formation with all the ills and the negative memories and experiences associated with colonialism. The discourses then fit well with the wider narrative that the ruling party was employing in its attacks on the opposition that it was serving foreign interests. In addition to creating a political environment that cast doubts on the new opposition's to address the problems in the country, the *Herald* editorials on the land reform program can also be characterized as attempts by the government controlled media to shift focus on the prevailing social and economic problems in the country that were largely a result of the 20 year policies of the Zanu PF

government. This was ideological as the discourse was generated in the context of power relations and the struggle for political power between Zanu PF and the opposition MDC.

The *Herald* discourse focusing on land can be regarded as ideological at two levels. First, it brought out the issue of economic empowerment of the majority black population. Infusing issues of economic empowerment also took attention away from the economic problems that were characterized by high unemployment.

In this regard, the discourse served the political needs of the ruling party by resorting to issues that were popular with the majority of the electorate. The editorials link discourses of Black economic empowerment, democracy, development, stability, peace and security with ownership of land and mineral wealth. The foregoing analysis clearly illustrates the interdiscursivity of the *Herald* discourses especially in the manner in which land was connected to economic empowerment of the Black population. Ultimately, land ownership and economic empowerment were positioned as representing democracy. This paints a picture of democracy and prosperity which occur from Zanu PF support.

At another level, the discourse focusing on land was also ideological in the sense that the ruling party framed its contestation with the MDC for political influence as a continuation of the struggle against colonialism. By advocating for the takeover of White owned commercial farms, the discourse in the government controlled *Herald* positioned the ruling party's political contest against the MDC. This is apparent as the discourses on land frame the opposition as advocating for the interests of the former colonizers. The discourse focusing on redistributing land became double edged; it positioned the ruling

party as more ‘authentic’ in empowering the Black majority and fulfilling the promises of independence, while at the same time it represented the MDC as defending the interests of White commercial farmers thereby perpetuating colonial imbalances.

Having pointed out how colonial and anti-colonialist discourses were central to the *Herald*’s framing of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, it is important to point out how this was accomplished. The discourses of colonialism and anti-colonialism also invoked nationalism. The discourses positioned the opposition MDC as alien to the values and spirit that brought independence from colonial rule.

Given that both the *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* were responding to the same political events in the country, the representation of the land issue in both newspapers can be regarded as one of the central arenas of competing discourses that emerged in the struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe. The discourse regarding land in the *Herald* can be considered as hegemonic as evidenced in the manner in which it described colonial history and presented the ruling party as the sole custodian of the anti-colonial struggle and received initial and widespread rural endorsement. The discourses of the *Zimbabwe Independent* in contrast to the *Herald*, featured claims about violence, property rights and allegations that the ruling party was using the land imbalances in the country to advance its own political interests. The *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses on the land can be regarded as counter hegemonic as they challenged the *Herald*’s interpretation of history.

The discourse on land therefore became a battleground for defining the content and the limits for the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Attempts at making the land

issue more important over any other issue can be interpreted as part of the *Herald's* push to define the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe on terms that were favorable to the ruling party. The *Zimbabwe Independent* countered these representations and accused the ruling party of racializing the land issue for political purposes. This countered the *Herald's* discourses thereby forestalling its emergence as the dominant discourse. It can be argued that this made it less hegemonic as the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses undercut the discourse in the *Herald*.

Ideology of National Interests and Western “Imperialism”

The *Herald's* discourses on the struggle for democracy in the country also focused on economic sanctions and travel restrictions that were imposed by mainly Western countries against mostly key figures in the Zanu PF government. In its representations of the sanctions, the *Herald* discourses directly blamed the opposition for working against the ‘national interests’ in calling for foreign governments to impose sanctions against Zimbabwe. This was despite the fact that most of the sanctions did not affect the economic activities of the country except for those entities that were directly linked or connected to leaders of the Zanu PF government or individuals that were responsible for the violence that gripped the country in the face of the formation of the MDC.

The *Herald* editorials tied the MDC with the sanctions and represented the opposition MDC as working in partnership with foreign countries. This dovetailed with other editorials that consistently linked the MDC with imperialism and neo-colonialism. The overall ideological implication was to reinforce the idea that the opposition was not a homegrown political party but a foreign entity that was pursuing interests of former

colonizers. These interests were presented as anemic to the interests of majority Zimbabweans. The discourse was helpful in bringing out a sharp contrast with the Zanu PF government and opposition.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* also addressed discourses related to the sanctions that were imposed against members of the ruling party by the European Union and the United States. While the *Herald* insisted that the opposition had asked Western countries to impose economic sanctions, the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourse on sanctions pointed out that the Zanu PF government was responsible for sanctions, and the government was supposed to address concerns raised by the foreign countries that had resulted in the imposition of sanctions in the first place. The editorials focusing on the sanctions urged the ruling party to stop violence against opposition supporters, members of civil society organizations and White commercial farmers. The ideological implication of the discourse was to place the blame for economic, social and political problems and unnecessary violence in the country on the ruling party.

The editorials also pointed out that the problems in the country were the responsibility of the ruling party and blaming foreign Western countries was meant to distract people from the violence in the country. With regard to the wider hegemonic implications of the discourse on sanctions, it can be argued that for the *Herald*, it was a consistently running thread in most of its discourses to link the opposition to foreign countries, thereby making them seem unsuitable to defend the interests of the country. On the other hand, the *Zimbabwe Independent* insisted on localizing the issue of sanctions back to the ruling party, thereby offering counter hegemonic discourses that focused on the actions of the Zanu PF government and their responsibility for the political and social

problems in the country hence the poor state of the nation. Under this discursive environment, the hegemonic influence of the *Herald* discourses on nationalism and sanctions were challenged by criticism from the *Zimbabwe Independent*.

Ideologies Normalizing the Status Quo

Related to the above analysis of the discourse regarding sanctions is evidence of how both newspapers responded to the economic and political environment in the country. In the discourses focusing on elections and violence, the *Herald* consistently tied the violence that characterized the elections in 2000, 2002 and 2005 to the opposition MDC and by implication, Western interests. This was despite evidence that most of the victims of the violence were members of the opposition MDC. In a political environment where the police were not taking any action to protect individuals from violence, the *Herald's* discourse on violence always supported the police. When supporters of the MDC reported about violence, the police did not follow up on the reports. There were numerous incidents where ruling party individuals who were accused of engaging in acts of violence were not brought before the courts.

In the face of loss of life and a great number of people being injured in the political violence in the country, every time there were elections, the *Herald* insisted that the elections were free and fair. The *Herald* either underplayed the extent of the violence or dismissed reports as false allegations. This approach from the *Herald* must be understood within the wider political context of the time where there was an international outcry around the world for the breakdown of order and rule of law in the country that made rounds in most of the major global news outlets.

Under these circumstances the ideological thrust of the *Herald's* discourse was to dismiss or diminish the impact of the reports on violence and insist that the political situation in the country was normal. Creating a sense of normalcy can be considered as downplaying the criticism the government was receiving from the opposition, human rights organizations and foreign governments. The *Zimbabwe Independent* reports on how the ruling party was responsible for the violence in the country had the effect of tainting the election victories as achieved with the use of violence. Discourse that emphasized normalcy and underplayed political violence in the country in the *Herald* had the ideological implication of providing political legitimacy to the Zanu PF government that it was winning elections freely and was therefore democratically elected to govern the country.

The *Herald* discourse also had the effect of justifying the political tactics of employing violence as well as intimidating and coercing voters to support the ruling party. The *Herald* editorial discourses therefore legitimized the actions of the ruling party that were disadvantaging the opposition MDC. The discourse cited the holding of elections irrespective of the conditions under which those elections were held, as evidence that the country was fulfilling requirements for conducting democratic elections. Elections were therefore represented as an end in themselves in the *Herald's* discourse on democratization. Arguments such as these were often raised in the *Herald* especially in the context of accusations that the country was undemocratic.

The ideological implications of the *Herald's* discourse on elections and violence must be considered as attempts to create the impression that the political, social and economic situation in the country was as normal as would be found in any Western

country. If there were incidences of violence, the discourse framed them as isolated and the country was fundamentally peaceful.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* also raised issues related to violence especially during times of elections. Consistent with international discourses regarding human rights, the discourse on violence and elections highlighted the ruling party's role in the violence that gripped the country during elections. In Zimbabwe, therefore, the issue of elections became contentious in the struggle for democracy. The ruling party insisted on having elections even under conditions where a lot of people were being killed or injured in the violence. Under these conditions, the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial discourses pointed out that it was not enough to state that the elections were held when they were accompanied by violence and they produced illegitimate results.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials cast doubt or dismissed claims by the ruling party and government controlled media that the ruling party had been democratically elected. Editorials highlighting violence had the ideological effect of weakening the ruling party's claims that it was winning elections freely. The discourses also delegitimized the ruling party's claims of having the mandate to rule as they highlighted that if free and fair elections were to be held in the country, the ruling party was likely to lose those elections. The editorial discourses also highlighted how the ruling party had institutionalized a pattern of violence in the country from when the country attained independence. The discourses on violence countered attempts by the ruling party to paint a picture of stability. The *Zimbabwe Independent's* discourse questioned the electoral process in the country, and by implication, the results of the elections that were held

under conditions that it characterized as inimical to the realization of democracy in the country.

Civil society organizations were also operating in this political environment characterized by violence during times of elections; the interview discourses and their ideological implications reflect this context. This discourse echoed some of the issues that were raised in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and were highly critical of the ruling party for both the violence and the manner in which elections were organized in the country. Individuals from civil society organizations, particularly those that were involved in human rights and elections, decried the political violence in the country. They emphasized the need to observe international standards for the country to conduct credible and legitimate elections.

Key to these interview texts on elections was the need for the country to implement international protocols governing elections to which the country was signatory, such as the African Union (AU) or the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In addition to invoking discourse valorizing international protocols, civil society organization representatives highlighted the need for consistency and for the country to observe United Nations human rights provisions, especially those linked to freedom of assembly and freedom of speech, which they insisted were central to having free and fair elections.

The ideological implication of these discourses was a tendency to emphasize a human rights-based perspective on democracy. This to an extent overlooked the history and current political context of the country. The discourses implicated the assumption

that the adoption of international protocols was central to the struggle for democracy in the country. Interview discourse from civil society organizations, when viewed in relation to discourses in the *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent*, tended to globalize the struggle for democracy in the country. In this respect, its hegemonic appeal was constituted upon acceptance of principles from other global civil society organizations in Africa, Europe and the United States. The ideological implication was to seek solidarity with these organizations and publicize the shortcomings of the electoral system in the country. In this respect, the struggle for democracy in the country was represented as a global struggle similar to other struggles around the world. The overall hegemonic effect was to centralize Western democratic norms as the standard to which Zimbabwe should hold itself. Then, putting a spotlight on political events in the country could possibly result in international pressure and condemnation of the ruling Zanu PF government.

In analyzing the election discourse from the two newspapers and civil society organizations, it is apparent that within the wider context of political developments in the country, the discourses speak to each other in one way or another thereby indicating the existence of interdiscursivity. While the discourse in the *Herald* underplayed the violence perpetrated by alleged Zanu PF supporters and insisted that elections conducted in the country were free and fair, the *Zimbabwe Independent* called for an end to the use of violence. It highlighted that elections conducted under conditions of violence could not be described as free and fair. It blamed violence on the ruling Zanu PF government. Civil society representatives' discourse also called for free and fair elections. The *Herald* also criticized both civil society organizations and the opposition MDC for advancing foreign interests.

Civil society organizations' discourse that emphasized the need for the country to adopt international protocols to guide the conduct of elections in the country played into the hands of government controlled *Herald*, in that they could be accused of advancing foreign interests. This can be interpreted as having the effect of downplaying the credibility and influence of civil society organizations. In the end then, there is evidence from both newspaper and civil society interview discourses that the discourses responded to each other's representations and interpretation of events in the country. Strategies of refutation were used by both newspapers. The *Herald* voiced the ruling party's refutations of being positioned as anti democratic, by pointing to anti-colonial stands, holding elections and land reform. The *Zimbabwe Independent* voiced MDC refutations of being positioned as Western allied imperialists by calling attention to current conditions and decrying violence against citizens.

The Ideology of Human Rights

In some of its editorials, the *Herald* addressed human rights issues related to freedom of the media and expression, freedom of assembly and association and the right to a fair trial. While these issues are regarded as fundamental rights especially in relation to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights, there were numerous instances where these rights were violated. In most of its editorials, the *Herald* either dismissed instances where there were human rights abuses or presented arguments that there were no problems related to human rights in the country. Examples of this include the *Herald's* justification of the media ownership structure in the country that was more favorable to the Zanu PF government when compared to the opposition MDC.

The ideological implications of these arguments can be considered as two pronged. First, the arguments in the *Herald* were provided as rebuttals to accusations and criticism from various human rights organizations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and local civil society organizations that advocated for an environment where there were more private or independent broadcasters and fewer threats to journalists who were already practicing in the country. Claiming there were no abuses acted to forestall calls that were gaining momentum in the country to broaden the ownership of the media and repeal laws that were considered inimical to the operation of the media.

In its understanding of democracy, the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* also addressed issues related to human rights in the country. A number of editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent* for the period under study focused on different aspects of human rights such as freedom of expression, assembly, the right to fair trial, rule of law and an independent judiciary system. Editorials addressing these issues were prompted by detention of journalists working for private newspapers for writing stories critical of the ruling party and government. These editorials were also a response to attacks on judges who were accused of handing down judgments that were regarded as unfavorable to the ruling party. In advocating for the respect of these rights, the editorial discourses relied on the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The discourses were counter discourses in that they challenged the representations from the ruling party and government controlled media that the country was largely peaceful, space was open and incidences of violence were few and isolated.

In contrast to the *Herald*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses showed that there was a systematic pattern of human rights abuses in the country, and placed responsibility for these on the ruling party. It also highlighted that individuals and institutions such as the media and the judiciary that were central to the defense of human rights were being targeted with violence by the government and ruling party. This can be interpreted as an ideological bid of associating the ruling party with the social and political problems in the country. Bringing out human rights abuses had the effect of increasing the credibility of the opposition and the *Zimbabwe Independent* to provide authentic report of conditions experienced. This then debunked the ruling party's accusations of the opposition as a Western puppet. The discourse also addressed issues of responsibility for the political and economic problems in the country. The *Zimbabwe Independent* tied the country's social and political problems to the ruling party, raising questions about their suitability to run the country. The corollary to raising doubts and criticisms of the ruling party was to raise hope and inadvertently give support to the opposition that was represented in most of the discourses as a better alternative to the ruling party.

In addition to human rights, the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials also called for the rule of law and enactment of a new constitution in the country as central to democracy. The editorials pointed out that there was selective application of the law that resulted in supporters of the ruling party not being brought before the law. It also cited examples of the forcible takeover of White owned commercial farms where the police were not stopping the violence. In addition to failure by the police and attacks on the judiciary that were making it difficult to observe the rule of law, the newspaper also argued for the drafting of a new constitution that would put limits to the power of the

executive arm of government. The newspaper argued that numerous amendments to the constitution had rendered it less effective in ensuring the existence of democracy in the country.

At the core of discourses regarding the rule of law and the need for a new constitution was the need to have safeguards to protect people and their human rights, in what the newspaper represented as a pattern of state sponsored violence perpetrated against supporters of the opposition. Rule of law and a new constitution were therefore represented in the discourses as important to entrench democracy in the country and protect individual rights. The discourses emphasized an understanding of democracy that protected ordinary citizens from what it described as excesses of the state. The *Zimbabwe Independent* argued that the constitution should protect minorities especially in the political context where White commercial farmers were being targeted by the ruling party.

The overall ideological implication of the discourses on rule of law and a new constitution can be summed up as making a case for change and reform in the country given how the discourses highlighted the absence of law and order in the country. In addressing issues of anti-colonial history, human rights, elections and violence, rule of law and the drafting of a new constitution, the newspaper provided discourses that challenged and at times repudiated some of the perspectives on the struggle for democracy presented by the ruling party and the government controlled *Herald* newspaper. In doing so, the *Zimbabwe Independent* advanced its own understanding of democracy which was largely based on the need to respect private property, free and fair elections and protecting individuals' rights in order to entrench democracy in the country.

This can be considered as counter hegemonic to *Herald* editorials that underplayed these issues.

Voices from civil society organizations in Zimbabwe became more visible when calls for the democratization of the country began to gather momentum in 1998. As they became more involved in the struggle for democracy, civil society organizations attracted the attention of both political parties in the country. The role of the civil society organizations in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe had been most visible with regard to offering legal protection to victims of political violence and arbitrary arrest, advocacy for media reform, peace building and development. Civil society groups played and continue to play a central role in advocacy for human rights and in the struggle for democracy in the country.

Most civil society organizations emphasized an understanding of democracy that was informed by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Their understanding put a lot of emphasis on civil and political rights. The rights described included among others, the right to freedom of expression, assembly and access to information. The civil society organizations, through interview discourses, offered additional perspectives on the struggle for democracy to those from newspaper discourses. In addition to the centrality of human rights in civil society groups' understanding of democracy, they also emphasized issues of participation and involvement of the general populace in the democratization process. They highlighted the need for people to participate in the election process and for elected representatives to consult the people so that elected officials could not make arbitrary decisions or pass undemocratic laws.

Democracy is also understood as a universal concept that was not supposed to be circumscribed by any local strictures or limitations. They argued that the rights of Zimbabweans were as equally important as the rights of any other human beings elsewhere in the world. These arguments were buttressed by civil society organizations' insistence that the country follow international guidelines and standards when holding elections. Some of the standards included those that had been set up by African regional international organizations such as the African Union and Southern African Development Community. These arguments were advanced in response to the ruling party's arguments that democracy in Zimbabwe should be informed by the country's past especially the anti-colonial history.

Civil society organizations' discourse on democratization that highlighted human rights, participation and the need to follow international standards must be understood within the context of the existing political environment in Zimbabwe especially after the formation of the opposition MDC political party. The environment was characterized by the suppression of civil and political rights, loss of life and violence that precluded many people from expressing their free will. In advocating for democratic change in the country, it appeared insufficient to keep on insisting that the ruling party should observe democratic practices. Under this context, reference to human rights appeared to be the best defense that civil society organization representatives had in responding to a very difficult political environment. The discourse on international standards can be seen as attempts to hold the government accountable to some of the protocols and treaties to which it was a signatory. This became necessary in the context where the ruling party refused to follow through on court judgments related to freedom of the press and arrested

journalists working for the private media for writing stories that were critical of the government and the ruling party.

The discourses from civil society interviews revealed a number of ideological implications related to the struggle for democracy. First, they highlighted the interplay between the local and global relations in the struggle for democracy. Most civil society voices offered a construction of democracy that was underpinned by universal aspirations, bound by local constraints. This contrasted with the context of political control being appropriated by a single political party.

The discourse on human rights as addressed in the three set of discourses above demonstrates contrasting perspectives. The *Herald* established hegemonic influence by underplaying issues related to human rights, dismissing or justifying accusations of human rights abuses by the ruling party, with valorizing the rule of law. The *Herald's* understanding of democracy focused on discourses that were favorable to the ruling party such as anti-colonial history and the land redistribution program favoring “indigenous” Zimbabweans. In emphasizing normalcy especially with regard to the problem of violence, the discourses in the *Herald* focusing on human right became hegemonic calls for anti-colonialism and black land ownership, and violence associated with support of opposition party resulted in lack of voting on the one hand, and election support for the ruling party on the other. This can be considered as evidence of how the discourses in the *Herald* achieved consent.

Given the existence of discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* that emphasized human rights abuses such as the critiques of banning of opposition rallies, arrest of

journalists and civil society leaders, and violence against commercial farmers and opposition supporters, it is possible to argue that the hegemonic influence of the discourses from the *Herald* was not exclusive. This is so because “at any time, forms of alternative or directly oppositional politics and culture exist as significant elements in the society” (Williams, p. 113). In this respect, the discourse in the *Zimbabwe Independent* can therefore be regarded as counter-hegemonic. It must be added that discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* were consistent with the interests of the opposition and civil society groups.

Civil society discourse focusing on human rights must be considered as part of the interdiscursive landscape in Zimbabwe during the study period. Civil society discourses on human rights directly responded to the government controlled newspaper and the ruling party. Discourse from civil society representatives focusing on human rights resembled discourse in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and for that reason can be considered as complementary. Civil society interviews reflected a tendency to take up some of the United Nations human rights provisions without necessarily contextualizing them to the country’s historical experiences. Interview discourses on human rights were also infused with calls for outside countries to intervene or condemn the ruling party. These discourses could be read as hegemonically reproducing the voice of the West as central to democratization.

The ideologies highlighted above on the status quo, the country’s anti-colonial history, land ownership, national interests and imperialism, through to the role of human rights indicated that although different groups and political parties were referring to the same events in the country, they attached different meanings and importance to these

events and issues. The interplay between the different media and civil society organizations as they pursued their interests, went further in showing how discourses were harnessed in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. In sum, the various discourses that characterized ideological frames and group relations in the struggle for democracy were predicated on issues that each of the different groups regarded as their strengths in terms of political appeal. It is for this reason that the *Herald* concentrated on anti-colonial history while the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society organizations emphasized issues related to rule of law and human rights.

CHAPTER 8:

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Theoretical Foundations

Applying Postcolonialism – History and Current Relationships

The use of the post colonial approach in this study highlighted the contradictions that still pervade post independent Zimbabwe. The end of colonialism was supposed to usher in a more democratic political system that was denied during colonialism. In applying post colonial theory to the Zimbabwe situation, discourses from newspaper and interviews texts indicated that while the government changed, the same institutional underpinnings of the colonial government were inherited at independence. This confirms Dirlik's (1997) argument that the "the postcolonial exists as an aftermath, as after – after being worked over by colonialism" (p. 565). This showed not only the legacy of colonialism in the discourses on democratization in Zimbabwe but its continued influence in framing issues using the binaries of colonizer/colonized.

Discourse analysis of the texts revealed that most of the structures that characterized colonial government remained in place. These included repressive laws, the media, legal and educational systems. Institutions of repression were deployed against the opposition in the same manner that they were used during colonialism. The *Zimbabwe Independent* and interview discourses from civil society representatives argued that the denial of basic freedoms after independence was worse than it was during colonialism. The role of the government controlled *Herald* and many other institutions of government also confirmed the relevance of using post colonial lenses in understanding the struggle

for democracy in Zimbabwe. Using a post colonial approach enabled me as Gregory (2004) has pointed out, to “reveal the continuing impositions and exactions of colonialism in order to subvert them, disavow them, and dispel them” (p. 9). In using the post colonial perspective it was possible to show the continued influence of the colonial past in constituting social relations in Zimbabwe.

During colonialism, the *Herald* together with other government controlled media demonized groups involved in the anti-colonial struggle. The same groups that had been demonized in the *Herald* during colonialism, employed the same approaches and tactics that had been used against them, to demonize opposition figures that were critical of their policies. This can be considered as contradictory in the sense that the ruling party that was at the forefront of the anti-colonial struggle and was demonized by the *Herald* now controlled the same newspaper and subjected the opposition MDC to the same experiences they had experienced. This gives credence to the view that much as the political players changed with the end of colonialism, some of the relationships fostered during colonialism between political leaders and citizens did not change. The ruling party ended up stepping into the colonial mainly because of some of the exclusive discourses of nationalism that characterized that anti-colonial struggle that was not open to alternative viewpoints.

Not only did colonialism remain the referent point for the ruling party discourses on Zimbabwe and the struggle for democracy, but it also informed social practices. The ruling party’s view of the world remained Manichean between the colonial past and the anti-colonial struggle that had been fought to end it. In insisting on framing the ruling party’s differences with the opposition as colonialism versus anti-colonialism, there is

evidence of the failure to formulate new narratives in order to deal with the challenges that came with the attainment of political independence. The discourses that ensued as a result of this failure remained trapped within the same dichotomies that had characterized social relations during colonialism. This demonstrated that “the capacities that inhere within colonial past are routinely reaffirmed and reactivated in the colonial present” (Gregory, 2004, p. 7). The use of the post colonial approach then enabled me to bring out some of these colonial continuities that were present in the discourses on democracy.

The postcolonial theoretical approach as pointed by Hegde (1998) is also aimed at critiquing the master narratives of modernity and Enlightenment. In the context of this research, it was possible to establish that some of these master narratives were evident especially in the ruling party’s and the *Herald*’s discourses on nationalism and national identity. This can be exemplified by the fact that the idea of the nation emerged from colonialism. The *Herald*’s discourses that redefined national identity by excluding White Zimbabweans and migrant workers from neighboring countries, shows how tenuous the arguments were, given that the idea of a nation was a product of colonialism itself. The issue of difference, which just as it has been used during the anti-colonial struggle, was again deployed. This echoes Anderson’s (2006) argument that “nation-ness is assimilated to skin-color, gender, parentage, and birth-era- all things one cannot help” (p.143). This position epitomized in the ruling party’s and the *Herald*’s discourses that did not challenge or extend the idea of national identity from the way it was produced during colonialism. It is through the use of the post colonial approach that it became possible to bring out the absence of a clear break or disjuncture with the colonial past.

The continued influence of the colonial past and the challenges of responding to global changes and in the case of Zimbabwe, the end of the Cold War, posed problems of identity. In the second chapter, I pointed out that Dirlik argued that “the end of colonialism presents the colonizer as much as the colonized with a problem of identity” (p. 568). The discourses in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe especially from the government controlled *Herald* can be considered as evidence of identity crisis with regard to what it meant to be Zimbabwean. This was evidenced by attempts to exclude groups of people from participating in the country’s politics despite the fact that they had been previously allowed to participate. The racialization of the land issue which spilled over to national identity can be considered to be evidence of the problem of identity. This is so because there was an attempt to reconfigure the identity of the country in setting up boundaries of who belonged or did not belong to Zimbabwe, if the country can be considered as an “imagined community” (Anderson, 2006).

In a paradoxical way, the ruling party manipulated the colonial legacy to its advantage as evidenced in the manner it associated the opposition as perpetuating colonialism. The ruling party through *Herald* discourses highlighted and represented the opposition MDC as advancing colonial interests, when in fact it was the ruling Zanu PF as the party in government had still not fulfilled the goals of independence. One can point out that colonial history was reproducing itself as evidenced by the repression that members of the opposition experienced in independent Zimbabwe. The repression manifested itself in the violence that was directed against the opposition MDC and its supporters.

Colonial violence was therefore reproduced after independence. This is captured by Fanon (1963) when he said “the violence which governed the colonial world, which tirelessly punctuated the destruction of the indigenous social fabric, and demolished unchecked the systems of reference of the country’s economy, lifestyles, and modes of dress, this same violence will be vindicated and appropriated when, taking history into their own hands, the colonized swarm into forbidden cities” (p. 5-6). A cycle of violence that started during colonialism, continued in the anti-colonial struggles was reproduced after the attainment of independence. Violence emerged in discourses as one of the social practices that were employed by the ruling party. Discourse analysis showed that the ruling party was still using colonial structures to entrench repression and protect its political interests in the same manner that the colonialists had done.

The post colonial approach also proved relevant especially in analyzing some of the discourses on democracy from the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interviews with civil society organization representatives. These discourses emphasized human rights and underplayed the country’s past. The discourses on human rights, which in most instances echoed Western notions and ideas of democracy demonstrates the relevance of the post colonial approach for a number of reasons. Most civil society organizations received their funding from Western countries. This can be considered as a continuation of relationships that were established during colonialism. Secondly, civil society discourses did not problematize some of the human rights discourse it was advocating in order to integrate it with the Zimbabwean context.

In arguing for the relevance of the post colonial approach, Dirlik pointed out that postcoloniality “addresses issues that may have been present all along in global studies

but are now rephrased to attune to issues in global capitalism: Eurocentrism and its relationship to capitalism” (p. 583). The discourses on human rights, much as they were relevant to democracy, were however adopted within the Zimbabwean context in a manner that mirrored conditions under which they developed in the West. Civil society groups in Zimbabwe approached human rights as if they were universal. Postcolonial approaches are critical of the universalizing tendencies of master narratives. Context and history are central to postcolonial analysis and in this study, it proved relevant as the discourses were intertwined with both colonial history and contestation for political domination.

From the foregoing analysis, it is evident that independence did not mark the end of social relations and practices that were informed by colonialism. This context illustrates the value of using postcolonial lenses to understand the transitions from colonialism. The continued use of colonial social, political and economic institutions, inherited at independence, to advance the interest of the ruling party, showed the relevance of the post colonial approach in studying social and political environments such as the one in Zimbabwe. It must also be added that the colonial legacy is now underpinned by globalization as evidenced in opposition and civil society organization discourses that were informed and connected to Western discourses on human rights.

Discourses of History as Contested in the Struggle for Democracy

One of the key attributes of critical discourse analysis is an awareness that discourses cannot be separated from the social, political and economic environment in which it occurs. In the case of this study, the discourses from the two newspapers and interviews with civil society organization representatives were informed by and

connected to the post colonial environment in the country. This is so because the end of colonialism did not mean the resolving of some of the issues that underpinned its experiences. Colonialism also had an institutional legacy as well. In Zimbabwe, most of the institutions that were inherited at independence were established during colonialism and went forward without any major changes. For example, the security forces were used during colonialism against groups involved in anti-colonial struggle in order to prop up the colonial government. The media were also used as propaganda arms of the colonial media. At independence, the government made minimum changes as the institutions remained structured in a manner that was geared to support the ruling party. With regards to the media, the *Herald* was controlled by the colonial government and produced news discourses that advanced the interests of the colonial government. At independence, when the Zanu PF took over from the colonial government, it also took over the *Herald*, which, in contrast to its role during colonialism, now supported the new government.

There was a global link to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Complications emerged when Western countries, Britain and, to a certain extent, the United States, tried to influence events in the country. The tensions that arose as evidenced from the contrasting conceptualizations of democracy in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interview discourses, on the one hand, and the *Herald* on the other, can be considered as evidence of the tensions that arose when there is contestation on the country's history and how it should move from the legacy of colonialism. The *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society discourses represented a more liberal and perhaps forward looking understanding of democracy; whereas, the *Herald* represented the past with an understanding of history that emphasized past glories of the ruling party. The struggle for

democratization in Zimbabwe became the arena where these contesting conceptualizations played themselves out.

Applying Theories of Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning in the Struggle for Democracy

This study addressed cultural identities and how they were constituted and reconstituted in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Both self identifications and representations in discourses had implications for the struggle for democracy. Explicit self identifications were more common in interview discourses with civil society representatives, and representations about others were more common in discourses in the two newspapers.

This study was largely informed by Stuart Hall's definition of representation. Hall (1997) has pointed out that "representation is the production of meaning through language" (p. 28). In this regard, discourses are central to the production of meaning. The production of meaning entails fixing meanings by taking advantage of culture, history and context. In Zimbabwe, the ruling party's ability to produce and fix meanings was largely facilitated by its widespread control of the means of communication such as newspapers, radio and television. There was limited communicative space for alternative viewpoints. In addition, the more limited the communicative space for alternative viewpoints, the stronger the connection between media representations and their consequences on the affected groups.

In the case of Zimbabwe, representations from government controlled newspapers such as the *Herald* were able to hold sway because the government also controlled

television and radio broadcasting. Private broadcasters were banned in the country. The representations from the *Herald* were repeated and echoed in the other government controlled media outlets. It is also important to add that “meaning and meaningful practice is (therefore) constructed within discourse” (Hall, 1997, p. 44). In the government controlled *Herald*, this was achieved through discourse on land, anti-colonial history. These discourses took advantage of the collective memory of colonialism through representations of White Zimbabweans and the opposition MDC as part of the colonial past.

On the other hand, much as the *Zimbabwe Independent's* representations countered discourses in the *Herald*, the newspaper could not do it on the same scale, given the differences between the two newspapers. The *Herald* as a daily newspaper could repeat its representations on a regular basis whereas the *Zimbabwe Independent*, as a weekly, was limited; the weekly could not have managed to possibly counter the representations and demonization of other cultural groups. The *Zimbabwe Independent's* representations were connected to the social practices of groups that were opposed to the ruling party. This is evidenced especially in its editorial discourses that opposed and criticized the ruling party. The *Zimbabwe Independent* fixed and produced meanings that represented the ruling Zanu PF government as repressive and undemocratic on the one hand and the opposition as representing freedom and a more democratic social order on the other. The repeated representations and portrayals of the different groups produced specific meanings that associated the ruling party with the social and economic problems in the country while on the other hand; the opposition MDC and adoption of human rights were represented as a panacea to the country's problems.

In addition, the *Zimbabwe Independent*'s editorial discourses echoed some of the discourses from the opposition and civil society groups especially those regarding human rights and calls for foreign countries to exert pressure on the ruling party. The *Zimbabwe Independent* produced meanings that further polarized the different groups, as it amplified the voices that were critical of the ruling party. The analysis of both the *Zimbabwe Independent* and the *Herald* shows that discourses and representations were not only connected to social practices but also had material consequences as evidenced in some of the resultant actions that were targeted at opposition groups. The two newspaper representations played a significant role in defining democracy through their representations of the different cultural groups in the country. The meanings that were produced by the newspapers became the referent points around which people talked about democracy and the various cultural identities in the country.

Cultural Identity Positioning

In analyzing the various identities that emerged from the discourses, I was informed by cultural identity theory especially the work of Hecht, Collier and Ribeau (1993). This has been extended in Collier (2005a, 2009). Key to the conceptualization of identity is the view that identities “intersect with structurally and socially produced representations and forces such as racism, sexism, classism and other ideologies” (Collier, 2005a, p. 252). This proved especially relevant in the Zimbabwean context where the discourses on democracy and the manner they reconstituted national, political and racial identities was closely linked with colonial history and the representations that were produced in the two newspapers. The bifurcation of identities that was characteristic of the colonial period was revisited during the period of study.

In the Zimbabwe context, cultural identifications were marshaled to reconstitute groups in a way that not only was affected by colonial history but also took advantage of the country's collective memory of colonialism. The reconstitution of national, political and racial identities especially from the government controlled *Herald* reinforced the demonization of White Zimbabweans. This was largely a result of the shared collective memory of colonialism. On the other hand, the demonization of the ruling party in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interview discourses with civil society representatives was based on the economic problems and repression that the people were experiencing at the time of the research. Through newspaper representations and positioning especially in interview discourses with civil society representatives, I showed that “enactment of cultural identifications occurs through varied discursive and textual forms and serves multiple functions to constitute, reinforce, as well as resist institutional structures, ideologies, and social norms, and group, and individual identifications (Collier, 2005a, p. 253).

In applying some aspects of cultural identity theory to this study, various group identity positions emerged. The main group positions were largely influenced by political affiliation. This was mainly because political identity emerged from the discourses as more salient than other forms of identity. This was evidenced in the *Herald* discourses that gave prominence to voices supporting the ruling Zanu PF as has already been mentioned in Chapter Four. The *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses and interview discourses from civil society representatives featured voices that were critical of the ruling party and supportive of the opposition MDC. These discourses were captured in Chapters Five and Six, respectively. The other group identities of race and nationality,

that were also highly contested, were largely underpinned by political identity. The above group positions created relations that were adversarial.

To sum up, the cultural identities that emerged from the newspaper representations and positioning in interviews with civil society representatives showed that histories, institutional structures and ideologies enabled and constrained the different groups to advance their interests. In the relations that ensued from the above discourses, the voices from the *Herald* and ruling party that took advantage of the country's collective memory had appeal to groups especially in rural areas whereas, the voices from the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society representatives drew their influence in urban areas.

Critical Discourse Analysis as Methodology and Method

This study employed Fairclough's (1992, 2003) critical discourse analysis to understand the discourses of democracy and representations and cultural identity positionings and representations in Zimbabwe. The major premises of critical discourse analysis are to uncover relationships between discourses and power relations in society and how discourses constitute social reality and have material consequences. In analyzing the discourses, I focused on three dimensions of analysis. Fairclough proposes a three dimensional model for discourse analysis that starts with the text at the center, followed by discursive practice and lastly social practice. As pointed out by Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) "all three dimensions should be covered in a specific discourse analysis of a communicative event" (p. 68).

I started the analysis by focusing on the ideational aspects of the text which in this research meant focusing on the themes or frames of democracy. This analysis yielded various conceptualizations of democracy that emerged from the different texts. I then followed this with analyzing the interpersonal aspects or group relations by bringing out the various representations of cultural identities that emerged in the three set of texts and analyzing how the identity groups were positioned in relation to each other. The analysis brought to the fore racial, national, and political identities and relations between these groups that were addressed in Chapters Four through to Six.

The second dimension in Fairclough model of discourse analysis focuses on discursive practices. Discursive practice “involves the production and consumption of texts” (Phillips and Jorgensen, p. 68). In the context of this research, this meant focusing on context and structural factors, histories and intertextuality especially with regard to how they influenced the production of the texts from which the various discourses on democracy and group relations took shape. The history of colonialism emerged as central in influencing the production of various discourses. The political context, differential access to resources and scope of distribution affected production of all three texts examined. Consumption was addressed in two ways. The first was uncovering how two newspapers printed critiques, responses and refutations of views from the other political party, thus they directly responded to each other. Aspects addressing consumption also emerged in interviews with representatives of civil society organizations as most of them critiqued representations of groups both inside and outside of Zimbabwe, that had been printed in the government controlled *Herald*. The historical context was intertwined with the various discursive practices around representations and group relations mentioned

above. In the analysis, structural and historical context were included together with the various discourses that emerged in the three sets of texts.

The last dimension in Fairclough's (2003) model refers to social practice. For my study this step entailed focusing on the ideological implications of the various discourses that emerged from the different texts. In addition to focusing on ideology, I also analyzed the social practices in relation to the concept of hegemony, in Chapter Seven. Through critical discourse analysis, it was possible to show that discourses are not free floating entities but are connected to contextual factors such as the country's history and consistency with each of the two major political parties in the country and produced ideological implications.

The relationship between discourses and other macro structures in the country such as politics and economic environment was also evident in the analysis and linked to ideologies and hegemonic force. Through critical discourse analysis it was possible to establish the relationship between how democracy and different cultural groups were described, and the actual actions that were carried out on the ground either to encapsulate specific ways of understanding democracy or subjugating cultural groups. The demonization in some of the discourses contributed to the targeted groups being violently treated and not receiving the protection from the law. In this third step, other concepts such as the order of discourse also proved useful in configuring the different discourses that characterized the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. For instance, there were various groups that were involved in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, each with its own interests that at times were at odds with each other. Applying the concept of order

of discourse allowed the study to bring out the different discourses on the struggle for democracy and the extent to which they influenced the debate in the country.

Overall, the use of critical discourse analysis proved effective in helping me to bring out not only the configuration of discourse in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe but also in establishing the relationship between the discourses and the social practices that ensued as a result of some of the discourses that emerged from newspaper and interview texts.

Summary of Results

This study was largely influenced by the need to understand the role of media and civil society discourse during the unprecedented political, social and economic changes that took place in Zimbabwe at the turn of the century. The research focused on newspaper and interview texts and the discourses that emerged from these texts. This section outlines the key conclusions. Finally, in addition to summarizing key findings, implications of this study for scholars planning to do studies of similar texts or carry out research in political environments such as the one obtaining in Zimbabwe at the time of this study are presented.

Discourses of Democracy

The first research question addressed discourses related to democracy and democratization: How is democratization constructed in media and civil society discourses in Zimbabwe? In order to answer this research question, I analyzed three set of texts; the government controlled *Herald* daily newspaper, the weekly privately owned newspaper, the *Zimbabwe Independent*, and lastly interview texts from 19 representatives of 18 civil society organizations.

Discourses of Democracy in the *Herald*

The analysis of the *Herald* editorial texts brought out key discourses on the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. First, analysis of the editorials showed that the struggle for democracy was connected to the anti-colonial struggle that had ended British colonial rule in Zimbabwe in 1980. The year 2000 was twenty years after the end of British colonial rule, but editorials in the *Herald* framed the differences between the ruling party and the opposition as a contrast between preserving the gains of independence, as opposed to the opposition political party that was represented as wanting to reverse those gains. The *Herald* discourses positioned the ruling party as more patriotic or integrated with the country's anti-colonial history. In contrast, the opposition MDC was positioned as working with foreign countries to bring back the former British colonizers. This was achieved through discourses that positioned the leader of the opposition as a 'puppet' of the British.

The *Herald* discourses on the struggle for democracy also focused on land ownership. In addressing land ownership in the country, the ruling party pointed out that there was need to redistribute land in order to redress colonial imbalances that had resulted in most of the productive land being occupied by commercial farmers the majority of whom were White. The discourses focusing on land highlighted the need to economically empower the largely majority Black population that had been consigned to regions of the country with poor soils and low rainfall. The discourses in the *Herald* consistently established a direct relationship between democracy and ownership of land. As highlighted already, discourse regarding the takeover of commercial farmland was connected to democracy and economic empowerment. The *Herald* editorials argued that

democracy would not mean anything if it was not accompanied by this type of economic empowerment. Interdiscursivity as evidenced in the connection of economic empowerment, land ownership and democracy, became one of the hallmarks of the discourses in the *Herald*.

As already argued, the *Herald* also centered issues related to colonialism. The *Herald* framed political differences between the ruling party and the opposition as a continuation of the struggle to end colonialism. The opposition MDC was accused of supporting White commercial farmers who lost their land as a result of the forced land redistribution program. The editorials also positioned the opposition as receiving foreign funding from Britain, the United States and other countries in the European Union. This positioning cast the political contest in the country as between one political party that wanted to defend the gains of independence and the opposition as reversing the same gains. The discourses in the *Herald* editorials focusing on colonialism reconstituted the narrative of the country's history on terms that were favorable to the ruling party.

Violence especially during times of elections emerged as another key discourse. In its representations of the violence in the country, especially where victims were supporters of the opposition, commercial farmers or members of civil society organizations; the *Herald* either dismissed the violence or underplayed the extent of the violence. In most cases the ruling party was accused of perpetrating the violence. The *Herald* discourses on violence defended the ruling party supporters or the actions of the police who were accused of selectively applying the law by only targeting opposition supporters. Examples of discourses, such as those described above were evident in

editorials that described violence as common experiences even in developed countries such as the United Kingdom or the United States.

Discourses on Democracy in the *Zimbabwe Independent*

The *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses focused on the same issues that were raised in the government controlled *Herald*. Regarding the country's history, the discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* critiqued the ruling party and accused it of being selective and revisionist in touting its contribution to the end of colonialism in the country. The discourses pointed out that the achievement of independence from colonial rule was a collective effort where people from diverse political backgrounds contributed. The discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* also highlighted that the ruling party was rewriting the country's history in order to advance its own political interests. As evidenced in the editorials in the *Zimbabwe Independent*, the country's anti-colonial history included people that cut across political affiliations and cultural backgrounds, and, as such, the end of colonialism could not be attributed to a single group or political party.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* also addressed the land issue in its editorials. The weekly newspaper pointed out that the ruling party and the *Herald* were raising the land issue in order to advance narrow political interests. The discourses questioned why the land issue was being raised twenty years after independence. The analysis showed that for the *Zimbabwe Independent*, the land issue was only raised in the country after the formation of a strong opposition that had the potential to form the next government. It

also pointed out that the land issue had nothing to do with the struggle for democracy in the country, as the people were more worried about the deteriorating economic situation in the country characterized by high unemployment and rising cost of food. The *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed that the land issue, which should have been addressed immediately after the country achieved independence, was meant to distract people from the challenges that they were facing.

The analysis of the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorial texts also brought out the anti-colonial discourses that were raised in the *Herald*. The *Zimbabwe Independent* repudiated the assertions that were made in the government controlled newspaper and pointed out that Zimbabwe was not facing any threat of re-colonization as alleged by the ruling party. The newspaper pointed out that accusations that the opposition was working with foreign governments in order to bring back colonialism were a throwback to a long gone era. The discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* countered the discourses and pointed out that the challenges that many Zimbabweans were facing were not caused by Britain or other Western governments but were a result of the policies that the ruling party had pursued after the end of colonialism. The *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed out that the actions of the ruling party were similar if not worse than those that were practiced under colonialism. The discourse in the newspaper countered the discourses that accused the opposition. In doing so, the weekly newspaper exposed the discrepancies and contradictions in the ruling party's claims for blaming the opposition and foreign countries for problems in the country.

In addition to addressing some of the discourses that were also highlighted in the government controlled *Herald*, the discourse on the struggle for democracy in the

Zimbabwe Independent premised its conceptualization of democracy on the importance of human rights. Discourse focusing on human rights highlighted the need for the government to live up to the international human rights protocols to which it was a signatory. In addressing issues related to human rights, the *Zimbabwe Independent* blamed the ruling party for violence in the country. Most of the violence that was directed against opposition supporters was used as evidence of the need for the government to observe human rights. The arguments for the observance of human rights were buttressed through citation of provisions on human rights in some of the United Nations Declarations and other regional association documents to which the country was a signatory. The discourse on human rights also cited international conventions to defend journalists, especially those working for privately owned media, who were, on numerous occasions, arrested for criticizing the ruling party or other top government officials.

The Zimbabwe Independent's discourse on human rights can also be linked to appeals to the outside world especially Western Europe, the United States and some other countries within the African region to put pressure on the ruling party to stop political persecution of opposition supporters and other human rights abuses that were occurring in the country. In addition to making human rights the cornerstone of its discourses on the struggle for democracy in the country, the *Zimbabwe Independent* also deployed human rights discourses as a way to criticize the ruling party and expose it for violence and suppression of other political rights.

Civil Society Discourses on Democracy

Most of the representatives of civil society organizations cited human rights as central to achieving democracy in the country. What emerged from the analysis of the

interview texts is that implementation of the international human rights conventions to which Zimbabwe was a signatory, was central to the realization of democracy in the country. The human rights that were cited emphasized civil and political rights, like the right to freedom of assembly, association, freedom of expression and many others. With regard to political rights, the representatives emphasized free and fair elections and the right of voters to choose their own leaders without the use of violence and other coercive methods that characterized the political environment in the country.

Civil society discourses on human rights highlighted the lofty ideals of having human rights observed in the struggle for democracy in the country, but texts were not clear on how to translate the discourses into practical tools that could produce democratic gains. In addition to highlighting the importance of human rights, civil society organizations were involved in advocacy work that entailed circulating representations of the problems in the country, especially during international conferences. At these conferences, civil society representatives produced reports that highlighted human rights abuses in the country that were, in most instances, attributed to the ruling Zanu PF party. Ultimately, it can be concluded that the discourses emphasized a moral appeal, but the organizations relied on international organizations and outside influence to try to affect implementation of the human rights policies that they were advocating

Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning

A second goal of this research was to find out cultural representations and identity positions that emerged in newspaper texts and interviews with civil society representatives. The second research question was: What cultural identity positions and

representations emerge in media discourse and interviews with civil society organization staff in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe?

The portrayal of the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe reconstituted many cultural identities through the ways in which some groups were represented and positioned in the context of the political changes. These are reviewed below.

Representation and Cultural Identity Positioning in the *Herald*

The *Herald's* discourses on the struggle for democracy brought new meanings to racial, national and political identities, through the revisiting of past policies and actions, and the political, social and economic environment in the country. Starting with national identity, the discourses in the *Herald* established new boundaries with regard to who belonged or did not belong to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 2006) constituting the political entity of Zimbabwe. In echoing the ruling party's discourse that was characterized by racial and ethnic attacks on White Zimbabweans and other Zimbabweans who originally came from neighboring countries of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, the *Herald* reconstituted nationality by establishing a narrow definition of who was Zimbabwean.

National affiliation was employed to target groups who were represented in the media as not being part of Zimbabwe. Groups that were targeted were positioned as supporters of the opposition MDC. For example, many White commercial farmers whose land was taken over by the government lost their citizenship although most were third or fourth generation Zimbabweans. Some were told that they possessed foreign citizenship, which they had never claimed, in countries such as Britain, New Zealand, Australia, and

South Africa. This resulted in changes to citizenship laws. These changes disenfranchised many White Zimbabweans who were either accused of holding citizenship in other countries because their great-great grandparent came from those countries or as many in the opposition and civil society argued, because they were White. Linking race, national, and political identities, White Zimbabweans, in addition to being targeted in the government led land repossession program, were also accused of providing financial support to the opposition MDC.

After the takeover of the White owned commercial farms by the ruling party, most of the farm workers, who originally had come from Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique, lost both their homes and sources of livelihood. As a result of these negative experiences, the majority of farm workers were represented in the *Herald* discourses as disgruntled and hence likely to support the opposition MDC. The commercial farmers were stigmatized and attacked both physically and through the *Herald's* editorials. The representation and the reconstitution of national identity showed that national affiliation was used by the ruling party to deny many Zimbabweans of their right to vote and participate in the country's politics. The discourses can therefore be characterized as policing the boundaries of what it meant to be Zimbabwean.

Closely linked to national identity was political affiliation. Most of the *Herald* discourses equated the ruling party with the country's anti colonial history and national feelings of patriotism associated with it. In representing the differences between the opposition and the ruling party, the discourses in the *Herald* positioned the opposition as puppets of Western countries such as Britain and the United States. Political relations in the country were polarized as supporters of the opposition were accused of advancing

foreign interests compared to the ruling party which was associated with the anti-colonial history.

Political identity became central to the struggle for democracy in the country as association with any one of the political parties had direct consequences to many individuals in the country. Supporters of the opposition were vilified. This vilification made them the target for political violence by the ruling party. Access to public resources was influenced by one's political affiliation with alleged supporters of the opposition denied service in public offices. Political affiliation polarized the country as either supporters of the ruling or the opposition party. Political affiliation trumped other forms of identity as the most salient identity, as a result of the polarized political environment in the country.

Connected to national and political identity was the racialization of a segment of the population. This mainly arose as a result of the land issue in which the White segment of the population, especially commercial farmers, was demonized. In demonizing and blaming the White community in Zimbabwe for the political and economic problems in the country, the *Herald* discourses on race singled out a group and represented them as responsible for wider structural and institutional problems. Members of the White community were positioned as foreigners and government actions to take over their land without compensation were presented as justifiable. White Zimbabweans were represented as remnants of the colonial era, resisting the government's land reform, and wanted to preserve their privileges while landless and more deserving Zimbabweans struggled economically.

In sum, race was tied to colonial history in order to direct responsibility for problems in the country to a specific group of people. The conclusion that can be drawn from the discourses in the government controlled newspaper is that group identities are generally unstable and fluid, and this is especially evident within the Zimbabwean context. This is probably also the case in many post colonial environments, such as Africa; this instability of group identity positions is more pronounced given an unstable political and economic environment. Given the limited legitimacy of the Zimbabwean government at the turn of the century, the *Herald's* discourses can be read as demonstrating that the ruling party resorted to targeting minority groups in order to shore up its support. The ruling party brought out the land issue in order to appeal to landless Zimbabweans. Given the skewed land ownership patterns in Zimbabwe stemming from the country's colonial past, White commercial farmers became an easy target given both the country's history and the unresolved land problems in the country. The combination of history and the exigencies for political survival for the ruling party eventually coalesced in the political and social environment that generated the discourses from the ruling party that were reproduced in the government controlled newspaper.

Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning in the *Zimbabwe Independent*

Cultural identities featured in the *Zimbabwe Independent* editorials in most cases were responses to the ruling party's positioning of other groups. The *Zimbabwe Independent* countered the *Herald's* discourse on national, political and racial identities. In its editorials that commented on nationality and being Zimbabwean, the *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed out that the ruling party's views and ideas were not consistent with developments elsewhere in the world, belonged to a long gone era, and had no relevance

to challenges the country was facing. The discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* critiqued this narrow definition of nationality and citizenship, highlighting the ways these disenfranchised groups were positioned. The weekly newspaper also argued that national ancestry was not the real problem in the country; as people were more concerned by economic decline, loss of jobs, violence and the repression that they were experiencing at the hands of the ruling party.

The highly polarized political environment that catapulted political identity to be more salient than other forms of identity was also blamed on political coercion and violence that the *Zimbabwe Independent* alleged was being committed by supporters of the ruling party and security forces, such as the police and the army. In countering the discourse that associated the ruling party with anti-colonial struggle and the opposition as advancing foreign interests, the *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed out that the opposition was borne out of the misrule and economic mismanagement that had characterized the ruling party's takeover of government from colonial rule. The threat of foreigners taking over the country or the opposition being sponsored by Britain and other Western countries were represented as weak attempts by the ruling party to run away from its responsibilities.

The *Zimbabwe Independent* also critiqued the racialization of the land issue in the country. In most of the editorials that addressed the violence that engulfed the country during the land reform program, the discourses in the weekly newspaper pointed out that the government could still have carried out an orderly land reform program without vilifying a racial minority in the country. It also pointed out that White commercial farmers were not responsible for land policies because as the ruling party had the

opportunity to address land issues during the first 20 years of independence. In dismissing both the physical attacks and the discourses that maligned the White community in Zimbabwe, the *Zimbabwe Independent* pointed out that there was a pattern of violence in the country every time the ruling party faced a strong opposition. It cited as evidence the killing of the Ndebele ethnic minorities during the early years of independence because the leader of a strong opposition at that time was a member of that group. In its representation of cultural identities, the *Zimbabwe Independent* countered both the ruling party and its positions that were represented in the government controlled *Herald* newspaper.

Representations and Cultural Identity Positioning in Civil Society Interviews

What emerged from the interview texts was that the positioning of different groups was closely intertwined with the social, political and economic environment in the country. Most civil society representatives pointed out that the changes in how various cultural groups were viewed in the country had largely been influenced by the politics in the country. Chief among these political changes was the politicization of the land reform program. Most representatives pointed out that land only became an issue when a strong opposition was formed.

It was through the politicization of the land issue that other forms of identity came to the fore. Interviewees noted that the forcible taking away of the land from the largely White commercial farmers meant that race became central to the struggle for democracy in the country. Representatives of civil society organizations pointed out that the ruling party resorted to using the land issue as it was a very emotive issue given the country's colonial history. Interviewees agreed that White commercial farmers and the larger White

community in Zimbabwe became associated with the colonialism of the past and were being unjustly blamed for the country's economic and political problems. Racial relations in the country were negatively affected and most civil society organizations' representatives pointed out that the ruling party and government controlled media, such as the *Herald*, were fueling the disaffection that was directed against the White minority.

Civil society organization representatives pointed out that with the formation of the opposition, racial identity became linked to national identity. The *Zimbabwe Independent* refuted the representations of the ruling party such as the opposition wanting to reverse the gains of independence by advancing interests of the former British colonizers and White Zimbabweans supporting the opposition MDC, in order to protect colonially acquired privileges. Both history and the political interests of the ruling party combined to make both racial and national identities central issues to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. In singling out White Zimbabweans and associating them with the opposition, the discourses cast them outside the protection of the law. This can be explained by how repressive governments tend to target minorities when confronted with a strong opposition.

Many representatives of civil society organizations pointed out that political identity gained more salience compared with other forms of identity, especially during the period of study. Their responses showed that the country was polarized on either being a supporter of the ruling Zanu PF party or the opposition MDC. Most civil society organizations were accused of advancing foreign interests and this was linked to the funding that they received from foreign donors mainly from Western Europe and the United States. The analysis of civil society interview discourses showed that race,

national and political identity were closely linked in the struggle for democracy in a complex relationship that brought out the country's colonial past in order to cause disaffection to minority groups as a way of advancing the political interests of the ruling party.

Put together, the discourses on the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe from the *Herald*, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interview with civil society representatives all point to the fact that the turn of the century ushered in a highly politicized political environment that was underpinned by the formation of a strong opposition party that in turn set in motion a chain of events that brought out underlying unresolved political issues in Zimbabwe. The combination of all these factors made race, national and political identity salient in the struggle for democracy in the country. The discourses from the two newspapers played a role in shaping the debate on the struggle for democracy. The country's colonial history emerged as a contested terrain with various groups presenting competing narratives of that history and what constituted being Zimbabwean.

Ideology and the Struggle for Democracy

The third goal of this study was to find out the ideological implications of the various discourses on the struggle for democracy and the representations and positioning of various cultural identities. This goal is captured in the third research question posed: What are the ideological implications of discourse and counter discourses in media and interview discourses?

To address this research question, I applied Hall's definition in which he defined ideology as "systems of representation composed of concepts, ideas, myths or images in

which men and women live their imaginary relations to the real conditions of existence” (Hall, 1985, p. 103). Newspaper and interview discourses produced different meanings, ideas and concepts of democracy, positions and relations between groups.

In summarizing the ideological implications of the various discourses that emerged in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, key ideological issues can be highlighted. The discourses in both the *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* together with interviews with civil society organization representatives brought out counter discourses and ideologies of anti-colonialism with the colonizer identified as the West or the current ruling party, racialization of land ownership, national interest and Western imperialism, normalizing of the status quo and lastly human rights.

The ruling Zanu PF party through discourses in the *Herald* newspaper advanced the need for continued surveillance against Western imperialism, anti-colonial vigilance, racialized land reform as economic advancement, and portrayals that violence was comparable to other countries and human rights of deserving Zimbabweans were protected in the current status quo.

Central to understanding the ideological implications of the various discourses is the need to bring out how ideologies interpellated (Althusser, 1972) various groups and social actors into particular positions. Interpellation can be defined as “the process through which language constructs a social position for the individual and thereby makes him or her an ideological subject” (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002, p. 15). Discourses in the *Herald* for example, interpellated members of the opposition MDC and civil society organizations as agents of Western governments and imperialists. White Zimbabweans

were also interpellated as foreigners and wanting to perpetuate colonialism. On the other hand, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and discourses from civil society interpellated the ruling party and its supporters as violent and oppressive.

The above subject positions were contested as evidenced by the counter discourse that characterized the representations from the two newspapers and interview discourses. The various ideologies and the meanings they produced through discourses “allowed subjects to recognize themselves in the discourses” (Hall, 1985, p. 107). The discourses then played the role of establishing subject positions for different cultural groups implicated in the struggle for democracy.

The discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and in interviews with representatives of civil society organizations were ideological in the manner they highlighted issues of human rights abuses and political repression in the country. These discourses were consistent with countering the ruling party’s representations. In countering the ruling party, the discourses in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and interviews interests of the opposition. The opposition was represented especially in the *Zimbabwe Independent* as fighting to establish genuine democracy in the country, that the ruling party had failed to establish. Human rights as fundamental to democracy throughout the world became means of contrasting between the ruling party’s policies and actions and those of the opposition and positioned the ruling party as violating international codes and laws.

The above summary shows that in countering the ruling party and the *Herald*, the *Zimbabwe Independent*’s ideological criticism was underpinned by a view of democracy

that emphasized human rights and individual freedoms. The *Zimbabwe Independent* discourses were also underpinned by an emphasis on the need for the country to conform to international standards that in most cases referred to Western views of democracy. In contrast, the ideological foundations of the *Herald* discourse were based on a call for continued anti-colonial vigilance. The struggle for democracy, therefore, was then an ideological contestation between these two competing groups.

Counter/Public Sphere and Struggle for Democracy

The concept of the public sphere was incorporated in the research in order to understand the role that the media and other civil society organizations played in the struggle for democracy. The public sphere concept largely refers to the communicative space between private capital and the state where “freedom was to be found in public, though of course the public realm of autonomous citizens rested on the private autonomy of each as master of a household” (Calhoun, 1992, p. 6). In the case of this study, it proved difficult to apply this to the Zimbabwean situation largely because of the absence of the conditions that Habermas pointed out were necessary for the existence of a public sphere. It is however the theorization of counter public spheres that proved relevant and useful in this research. Asen (2000) has argued that “counterpublics emerge as a kind of public within a public sphere conceived as multiplicity” (p. 88). Whereas for Habermas, the public sphere was a single entity, that only allowed privileged members of society to participate, for Asen, “counterpublics signal that some publics develop not simply as one among a constellation of discursive entities, but as explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the interests of potential participants” (p. 88).

In the case of Zimbabwe, the struggle for democracy was characterized by discourses that were exclusive of other cultural groups. The concept of counter publics in its recognition of differences extends Habermas' initial conceptualization by recognizing differences and the difficult, for a single public sphere to provide meaningful interaction necessary for participation in the democratization process. The struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe was characterized by differences in both the conceptualization of democracy and among the cultural groups that were involved. Instead of thinking of a single public sphere to accommodate these differences, Zimbabwe may be better understood by counter public spheres, what Asen and Brouwer (2001) argued as "many publics arise as well from the demands made by long-suppressed and marginalized groups for the rights and responsibilities of political membership, collective sovereignty, or both" (p. 2).

The role of the various discourses in the struggle for democracy and the way discourses constituted identities confirm the need for communicative space for different groups in society. In a society characterized with diverse cultural groups such as Zimbabwe, the public sphere cannot be conceptualized as a single entity where all groups can equally participate. The publicly funded media such as the *Herald* did not include alternative views, but were used to advance narrow interest of the ruling party. The ruling party at particular times dominated the public sphere. In Zimbabwe, as in other politically contested spaces there is no single public sphere. In the case of Zimbabwe, this could have been achieved through the opening up of communicative space such as radio and television as this would have allowed other groups to both counter negative representations and also project their own viewpoints. The application of the concept of counter public sphere to this study established the imperative for allowing other media

outlets especially broadcasting media to operate in the country as alternatives to those controlled by the government.

Broadening the communicative space to alternative voices would, in turn, extend the public spheres. This position is being advanced in relation to groups such as the opposition, White Zimbabweans and others who were not supportive of the ruling party and whose voices were missing in most of the discourses on democratization. Other than the limited space that was offered by the *Zimbabwe Independent*, most of these groups did not have a wide array of choices that they could have used to counter the demonization and negative representations in the government controlled media such as the *Herald*.

The fact that some of the discourses went unchallenged gave some of the discourses hegemonic force that they might not have achieved had they been countered by alternative positions. After the year 2000, the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society organization voices were able to create a counter public sphere, at least in urban areas. The concept of public sphere is also relevant to civil society organizations in that many pointed out that it was difficult to find communicative space where other members of the public could freely join without fear of persecution from the ruling party. This study therefore shows the relevance of the concept of counter public spheres to the creation of spaces for democratic engagement.

The results of this research showed that in Zimbabwe it was possible for one group to own and control most of the media outlets and at the same time claim to provide open access to interests of diverse groups in the country. Both newspapers tended to

serve specific political interests. The cause for democratization is advanced by allowing a multiplicity of groups to own and control their own media. This gives the opportunity for a multiplicity of voices that ordinarily would not be heard or have a chance to position themselves and also respond to the representations and positioning that they might get from other groups. In the case of Zimbabwe, cultural groups that did not have as much access to media outlets were marginalized without necessarily having the opportunity to defend their position or space to proffer their own positions.

In as much as the concept of counter-publics provides possibilities to engender a more democratic environment, there are a lot of constraints to counter-public spheres in Zimbabwe. This is mainly because of the numerous laws that limit the ability of private individuals, civil society organizations and private media outlets to exercise some of the basic human rights that are consistent with a democratic political dispensation. In addition to this limitation, independent voices are marginalized in government controlled media such as the *Herald* as already shown.

As the concept of counter public spheres highlighted above shows, many societies, including Zimbabwe, are characterized by cultural differences and these differences can be featured in a media structure that enables diverse ownership of the media. Although this might not guarantee a democratic environment, it may offer a platform that might be important for democracy. Given the above arguments and the situation in Zimbabwe, the question that will always remain is whose idea of democracy is advanced at any historical moment.

Democracy

As this study demonstrates, democracy takes many forms. This research was largely informed by Cohen and Arato's (1992) theorization of civil society. Cohen and Arato linked democracy to civil society. The idea of civil society also implicates the media, as they are part of civil society. Cohen and Arato argued that democracy must be anchored by individuals who are capable of forming associations, and able to freely communicate and interact in those civil society organizations. It can be argued that civil society organizations, when complemented by the existence of a multiplicity of media outlets, might help in establishing a more democratic political dispensation. The question then becomes what type of democracy can emerge, and who is served by such a democracy?

From analyzing discourse on democracy in Zimbabwe, what emerged was what some scholars have categorized as democracy with adjectives. As Collier and Levitsky (1997) have pointed out "the global wave of democratization has presented scholars with the challenge of dealing conceptually with a great diversity of postauthoritarian regimes" (p. 30). In Zimbabwe, for the ruling party, the mere fact of holding elections was taken as evidence of Zimbabwe being a democratic country. The holding of elections cannot however be considered as adequate for democracy to be realized as was the case in Zimbabwe where elections were characterized by violence and other manipulations. What therefore emerged in Zimbabwe was a democracy that should be qualified with additional adjectives. The democracy advocated by the ruling party can be described as dominant party rule or authoritarian democracy. This is mainly because of the continued

dominance of the ruling party in the country's politics despite some inroads made by the opposition.

While there are many various ways in which democracy can be defined, each definition benefits some groups more than others. In the case of Zimbabwe, my preferred view of democracy entails addressing historical colonial imbalances such as land ownership, and, at the same time, recognizing the freedom of individuals to assemble, associate and communicate through civil society organizations of their choice. Democracy should not entail violence as illustrated in the discourses about conditions in Zimbabwe. Democracy should be anchored upon freely associating individuals and this can be considered as a starting point towards continued efforts to attain democracy in Zimbabwe.

This type of democracy is still an ideal in Zimbabwe; given the hegemonic influence of the ruling party, such open engagement is unlikely for some time. This is mainly because much as the discourses that emerged might enable some people, they also constrained most of the people. For example, the *Herald* discourses constrained and limited the agency of the opposition, civil society organizations and private media organizations. The use of violence and other forms of repression constrained citizens in participating in the country's politics. Much as discourses regarding land redistribution were aimed at addressing colonial land imbalances, land redistribution ended up being implemented in a chaotic manner because of the politicization of the issue. Overall, then the discourses limited the agency of many Zimbabweans because of its exclusivity.

On the other hand, the discourse in the *Zimbabwe Independent* and from interviews with civil society representatives, much as it advocated for human rights to enable citizens to participate in the country's politics, it constrained voices of land ownership and history. The failure to contextualize human rights to the Zimbabwean context limited the influence of the discourses especially in instances where the discourses ended up being framed by the ruling party as attempts to bring back colonialism. Given the polarized political environment during the period under study, the discourses that were produced by the two newspapers and civil society interviewees limited the agency of Zimbabweans to participate in the democratization process.

Methodological Challenges: Doing Research in Zimbabwe

Every research context and environment poses challenges to the researcher. At times these challenges have implications to the research methods that are applied as they can influence the practical steps that one has to take in order to access either documents or research subjects. In this study, the researcher faced a number of challenges that are highlighted below. Before highlighting these challenges, I first need to highlight that I am originally from Zimbabwe and studying in the United States. I came to the United States in July, 2007 and went back to Zimbabwe in July 2010 to collect data, after spending three years in the United States.

In order to carry out this research, I had to access archives of the two newspapers. I also had to access various civil society organizations in order to carry out interviews with representatives of these organizations. Accessing the government controlled newspaper and some civil society organizations proved difficult for a number of reasons. Revealing that I was studying in the United States proved to be both a risk and an

opportunity. It was a risk especially in accessing the *Herald*, as I was treated with suspicion for the mere fact that I was studying in the United States. This was despite the fact that I am Zimbabwean. The process of gaining access required negotiation to be allowed to use the newspaper's library. The negotiation of access brought into focus issues of the relationship between myself as a researcher and the subject material that I was researching.

The difficulties in accessing newspapers from the *Herald* were affected first by the political environment. The political polarization in the country and suspicions about those who had spent time in Western countries trumped many other similarities of identity, such as being Zimbabwean. This can be possibly explained by the fact that given the association and demonization of countries such as the United States in the *Herald* discourses, it became taken for granted that people who were studying or had visited the country were in some way working to advance interests that could be considered detrimental to Zimbabwe. This raises issues about carrying out research in environments that are politically charged as was the case in Zimbabwe.

The above experiences showed that it was not enough to insist that one was a researcher in order to be able to carry out the research. I had to cajole and present necessary documentation over and over to prove that I was a bonafide student who just wanted to carry out research. This negotiation required that I had to be patient and develop a working rapport with most of the people with whom I interacted. This showed that doing research under conditions as those existing in Zimbabwe ceased to be just an academic endeavor as my national and professional identities were questioned. My experiences showed the extent to which politics had permeated most levels of interaction

such that I had to negotiate these identities in order to gain the necessary documents central to this research. In contexts such as Zimbabwe, my avowed identities of being Zimbabwean, a researcher and communication professional were not enough to allow me to carry out the research. Studying in the United States invited ascriptions of extra layers of identity which I had not anticipated going into the research. These ascribed identities were largely informed by the political developments in the country.

The above experiences at the *Herald* contrasted sharply with the experiences that I had interviewing representatives of civil society organizations. 19 representatives from 18 civil society organizations agreed to be interviewed for this study. I experienced difficulties and could not carry out interviews with representatives from five additional organizations. For the organizations whose representatives agreed to be interviewed, mentioning that I was studying in the United States generated a positive disposition toward me; they were willing to answer all my research questions. There was also a willingness to share information about the work they do. In interacting with most of them, they positioned me as a researcher who probably could understand and perhaps was politically aligned with the work that they were doing. Despite the polarized political environment, civil society organizations were willing to share their experiences.

I also had the same experience at the *Zimbabwe Independent* where I was quickly granted access to the newspaper's library. The above brought to my attention that as a researcher, from these organizations' perspectives, I was positioned as if I shared their viewpoints with regards to the political divisions in the country. I also realized that whereas the fact I was studying in the United States was a hindrance with the government controlled newspaper, with many of the civil society organizations, this proved to be an

advantage. I also realized that as a researcher studying in the United States I had some privileges that enabled me to be positioned in that manner. First, I had the privilege of leaving the country at a time when the political and economic environment in the country had deteriorated and this spared me some of the hardships that a lot of people who stayed behind had to endure. I had the economic means to travel and support myself while in Zimbabwe. My race and sex along with class positioning also gave me credibility. Again, because of my educational and professional background, some members of the organizations, who also shared the same background, could identify with me. That might have made accessing the organizations less difficult.

In contrast to the nineteen civil society representatives that granted me interviews, I failed to gain access to five organizations despite several attempts to do so. Initially I sent emails to the organizations but these were not answered. After phoning the organizational offices, I was either told to phone again or given a date for the interview. On visiting the organizations, some denied me entry or told me to come again the following day. This went on for weeks with three of the organizations. After being promised interviews, at times the organizational representatives asked me to provide more information showing that I was a student and to guarantee that I would use the information for research purposes only. Two of the five organizations openly refused to carry out interviews with me.

In speaking with other civil society representatives, they said that the refusal of access could largely be explained in terms of the experiences of some members of the organizations. Some members of these organizations that refused to grant me interviews had either been arrested or violently treated by security forces in the country. As such

they were suspicious of interacting with members of the public whom they did not know. This showed that carrying out research was affected by the political environment in the country as researchers were subject to suspicion that was largely informed by the political environment in the country.

Given the above challenges and experiences of carrying out research in political environments such as in Zimbabwe, scholarship cannot be separated from the context in which it is carried out. My relationship as the interviewer with the interviewees was contingent in that it had to be negotiated and cultivated at the time of the research. The relationship was also contingent on the prevailing political situation in the country. The political polarization in the country meant most issues were judged or evaluated through the political lenses. As a researcher, I had to tread a very fine and delicate line of remaining ethical and at the same time not showing any signs or indicators that could be misconstrued as belonging or sympathetic to any of the political divisions in the country. This issue was made complex by the fact that I had to do this with organizations that were on the opposite ends of the political wavelength in the country, and yet recognizing assumptions of my being aligned with oppositional politics did increase my access to one newspaper and many civil society organizations. While with the *Herald*, I was considered as an outsider who could not be given easy access to the newspaper that I was researching.

Outside of that experience, and, the five organizations that refused to grant me interviews, otherwise I was accepted without facing many hurdles. However, even for the organizations where the opportunity to do the interviews was granted, as a researcher I

still had to ensure that the representatives of these organizations understood that I was doing research. I could not endorse or give them any other support.

The above experiences showed that doing research in environments such as the one in Zimbabwe require sensitivity to the political and social context. In addition to knowing and understanding the political environment in the country, there is also need to be able to negotiate relationships with interviewees in each specific situation.

Strengths, Limitations and Future Research

This study was limited to focusing on analysis of the newspaper and interview texts as a starting point for understanding the struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe, and creating a basis upon which other studies can build. It is also important to highlight that there is very limited literature on the communication implications of the events that unfolded in Zimbabwe starting in 2000, and this research therefore can be a starting point for analysis. This study nonetheless, managed to offer possible accounts for the connections between discourses and audiences, and connecting discourses to actions, other political developments and conditions in Zimbabwe.

The struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe included many groups beyond the major political parties that were included in this study. The media together with other civil society organizations were key institutions through which citizens could come together to address their concerns with regards to democratization. This study included 19 interviews from 18 civil society organizations and two newspapers. Given the difficulties of negotiating access with other civil society organizations addressed above, it was not possible to conduct interviews with some civil society organizations that have

been central to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. These organizations include those involved in broader women's issues especially with regard to their participation in the political and economic life of the country. Other groups that have also been central, but for which access could not be obtained, include professional organizations for teachers who have been central to the struggle for democratization in the country. Inclusion of these groups could have broadened the diversity of the groups and the issues that could have been addressed in this study.

This research was focused mainly on organizations that are based in urban areas. This can be largely attributed to imperatives governing social, political and economic life in places such as Zimbabwe where most of the activities tend to be concentrated in urban areas, especially in the capital. In this regard, perspectives from the rural segment of the Zimbabwean population were not included. This was because of the structural issues and limited access and financial resources. Future research focusing on the struggle for democratization especially in rural areas can complement findings from this dissertation.

Lastly, this study drew from two contrasting sets of newspaper editorials in order to understand the struggle for democracy in the country. The media structure and ownership patterns were heavily skewed in favor of the ruling party because of the government's ownership of the only licensed television broadcaster and four radio stations in the country. Future research might uncover how they played a central role in either complementing or amplifying ruling party voices.

Further research on the struggle for democratization in Zimbabwe would need to address this and the relationship between the discourses in the government controlled

newspapers and radio and television in projecting the interests of the ruling party. The research could also have been extended to other private newspapers in order to capture the broadest range of discourses from entities that were outside the control of the ruling party. It must be however pointed out that there hasn't been a privately owned daily newspaper over the period of study that has been consistently published in the country, as the ones that have existed before have either been shut down by the government, or closed because of economic viability problems. Inclusion of other privately owned newspapers other than the *Zimbabwe Independent*, nonetheless would further extend and complement the conclusions that are drawn in this research.

Applications

Training programs that highlight these issues could benefit journalists working in various media, not only to be sensitive to the rights and interests of minority groups, but also to exercise restraint even under conditions where they are pressured to demonize some sections of the country's population based on their racial, ethnic, geographical, sexual orientation or political affiliation. Training of that nature would go a long way in entrenching a more democratic society especially considering the central role that the media can play. The quest to improve the role that journalists and other media practitioners can play in society is largely informed by the understanding that the media, among many other institutions, are central to the struggle for democratization. Media reform should involve welcoming alternative press and broadcasting institutions, though this is not likely given the current laws and policies and influence of the ruling party.

The research can also be applied to civil society organizations especially in linking their struggle for democracy with the history of the country. Along with some of

the discourses from the *Herald* that offered an insular view of history, civil society organizations tended to latch on to discourses of globalization without taking into consideration the country's history. Discourses from both the government controlled *Herald* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* and civil society groups tended to be mutually exclusive with regard to issues that they considered important. Considering the complex nature of the colonial legacy and how the world is increasingly globalized, the struggle for democracy cannot be an "either" "or" proposition as there is need recognize these complexities. Civil society organizations can benefit from this study by understanding that contributing to a polarized political environment has consequences for how they are positioned when linked with the opposition and the structural constraints that then limit their agency. Consequences include becoming targets of violence and their abilities to do their advocacy work becoming even more limited.

Conclusions

This study showed that the struggle for democracy in formerly colonized countries such as Zimbabwe is complex as evidenced by the contested nature of the colonial legacy and its collision with aspirations for democracy. The study also revealed that very little has changed from the days of colonialism; the rulers may have changed but the domination has not. The study highlighted that democracy as a value and aspiration was a contested term with various groups' conceptualizations of the democratization process informed and influenced by their political affiliation. For the ruling party, democracy meant reviving the history of colonialism and bringing the land issue as central to the attainment of democracy. One party dominance was defined as "democratic" because elections were held. This raises questions with regard to what

democracy requires. On the other hand, the opposition, private newspaper and civil society organizations emphasized human and individual rights as keys to democracy, and the need for external pressure through sanctions in order to advance the cause of democratization. Further, they critiqued the one party domination and argued that the ruling party was not freely elected. Thus, there was a struggle to constitute as well as enact democracy in the country.

Cultural identities were also reconstituted through discourse and were subordinated to the interests of the two major political parties. The contestation for political hegemony became the prism through which cultural identities in the country were re-negotiated. The re-negotiation resulted in national, racial and political identities becoming more salient during the period of study. The struggle for democratization therefore remain a challenge that still need to be addressed in Zimbabwe, as the country tackle the post colonial problems.

To review, the turn of the century witnessed major political changes in Zimbabwe. For the first time in the country's political history, the ruling party lost in the country's constitutional referendum. This was then followed by a closely fought election in the same year which the ruling party barely won. These two events resulted in a weakened ruling party that had to contend with sharing political space in parliament with a very emboldened and strong opposition party. These political shifts had consequential effect in both the direction of the country and the resultant discourse that accompanied the changes. Some of these changes include the forcible takeover of mainly White owned commercial farms, attacks on private business, political violence mainly directed against supporters and members of the opposition MDC political party. These political changes

were underpinned by the heightened political contestation for political space. Under this environment, there are discursive struggles to fix the meaning of what constitute democracy that play out in civil society, governmental and private media forums.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A : IRB Approval	267
APPENDIX B : List of Civil Society Organizations	269
APPENDIX C : Invitation to Participate in a Research Study	270
APPENDIX D : Interview Guide	273
APPENDIX E : Consent to Participate in Research	275



APPENDIX A

THE UNIVERSITY of NEW MEXICO

Main Campus Institutional Review Board

Human Research Protections Office

MSC08 4560

1 University of New Mexico~Albuquerque, NM 87131-0001

<http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/>

24-Jun-2010

Responsible Faculty: Mary Collier

Investigator: Cleophas Taurai Muneri

Dept/College: Communication Journalism

SUBJECT: IRB Approval of Research - Initial Review - Modification

Protocol #: 10-245

Project Title: Negotiating cultural identity in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe: Postcolonial transitions and endurance.

Type of Review: Expedited Review

Approval Date: 24-Jun-2010

Expiration Date: 23-Jun-2011

The Main Campus Institutional Review Board has reviewed and approved the above referenced protocol. It has been approved based on the review of the following:

1. Expedited New Study Application dated 5/7/2010
2. protocol dated 6/1/2010
3. interview guide dated 5/7/2010
4. consent form dated 6/24/2010

Consent Decision:

Requires a signed consent form

HIPAA Authorization Addendum not applicable

If a consent is required, we have attached a date stamped consent that must be used for consenting participants during the above noted approval period.

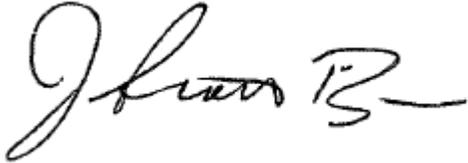
If HIPAA authorization is required, the HIPAA authorization version noted above should be signed in conjunction with the consent form.

As the principal investigator of this study, you assume the following responsibilities:

- **CONSENT:** To ensure that ethical and legal informed consent has been obtained from all research participants.
- **RENEWAL:** To submit a progress report to the IRB at least 30 days prior to the end of the approval period in order for this study to be considered for continuation.
- **ADVERSE EVENTS:** To report any adverse events or reactions to the IRB immediately.
- **MODIFICATIONS:** To submit any changes to the protocol, such as procedures, consent/assent forms, addition of subjects, or study design to the IRB as an Amendment for review and approval.
- **COMPLETION:** To close your study when the study is concluded and all data has been de-identified (with no link to identifiers) by submitting a Closure Report.

Please reference the protocol number and study title in all documents and correspondence related to this protocol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott Tonigan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "B" at the end.

J. Scott Tonigan, PhD
Chair
Main Campus IRB

* Under the provisions of this institution's Federal Wide Assurance (FWA00004690), the Main Campus IRB has determined that this proposal provides adequate safeguards for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects involved in the study and is in compliance with HHS Regulations (45 CFR 46).

APPENDIX B

Civil Society and Community Organizations in Zimbabwe

African Forum for Catholic Social Teaching

Bulawayo Agenda

Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe

Center for Community Development in Zimbabwe

Center for Peace Initiatives in Africa

Christian Alliance of Zimbabwe

Crisis Coalition Zimbabwe

Media Institute of Southern Africa – Zimbabwe Chapter

Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe

National Constitutional Assembly

Radio Dialogue

Research and Advocacy Unit

Sokwanele Zimbabwe

Solidarity Peace Trust of Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Election Support Network

Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum

Zimbabwe Liberators' Platform

Zimbabwe National Students Union

APPENDIX C

Invitation to participate in a research study

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research conducted by Cleophas Taurai Muneri, Doctoral Candidate in the Department of Communication & Journalism at the University of New Mexico, U.S.A. The overarching goal of this study is to understand the role of civil society organizations in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. In order to understand this, the research seeks to understand the role of civil society discourse in the construction of cultural identities in Zimbabwe. This research project is designed to interview staff members in civil society and community organizations in Zimbabwe in order to understand your experiences with the democratization process, the communication strategies that you have used to meet political, economic and social challenges in the country, influence of these experiences on your cultural identity and how this has affected the democratization process in Zimbabwe.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to conduct interviews with individuals who are working with civil society and community organizations in Zimbabwe in order to get information about their views on the process of democratization and how this has affected or influenced their cultural identities. The research also entails discourse analysis of publicly available archives and texts. The specific research questions that this research seeks to address are (a) how is democratization conceptualized in media and civil society/community organizational discourses in Zimbabwe, (b) what cultural identity positions emerge in media discourse and interviews with civil society and community organization staff in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe, (c) what are the ideological implications of discourse and counter discourses in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe? This research is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the doctoral program that the researcher is undertaking at the University of New Mexico in the U.S.A. The results will be presented as a dissertation to the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico and will be published in communication journals and/or as book chapters on communication and democracy. The other goal is to develop frameworks or models that can be used to understand how cultural identities are influenced or affected by the struggle for democratization. The interviews will go a long way in developing these frameworks. At your request, manuscripts can be sent to you when they are submitted for publication in journals and or book chapters.

Why are you being contacted?

You are being asked to participate in this study based on the following reasons: (a) because you are working with an organization involved in issues related to human rights, peace building, community development, social and political advocacy and professional development, (b) you are a staff member with any of the above mentioned organizations, (c) your organization is located in Harare, Bulawayo or other locations in Zimbabwe, (d) you are a Zimbabwean citizen, and (e) you are willing to talk about democratization in Zimbabwe.

What are the procedures?

If you decide to participate in the study, the interview will be held at your organization or any other place that is most convenient to you and where we can have a private, uninterrupted interview. The researcher who is from Zimbabwe will conduct the interview. Participation in the interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time on the day appointed for the interview. During the interview, you will be asked to provide information about your organization and your involvement in the organization by sharing information on your professional work, the actions that you have taken and how you think these actions are helpful to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Your responses will be kept confidential. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

What are the benefits for my participation?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences in the struggle for democracy and cultural identity in Zimbabwe. The interview will allow you to share your views on what democracy means and how the democratization struggle has been affected by historical, economic, political and social factors. In short, this research provides you with an opportunity to reflect about the work that you are doing and has potential to be developed into a model for best practices that can be applied in your organization for best outcomes. The results from the interview will be compared and contrasted with results from other civil society and community organizations and this will lead to a better understanding of cultural identities for people involved in the struggle for democratization as well as recommendations for all the participating organizations. The results of the study will be directly relevant and applicable to the work you are doing in your organization, in Zimbabwe and in Africa.

How will my interview responses be used?

All the information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. Your personal responses

will not be shared with anyone else in your organization. Your name or name of your organization will not appear in any research report or transcript. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms in the final research report. Quotations from the interview responses will be listed with the pseudonyms only. It is only the researcher, Cleophas Taurai Muneri who will have access to the audio tapes and the transcripts of your interview. The audio taped data will be erased when the written transcriptions of your interviews are finished or wherever you request that from Cleophas Taurai Muneri via e-mail or phone call. For contact information for Cleophas Taurai Muneri, please see below.

What do I need to do to participate in the interview?

Should you decide to take part in this interview, you will need to get the approval/permission of your supervisor or organization. After getting approval, send an e-mail message to Cleophas Taurai Muneri at cmuneri@unm.edu to indicate your willingness to participate. You can also send any other questions that you might have and I will be happy to address them. Then we will schedule a time and place for the interview. Thank you for your time and willingness to take part in this research study.

APPENDIX D

Interview Guide

Instructions

The following interview questions pertain to how you understand your involvement and experience in your community or civil society organization within the broader context of the country's history over the past ten years. The questions focus on your understanding of your cultural identities, the democratization process and the strategies for resistance that you have employed in the organization to achieve democracy. Your responses are going to be kept confidential. Participation in this interview is voluntary and you may choose not to answer any questions if you feel uncomfortable during the interview. Responses to this interview will be tape-recorded only with your permission.

Organizational Background and Work

1. Please describe the activities that your organization is engaged in.
2. How was your organization formed?
3. Please describe the funding and staffing for your organization.
4. Does your organization receive international funding and if so how has this worked for your organization?
5. What are the goals of your organization and how do you intend to achieve these goals?
6. What does democracy mean in the context of your work and your organization?
7. To what extent is your organization involved in the struggle for democracy?
8. What do you think is the role of organizations such as yours in the struggle for democracy?
9. Describe a moment of success that you have enjoyed in your organization.
10. What are the major challenges or obstacles faced by your organization?
11. How would you describe the future of the organization in the next 5-10 years?
12. How have the following factors affected your work in the organization?
 - a). political events
 - b). economic conditions
 - c). government policies and practices (in general and pertaining to the organization)
 - d). major institutions (religion, military, education, etc)

Assessment of Communication

13. How do you communicate your programs, actions or messages to the general public? (How effective have those messages been?)
14. Where else are people talking about democracy?
15. What role has media played in covering political events in the last ten years?

16. How have the media covered your organization?

Cultural Identities and Democracy

17. Which groups have gained importance in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe? How has involvement in the struggle for democracy changed you or your organization?
18. What does democracy mean for Zimbabwe?
19. Please describe the role of cultural identities in the work that you are doing in this organization. (Consider: nationality, race, ethnicity, socio-economic class, sex, sexual orientation, level of education, professional or job status, region of residence, political orientation/affiliation, religion etc.)
20. Which forms of identity have gained importance in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe?
21. Which identity groups are in conflict?
22. Which identity groups are allies? How have the alliances worked in the struggle for democracy?

Democratization Strategies

23. How do you talk about democracy in your organization? Who else is talking about it and in what way?
24. What are the conditions that are necessary for a country like Zimbabwe to be considered democratic? If democracy is achieved in Zimbabwe, what would it look like?
25. What are some of the strategies that your organization has used related to the struggle for democracy?
26. How effective have these strategies been?
27. Are there any organizations that have been particularly effective in the struggle for democracy?
28. What is the role of foreign countries such as the West, regional countries and other international organizations in affecting the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe?
29. What do you think will happen in the country in the next 5-10 years?
30. Any other information that you will like to add? Any other individuals that you can recommend for us to interview?

APPENDIX E

The University of New Mexico Main Campus IRB Consent to Participate in Research

Negotiating cultural identity in the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe: Postcolonial transitions and endurance

Introduction

You are being asked to participate in a research study that is being done by Cleophas Taurai Muneri, who is the Principal Investigator and Mary Jane Collier, from the Department of Communication and Journalism. This research is studying how cultural identities in Zimbabwe have been affected or are influenced by the struggle for democracy over the past ten years.

Most researchers on the democratization process in Zimbabwe have tended to focus on the role of media (Ronning, 1994; Saunders, 1999; Mandaza, 1991). These researchers point out how the availability of different forms of media ownership enhances democracy within the African context. They also emphasize the economic and political dimensions of democracy. While the media together with the political and economic dimensions of democracy are very important, there is also need to address the cultural aspects as they play an important role in understanding democracy within the African context. The relationship between cultural identities and democracy is an area where not much research has been carried out and this research is an attempt to add on to existing literature. Again, previous researches do not address the role of other civil society organizations in the democratization process. In this respect, this research must be considered as adding on to existing knowledge by focusing on civil society organizations that appear to complement the media. Compared with past researches, this research is aimed at bringing out how both media and other civil society organizations contribute to the democratization process. Previous researches have focused on media texts and have not included human subjects and this is why this study seeks to include people that are involved in civil society organizations by carrying out interviews.

The purpose of this study is to understand how Zimbabweans especially those working with civil society groups involved in the democratization process in Zimbabwe define what democracy means. The study also seeks to understand how you have negotiated your own cultural identities in relation to political, social, economic experiences, your relationships with other groups and views of media coverage. This research is being undertaken as part of the requirements for the doctoral program that the researcher is undertaking at the University of New Mexico in the U.S.A. The results will be presented as a dissertation to the Department of Communication and Journalism at the University of New Mexico and will be published in communication journals and/or as book chapters on communication and democracy. Another goal is to develop frameworks or models that can be used to understand how cultural groups and relationships are affected by the struggle for democratization. The interviews will go a long way in developing these frameworks. At your request, manuscripts can be sent to you when they are submitted for publication in journals and or book chapters.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are working with an organization involved in issues related to human rights, peace building, community development, social and

political advocacy and professional development, (b) you are a staff member with any of these organizations, (c) you are involved in an organization located in Harare, Bulawayo or other locations in Zimbabwe, (d) you are a Zimbabwean citizen, (e) you are willing to talk about democratization in Zimbabwe, and (f) your supervisor or a designated officer from your organization (if appropriate) has given approval for you to be interviewed and the information that you provide will not be shared by anyone in the organization including the supervisor. 25 people will participate in the cities of Harare and Bulawayo both in Zimbabwe. Cleophas Taurai Muneri is funding this study.

This form will explain the research study, and will also explain the possible risks as well as the possible benefits to you. We encourage you to talk with your family and friends before you decide to take part in this research study. If you have any questions, please ask one of the study investigators.

What will happen if I decide to participate?

If you agree to participate, the following things will happen:

You will participate in an interview that will be held at your organization or any other place that is most convenient to you and where we can have a private, uninterrupted interview. The researcher, who is from Zimbabwe, will conduct the interview. Participation in the interview will take approximately 60 to 90 minutes of your time on the day appointed for the interview. During the interview, you will be asked to provide information about your organization and your involvement in the organization by sharing information on your professional work, the actions that you have taken and how you think these actions are helpful to the struggle for democracy in Zimbabwe. Your responses will be kept confidential. Your responses will not be shared with other members of your organization. Since your participation is completely voluntary, you may choose not to answer any questions during the interview without any penalties whatsoever. Your responses will be tape-recorded only with your permission. There are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

How long will I be in this study?

Participation in this study will take a total of one and half hours over a period of one day.

What are the risks of being in this study?

There are no foreseen risks associated with participating in this study. There may be some minimal risks in talking about some uncomfortable experiences that you might have gone through. In this respect, memories of these experiences may make you feel uncomfortable. The interview will also explore questions regarding your own cultural groups and your relationships with people whose group identities are different from yours. You may choose not to respond to any question, inform and talk about your discomfort with the interviewer, or stop the interview at any time.

- There are risks of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

For more information about risks, ask one of the study investigators.

What are the benefits to being in this study?

Your participation in this research will give you the opportunity to share information and views about your experiences in the struggle for democracy and intercultural communication in Zimbabwe. The interview will allow you to share your views on what democracy means and how the democratization struggle has been affected by historical, economic, political and social factors. In short, this research provides you with an opportunity to reflect about the work that you are doing and has potential to be developed into a model for best practices that can be applied in your organization for best outcomes. The results from the interview will be compared and contrasted with results from other civil society and community organizations and this will lead to a better understanding of communication practices in the struggle for democratization as well as recommendations for all the participating organizations. The results of the study will be directly relevant and applicable to the work you are doing in your organization, in Zimbabwe and in Africa.

What other choices do I have if I do not want to be in this study?

You may choose whether or not to participate in this study. If you volunteer to participate, you may withdraw at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. During the interview, you may also choose not to answer any questions and still participate and proceed to the other questions that will be asked during the interview.

How will my information be kept confidential?

We will take measures to protect your privacy and the security of all your personal information, but we cannot guarantee confidentiality of all study data.

Information contained in your study records is used by Cleophas Taurai Muneri, in some cases it will be shared with the sponsor of the study. The University of New Mexico IRB that oversees human subject research will be permitted to access your records. There may be times when we are required by law to share your information. However, your name will not be used in any published reports about this study.

All the information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Your interview responses will be used strictly for academic purposes. Information (without your name) will be entered

into a locked file cabinet in the Principal Investigator's office at the University of New Mexico. Cleophas Taurai Muneri will have access to your study information. Data will be stored for one year, and then will be destroyed.

Your personal responses will not be shared with anyone else in your organization. Your name or name of your organization will not appear in any research report or transcript. All participants will be assigned pseudonyms in the final research report. Quotations from the interview responses will be listed with the pseudonyms only. It is only the researcher, Cleophas Taurai Muneri who will have access to the audio tapes and the transcripts of your interview. The audio taped data will be erased when the written transcriptions of your interviews are finished or wherever you request that from Cleophas Taurai Muneri via e-mail or phone call. For contact information for Cleophas Taurai Muneri, please see below.

What are the costs of taking part in this study?

There are no direct costs to you for participating in this study.

Will I be paid for taking part in this study?

Participation in this study is voluntary and there are no monetary rewards due to you for participating in this research.

Can I stop being in the study once I begin?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You have the right to choose not to participate or to withdraw your participation at any point in this study without affecting any services to which you are entitled.

If the personal safety of the investigator becomes questionable by visiting a certain region or organization, that particular interview will not be conducted.

Whom can I call with questions or complaints about this study?

If you have any questions, concerns or complaints at any time about the research study, Cleophas Taurai Muneri, Phd Candidate, or his associate Dr. Mary Jane Collier will be glad to answer them at 505 554 4831 any time throughout the week. If you would like to speak with someone other than the research team in regards to any complaints you have about the study, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129 or email at IRB@salud.unm.edu.

Whom can I call with questions about my rights as a research subject?

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may call the UNM IRB at (505) 272-1129. The IRB is a group of people from UNM and the community who provide independent oversight of safety and ethical issues related to research involving human subjects. For more information, you may also access the IRB website at <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/HRRC/maincampusirbhome.shtml>.

Consent

You are making a decision whether to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you read the information provided (or the information was read to you). By signing this consent form, you are not waiving any of your legal rights as a research subject.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and all questions have been answered to my satisfaction. By signing this consent form, I agree to participate in this study. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you.

Name of Adult Subject (print)

Signature of Adult Subject

Date

INVESTIGATOR SIGNATURE

I have explained the research to the subject or his/her legal representative and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Cleophas Taurai Muneri

Name of Investigator/ Research Team Member (type or print)

(Signature of Investigator/ Research Team Member)

Date

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