



**SCHOOL OF APPLIED HUMAN SCIENCES, COLLEGES OF HUMANITIES**

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## **Acronyms and Abbreviations**

AMV - Africa Media Ventures  
BSAC - British South Africa Company  
CSO – Central Statistics Office  
GDP - Gross Domestic Product  
GRZ - Government of the Republic of Zambia  
IBA - Independent Broadcast Authority  
ICT - Information and Communication Technologies  
LONRHO - London Rhodesia Mining and Land Company  
MECOZ - Media Ethics Council of Zambia  
MIBS - Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services  
MISA - Media Institute of Southern Africa  
MLC - Media Liaison Committee  
MMD - Movement for Multiparty Democracy  
MP - Member of Parliament  
MRC - Media Reform Committee  
NAIS - National Agricultural Information Services  
NDL - Newspaper Distributors Limited  
PAZA - Press Association of Zambia  
SABC - South African Broadcasting Corporation  
SAP - Structural Adjustment Programme  
SOE - State Owned Enterprises  
UK - United Kingdom  
UN - United Nations  
USA - United States of America  
USD - United States Dollar  
UNIP - United National Independence Party  
UNZA - University of Zambia  
UPND - United Party for National Development  
ZANACO - Zambia National Commercial Bank  
ZANIS - Zambia National News and Information Service  
ZDM - Zambia Daily Mail  
ZDML - Zambia Daily Mail Limited  
ZIMCO - Zambia Industrial Mining Corporation  
ZDA - Zambia Development Agency  
ZMW - Zambian Kwacha  
ZNBC - Zambia National Broadcasting Services  
ZPA - Zambia Privatisation Agency  
ZRA - Zambia Revenue Authority  
ZUJ - Zambia Union of Journalists

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## Exchange Rates, 23 November 2015

Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) 11,7467 = 1 United States Dollar (USD).

South African Rand (ZAR) 13,9324 = 1 United States Dollar (USD).

Zambian Kwacha (ZMW) 0.93045 = 1 South African Rand (ZAR).

## **Abstract**

This study sets out to explore the sustainability of a free press in Zambia. The main objective is to contribute to the debate on factors affecting the political and economic sustainability, advertising in particular and independence of newspapers in a small media market. For this purpose, the study uses a case of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. Using political economy analysis, the thesis uncovers the nature and form of the media system; the factors influencing the independence and freedom of the press; the type, the extent, resources required for the sustainability of a free press and the role and impact of policy interventions for creating an enabling environment for a free press in Zambia. The thesis acknowledges that global transformations are pushing media systems around the world towards the liberal system of market-driven de-regulated, convergence and commercialism. Similar claims are made that, like any other, the Zambian media market is not immune to these trends, and is in transition to integrate with the global trends. It, however, stresses that the degree and extent to these transformations varies from region to region, and country to country. However, irrespective of some signs of evidence of this transformation, Zambia is a small country with a small media market, subjecting it to different influences from affluent Western countries. It has therefore been argued that country-specific conditions in the media and communication environment such as a country's media and communications infrastructure, and more rudimentary characteristics including market size, growth rate, profitability and competition should be taken into consideration. In this vein, the thesis also contends that the influence of the global trends in the political economy of communication on the Zambian media system has not been subjected to adequate academic examination. In fact, this observation is extended to most third world African countries. As a result, this has led such countries to either be left in the margins or be subjected to sweeping generalisations made about Western societies. Therefore, the thesis advocates evidence-based approaches for conceptualising the political economy of communication.

## CHAPTER 1:

### DEMOCRACY AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF A FREE PRESS IN ZAMBIA

#### Introduction

In his inspiring work, *Media, Markets and Democracy*, Edwin Baker (2002: 125) asserts that “democracy is impossible without a free press”. Or should the assertion read: *a free press is impossible without democracy?* A lot of assumptions have been made regarding the relationship between the media and democracy. This study does not focus on explicating what precedes the other between the two. What is important to note as Price and Krug (2000) contend, is that it is apparent that at some point in every democratic transition, a free and independent press is vital. This is because the press is the ‘connective tissue’ to democracy: “the principle means through which citizens and their elected representatives communicate in their reciprocal efforts to inform and influence” (Gunther and Mughan, 2000: 1). In this vein, Baker (2007: 7) goes on to argue that to be self-governing, people require the capacity to form public opinion and then to have that public opinion influence and ultimately control public “will formation” – that is, government laws and policies. To this effect, he contends that a country “is democratic only to the extent that the media, are structurally egalitarian and politically salient”.

For all this to be possible and to ensure integrity of political competition and participation, democracy must guarantee political and civil rights such as the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press (Diamond, 1996). Attaining this level of political integrity and guaranteeing liberties has generally been a challenge for many transitioning democracies in African states. This is invariably because of leaders who want to assume total authority (Ake, 1991). This subsequently makes it difficult for the media to provide the crucial link between the state and society, and as O’Neil (1998) suggests, it should not always be directly assumed that democratic systems of government will necessarily facilitate the dispersal of power and public access to it. He further points out that such systems can be easily corrupted and in the process, undermine public participation and voice (O’Neil, 1998). But De Smaele (2006) argues that public interests can be safeguarded and democracy enhanced if the press plays a central role in society. As such, he points out that as an essential precondition to fulfil this role, the press should be separated from state and political institutions, and its freedom from inhibiting forms of economic, political or other dependency. But again, the effectiveness of the media in achieving this role in modern liberal democracies in third world countries such as

Zambia is open to question. Perhaps the major problem stems from the fact that democratisation debates are largely influenced by modernisation theory which focused on the construction of Western-style political societies. As a result, such societies have, in many aspects, been used as indicators of progress (O’Neil, 1998). In line with this, Parekh (1992) notes that democracy as defined and structured within the limits set by Western liberalism cannot claim universal validity. It is against such assumptions that this study is set because different states, according to Price and Krug (2000), at different stages of development, require different strategies for thinking about the role of media and, as a result, for thinking about the design and structure of the environment in which they operate.

Moreover, state, political institutions and economic conditions, differ from one type of democracy to the other and one region to the other. It is for this reason that O’Neil (1998) contends that simply transplanting Western models into foreign societies without due consideration of legacies of social order might not guarantee the sort of institutional transformation that is associated with modern democracies (Chirambo, 2011). In relation to democracy and the press, there are structural problems which may not be immediately apparent in transitional societies such as Zambia. It appears the country’s media system has, at least in the short run, been untouched by global developments towards the political economy of communication. As such, the Zambian media market needs to be interrogated in relation to its adaptability to global trends and capability to sustain a press free.

## **Background**

This doctoral thesis employs the political economy of communication and the public sphere approach to explore the factors that influence the sustainability of a free press in Zambia’s Third Republic. It is a case study involving *The Post* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* newspapers. The two newspapers are very prominent in the history of the press in Zambia. The concept of sustainability is discussed in the contexts of the development of newspapers and editorial independence – the quality of being able to publish whatever one pleases, without economic interests setting the agenda (Grattan, 1998). Therefore, the study also examines the ways in which political and economic forces, which essentially include advertising, may have influenced the development of a free press, editorial independence and the public sphere in Zambia. A brief overview of the development of the press and the concept of press freedom is provided to serve as context for the analysis.

The political economy in Zambia has undoubtedly been a major factor in determining the state of press freedom in the country; hence the thesis includes a brief background of transitions in the political-economy of the country. Since independence in 1964, Zambia has undergone very distinct political transformations namely, the First, Second and Third Republics. The three republics are categorised according to the following historical epochs: the First Republic was from 1964 to 1972; the Second Republic from 1972 to 1991; and the Third Republic from 1991 to date. All these republics have been punctuated by different types of media ownership patterns, control and regulation.

The First Republic was the shortest and only lasted eight years. It “started off as a democratic system characterised by a dominant party system in which the United National Independent Party (UNIP) was the major political force” (Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003: 3). At the beginning of the First Republic, the country’s newspapers were predominantly privately owned, with little or no government or commercial interference. Thus, the state of press freedom is said to have been good as newspapers were able to operate independently and even criticise the UNIP government (Kasoma, 1986). The Second Republic, which lasted 19 years was a one-party state and was declared a “one-party participatory democracy” (Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003: 4). The regime was described as a ‘mild’ dictatorship (Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003: 4) mostly because of the “reduction of toleration for internal dissent and a general contraction of civil liberties” (Gewald *et al.*, 2008: 16). During this period, newspapers were nationalised, and cautioned against opposing the government. The *National Mirror*, a church-run newspaper was the only non-government publication during the Second Republic. However, Kasoma (1986) observed that this did not stop the *National Mirror* from criticising the government. The government was not happy with the newspaper, hence, in a bid to cripple its (*National Mirror*) operations, it banned advertising in this newspaper in 1982. It was “dubbed by some state functionaries as a dissident newspaper which did not deserve to be supported by advertisements from state companies” (Kasoma, 1986: 204).

The Third Republic, which at the time of writing had lasted for 24 years, was brought about by the wind of change from the so-called ‘mild dictatorship’ to democratic dispensation (Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003: 4). This new republic also heralded a change of ruling party, from UNIP to the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD). Consequently, this change in the political landscape was perceived as a strong indicator that similar developments would follow in media circles. Phiri (1999: 54) best describes the situation by saying:

The transition was thought to mark the end of the repression of the media and the beginning of an era in which the media would be an autonomous contributor to the country's social, political, and economic life. There was optimism that the state-run media (*The Times of Zambia*, *The Daily Mail*, and the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation) would stop serving as the mouthpiece of the ruling party and become a vibrant forum for the objective discussion of public affairs.

It appeared that this optimistic outlook was not just for the state-owned press. Even the prospects for the privately-owned newspapers, which were muzzled in the previous political dispensation now looked bright. In addition, the country's economic projections were refreshed by the MMD's promises for recovery through economic liberalisation (Rakner, 2003). The freeing of the economy promised expansion of the commercial aspects of the media industry (Phiri, 1999). In light of such developments, this thesis is partly based on the assumption that during these three political eras, Zambia experienced many social, political, economic challenges and developments which might have influenced the growth and nature of the advertising market and the press.

### **Problem in Context**

Despite the move to democracy and political transformation, it has been claimed that press freedom in Zambia remains a challenge due to political and economic restrictions (Makungu, 2004). Multi-party elections in Zambia in 1991 were seen by many people as a victory for democracy and a defeat of Kenneth Kaunda's UNIP whose governing philosophy of Humanism had ruled Zambia for 28 years (Pitts, 2000). This marked the beginning of the Third Republic under the leadership of President Frederick Chiluba. Against the anticipated democratic freedom during the transition, reality showed that media growth was stunted (Erdmann and Simutanyi, 2003). To this extent, Phiri (1999: 1) recalls that "there was a brief period (just before and soon after 1991) when it appeared that the media would become an independent influence in a democratic environment". However, any movement towards achieving this dream has been thwarted by the continued state control of the country's major news establishments (Phiri, 1999), thereby impinging on the possibility of a free press. It is therefore not surprising that Makungu (2004) contends that even in the Third Republic, the country is still facing a tough battle for press freedom.

In the last 20 years, press reform and media freedom have been closely examined by various scholars and non-governmental organisations such as the Freedom House<sup>1</sup>. This has been because of the reasons already expressed earlier that press reform and freedom are viewed as an intrinsically important condition for democratisation (Becker *et al.*, 2004). As a result of this perceived importance of press freedom, the Freedom House “developed indices of press freedom, at least implicitly so as to judge the consequences of and need for media reform” worldwide (Becker *et al.*, 2004: 1). According to the Freedom House press freedom index, Zambia has always had a ‘Not Free’ status, except for 2012 and 2013 when it improved to ‘Partly Free’, but reverted to ‘Not Free’ in 2014 and 2015. The table below is a compilation of Zambia’s scores on the press freedom index.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Legal Environment</b>	<b>Political Environment</b>	<b>Economic Environment</b>	<b>Press Freedom Score</b>	<b>Status</b>
2002	22	24	19	65	Not Free
2003	20	24	19	63	Not Free
2004	19	24	20	63	Not Free
2005	20	25	20	65	Not Free
2006	19	24	21	64	Not Free
2007	19	24	21	64	Not Free
2008	20	24	20	64	Not Free
2009	20	25	20	65	Not Free
2010	19	25	20	64	Not Free
2011	19	23	19	61	Not Free
2012	19	22	19	60	Partly Free
2013	17	24	19	60	Partly Free
2014	18	24	19	61	Not Free
2015	18	25	19	62	Not Free

**Table 1: Freedom House Press Freedom Index for Zambia in the last 14 years.**  
*Extrapolated from the press freedom index*

On a scale of legal, political and economic factors, the Freedom House (2015) press freedom index for Zambia shows that the political environment is the biggest hindrance to press freedom. This is mostly because the political governance and regulatory structures leave the press vulnerable to political interference (Freedom House, 2014). Table 1 shows that the legal and economic environments have also been problematic to the freedom of the press. Meanwhile, economic constraints show a consistent and significant score of between 19 and

<sup>1</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/about-us>: The Freedom House, an international organisation which assesses each country’s degree of political freedoms and civil liberties in the world. Accessed on 11 October 2015.

21. It appears that this unyielding feature coupled with the political and legal impediments is what determines the sustainability of a free press.

Indeed, when analysing factors for creating an enabling environment for a free press, it is difficult to separate the economic from political and legal (Price and Krug, 2000). This study gives salience to economic forces, while relegating other factors to the background. Furthermore, within the economic framework of sustainability, it focuses on market forces which are intertwined with the role of advertising in sustaining a free press in Zambia. In particular it poses the question - how has advertising influenced newspaper editorial content? In order to build a compelling argument, the thesis explores the historical development of advertising with regard to newspapers in Zambia. Focus is put on the Third Republic because it is the current political dispensation as well as being the longest of the three republics. In this sense, the Third Republic offers more scope for exploring the many political and economic changes the country has experienced over the past quarter century. And as a corollary, this period has also witnessed the digital revolution which has been argued to have transformed the media worldwide.

Globally, infringement on press freedom in a society is often predicted on history, culture, political and economic systems (Dahlberg, 2011). In Zambia, it has been generally established that the press has functioned as a tool of the ruling class. Its role has been perceived as helping the state to mobilise people for economic development, but ultimately to promote and uphold the interests of the ruling class (Makungu, 2004). This use and abuse of the media, and the press in particular seems to have been a dominant characteristic in African political governance from colonial rule, through independence to modern times. Kasoma (1986) indicates that the press was used as a tool for attaining political power. Most of the people that owned the early newspapers used them to reflect their own beliefs and as a springboard to catapult themselves to positions of political power and influence. After independence in 1964, the new UNIP government “continued to see and use the media as tools for mobilisation of the people to achieve whatever goals it thought were good for the country” (Makungu, 2004: 14). Makungu further states that this was because the media were mostly owned and controlled by the state. The two state-owned daily newspapers including the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* were expected to function in partnership with the government towards national building (Makungu, 2004). In relation to the foregoing, it seems that the current state of press freedom in Zambia is a product of historical activities.

The UNIP government's tendency to control the press drifted into the Second Republic which was a one-party-state. The Second Republic was characterised by many changes to the operations of government sectors, including the media. This was through President Kaunda's famous 1975 declarations, in what was referred to as the 'watershed speech'. In this speech, President Kaunda prescribed how the press was expected to operate. The government's will to control the press was made more emphatic when President Kaunda out-rightly declared that the function of the media in the country's social and economic development was to "promote human morals in line with Zambia's 'Philosophy of Humanism', and also to promote cultural values" (Makungu, 2004: 14). Kaunda's adopted principles of humanism seemed to be in line with Siebert's *et al.* (1956) communist theory of the press. This was evident through the nationalisation of the press. The soviet-communist theory of the press asserts that the newspapers should be state owned, should be at the service of the state, and most importantly, should operate in accordance to the principles defined by the communist-party controlled state (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). These were the principles that applied until the end of the UNIP rule in 1991. This demonstrates how journalism can be contextualised and constrained by press structure and state policies (Ostini and Fung, 2002). The prescription by the four theories of the press model assumes that the state has a fundamental interest in maintenance and stability of the power structure in its favour. However, the soviet-communist model prescribes a very different dimension from the libertarian theory which is considered as the ideal in which the main function of society is to advance the interests of its individual members (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). In addition, Wright (1986) argues that adherence to libertarian ideals involves a natural mistrust of the role of government and the state because state surveillance is a basic social function of media. This is because the press helps discover the truth in a free marketplace of ideas where any individual is free to publish (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). Ostini and Fung (2002: 42) interpret the soviet-communist model "as an extreme application of authoritarian ideas in that media are totally subordinated to the interests and functions of the state".

Between 1990 and 1991, towards the end of the Second Republic, Zambia witnessed the birth of a number of independent newspapers and magazines, during which a total of 30 were registered (Chirwa, 1997). This period saw the birth of the *Weekly Post*, which later changed to become a daily newspaper re-named *The Post*. Some newspapers which appeared during this period include among others *The Crime News*, *The Weekly Express*, *The Sun* and the *Eagle Express*. In 1991, during the transition to the Third Republic, there was a change of

government, and the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) was ushered into office after defeating UNIP in the general election. The MMD came to power on the platform of market economy and liberalisation, which was effectively implemented by a privatisation programme, a very prominent feature of the 1991 MMD Manifesto. Before the 1991 elections, the MMD promised good democratic governance where press freedom, freedom of expression and association would be promoted and encouraged (MMD Manifesto, 1991). As such, this study argues, in subsequent chapters, that this period was characterised by a temporal increase in industrialisation of the Zambian economy, which consequently facilitated the development of the advertising market in the country. The MMD government aimed at creating an enabling environment wherein the government would be a facilitator and business would be run by the private sector (Chirwa, 1997).

In Zambia, freedom of expression, freedom of the press and freedom of assembly and association are guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution's Article 20(1), which states that:

Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to impart and communicate ideas and information without interference, whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons, and freedom from interference with his correspondence.

This is the legal provision upon which the MMD Manifesto based its principles as regards media freedom. With specific reference to the Mass Media, the Manifesto stated in part:

The MMD believes that freedom of expression and the right to information are basic human rights. As such, journalists will have to play an important role in promoting democracy and development in an MMD - led government. All bona fide journalists, both local and foreign, will be accredited to perform their duties without hindrance. (MMD Manifesto, 1991).

Furthermore, the MMD indicated that individuals and organisations would have the right to own and operate their own press and electronic media facilities. The MMD manifesto thus

carried a resounding promise that the party had the potential and commitment to a free press. Despite the inclusion of Article 20(1) in the Constitution, it appears the promise still remains to be fulfilled. Like previous legislation on the press, the Constitution of Zambia Act of 1996 does not include a specific clause securing freedom of the press, but rather subsumed it under the general right to free expression. In fact, it secures and guarantees freedom of assembly and freedom of expression. This and other voids in the constitutions are what allow politicians to legally harass the press.

Although the formal structures and institution of the state communication system remained basically unchanged, some changes took place in the private sector. As was generally observed from the proliferation of newspapers in 1990 and after the 1991 democratic elections, press freedom in Zambia seemed to have improved (Chirwa, 1997). In 1995, the ranking of Zambia on the Freedom House Press Freedom Index changed from 'Not Free' to 'Partly Free' (Freedom House, 1996). By the end of the MMD's first five-year term in office, about 75 newspapers were registered with the National Archives of Zambia (NAZ). Chirwa (1997) states that this was owing to the fact that the MMD government adopted liberal democratic policies which established a free market economy and media deregulation. The liberalisation of the economy meant that the press had to operate in a free market. However, this posed a challenge to newspapers that failed to attract advertising. Thus, the central focus for this study is to explore the role that advertising played in the development of press freedom in Zambia.

### **Conceptualising Press Freedom**

As a point of nomenclature, in this study the word 'press' is taken to mean newspapers. It is acknowledged that the term normally refers to newspapers and magazines; and generally all print publications. However, the focus of this work is on newspapers, hence the above delimitation. By extension, the word 'free' is brought into this discourse in order to make reference to the 'free press'.

The freedom of the press has not had a happy history in Africa, and there is little evidence suggesting improvement in the immediate future (Martin, 1998). This assertion casts a gloomy outlook regarding the hopes of establishing a free press on the continent. With intermittent references to other countries, this section of the chapter focuses on press freedom in Zambia. The scope and meaning of freedom of the press will always be contentious (Keane, 1998; O'Neil, 1998). Nonetheless, in order to provide contextual understanding of the concept, the

chapter attempts to define ‘free press’ or ‘press freedom’. This is because, among scholars, there are differences on the perceived concept of press freedom.

Becker and Vlad (2009: 1) situate the discussion into better perspective by raising the following questions as guideposts:

1. From what is the press free?
2. Who is served by that freedom?
3. What rights and advantages do individual citizens gain from the freedom?
4. How does that freedom serve the diverse interests of a society? (Becker and Vlad, 2009: 1)

Perhaps as a way of addressing these questions an appropriate approach is to undertake chronological exegesis of the works of scholars who attempted to define press freedom. Conceivably the oldest conceptualisation of press freedom mainly focused on freedom from government control (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). At the time of his work Schramm (1963) was apparently positive that the literacy, the gross national product, the distribution of wealth and population, and other elements are instrumentally related in some way to the pattern by which press systems have developed in each country. Nixon (1960) downplayed as deficient Schramm’s approach of using “exclusive” variables which the latter suggested for the existent of press freedom because it lacked empirical data. Hence, Nixon (1960) improved on the definition by the International Press Institute provided in the *Press in Authoritarian Countries*<sup>2</sup> by defining a free press system as one in which private owners and independent journalists are free to publish under the statutes of libel and decency which are applicable to everyone and not capable of arbitrary and discriminatory interpretation by the ruling power (Nixon, 1960). However, even Nixon (1960) was criticised by Lowenstein (1967) for lacking specificity and claimed to offer a more concrete definition which incorporated both freedom and control. He argued:

A completely free press is one in which newspapers, periodicals, news agencies, books, radio and television have absolute independence and critical ability, except for minimal libel and obscenity laws. A completely free press has no concentrated

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<sup>2</sup> In this study the IPI completed a series of surveys in which journalists and scholars were collaborated to appraise the kinds and degrees of press control in all major countries of the world today.

ownership, marginal economic units or organized self-regulation... A completely controlled press is one with no independence or critical ability. Under it, newspapers, periodicals, books, news agencies, radio and television are completely controlled directly or indirectly by government, self-regulatory bodies or concentrated ownership. (Lowenstein (1967: 45).

Many other scholars such as Levy (1963), Meiklejohn (1965), Chafee (1967) and McCoy (1968) have contributed to the debate on the meaning of press freedom. However, more relevant to this framework is the work of Emerson (1963) who pointed out the link between press freedom and democracy. His follow up work in Emerson (1970) reiterated that the freedom of expression is essential for all members of society to express themselves and participate in decision making in a democratic process.

This far, it is clear that the third issue of rights and advantages of press freedom has been addressed (Emerson, 1970) and Siebert *et al.* (1956) highlight the characteristic of control from the government, and Lowenstein introduces the ownership element of control. Siebert *et al.* (1956) indicate that the realisation of press freedom is partly because for the media to be financially independent, they are economically supported through advertising, which in turn allows them a measure of freedom from state controls. Weaver (1974: 8) is even clearer when he identifies and distinguishes three variables of press freedom: firstly, the relative absence of government restraints on the media; secondly, the relative absence of government and all other restraints on the media; and thirdly, as not only the absence of restrictions on the media, but also present, conditions necessary to insure the dissemination of a diversity of ideas and opinions to a diversely large audience. It is very clear that early in the conceptualisation of press freedom, the element of control has featured most prominently. To many scholars, it appears that “control” is an antithesis of “freedom” in expounding the meaning of press freedom. Hence McQuail (2010: 169) simply defines press freedom as “freedom from restriction.”

The control or restriction element has mostly been ascribed to government, whilst assuming that freedom may only be attained if the press depended on corporatism. However, some scholars argue that a media system that is free of interference from both government and business or dominant social groups is freer and able to contribute to the democratisation process (Becker and Vlad, 2009; Rozumilowicz, 2002).

The discursive debate of press freedom has subsequently highlighted the role of the press in national building and development (Schramm, 1964) and media and democracy (Hagen, 1992) among others. In seeking to comprehensively capture all the questions in the above framework of conceptualising press freedom, the study evokes McQuail's (2010) social theory of the media. In explaining how a media system is structured, McQuail highlights the following issues:

- Freedom of publication: It is widely agreed that media should be free from control by government or other powerful interests, sufficient to allow them to report and express freely and independently and to meet the needs of their audiences.
- Plurality of ownership: Here the prevailing norm opposes concentration of ownership and monopoly of control, whether on the part of the state or the private media industry.
- Universality of provision: As in the public utility model, the communication network of a society should reach all citizens at equal cost to consumers, the obligation to provide coverage falling on the state.
- Diversity of channels and forms: Ideally, media structure will also have many different types of media and separate channels to maximise the chance of meeting a wide range of public communication needs. Citizens should have access as senders and receivers of public communication needs. Different types of media should be under different control.
- Diversity of information, opinion and cultural content: It is desirable that the media system overall should exhibit a range of output that reflects the diversity of the society, especially key dimensions of religion, politics, ethnicity, culture, and so on. (McQuail, 2010: 166).

The justifications advanced by McQuail seem to provide some important comprehension into the conceptualisation of press freedom. Just like Becker and Vlad (2009) McQuail posits, for example, that media freedom should include a balance between both the degree of freedom

enjoyed by the media and the degree of freedom and access of the public to media content. He argues that a free press has to operate in consideration with public interests by espousing to quality cultural provision, democratic principles and meeting human rights obligations.

From the ensuing discussion, the study continues to situate the concept of the free press in the Zambian context. It can be argued that due to the political-economic differences the set standards reflect the Western notion of the press. However, if the Western criterion is not the preferred option, it may imply that the understanding and meaning of press freedom in Africa, and the Zambian context in particular may be different. Care is taken to avoid assuming that Western models and assumptions can be grafted into the African context (O'Neil, 1998). Therefore, having set the scene for the discourse of a free press in Zambia, the next chapter will first explore in retrospect this concept since the colonial era.

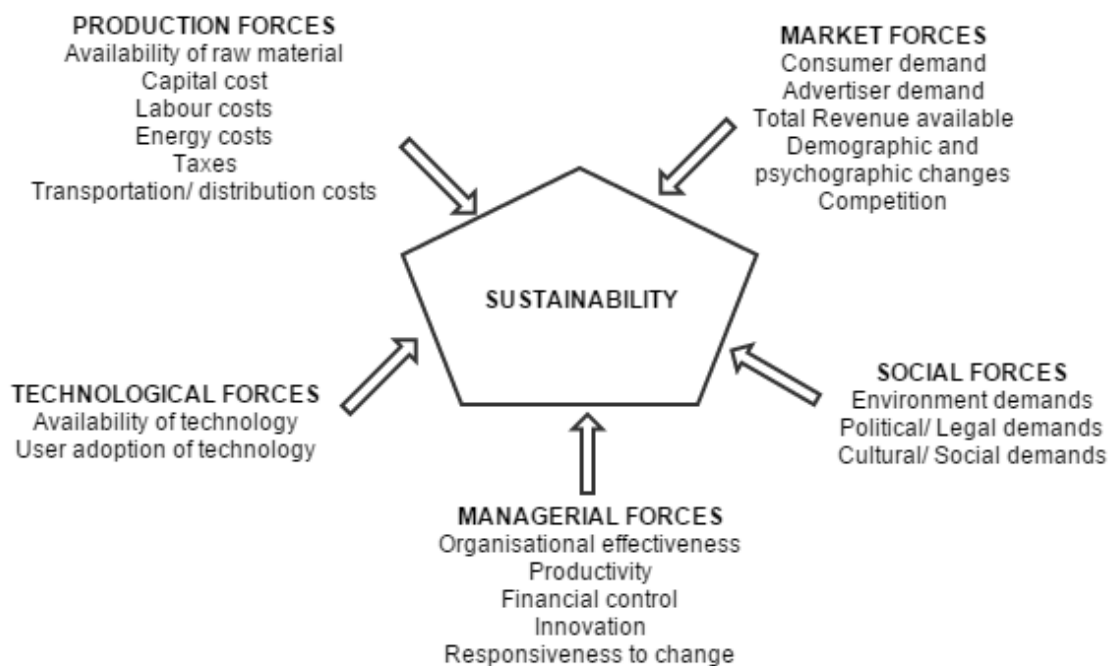
### **Sustainability: the link between Advertising and Free Press**

Newspapers, like living organisms, can grow and flourish, they can languish and wither, or they can be snuffed out (Hachten, 1993: vii).

In his book, *The Growth of Media in the Third World*, Hachten (1993) stressed that a sound economic environment is vital for the development of newspapers. What remains contentious, however, is whether there is a direct relationship between media development and the sustainability of a free press. Hence, this thesis is interested in the question of how advertising economically contributes to the financial viability of the newspaper business, on one hand, and on the other, how advertising influences newspaper editorial autonomy. This study generally investigates whether, historically, newspapers have sustained themselves through advertising, and have as a result been able to operate with editorial independence. It highlights the twists and turns in the three republics by offering a comparative analysis of varying levels of advertising and press freedom. The assumption is that higher advertising revenue allows newspapers to financially sustain and liberate themselves from political entanglement and render themselves free. At the same time, higher advertising revenue may allow commercial interests to meddle with editorial autonomy.

Whether a newspaper is a commercial or non-commercial, private or state owned operation, it faces a variety of economic and financial forces to which it should respond and manage (Picard, 2002). It is generally assumed that the ability to respond to such forces is indicative of a

newspaper's ability to operate independently and freely (Price and Krug, 2000). Hence the concepts of sustainability in the various ways it influences the environment for a free press is of key interest to this study. According to Picard (2002: 46), sustainability represents the viability of an industry or firm, its ability to maintain effectiveness and operations. He contends that sustainability is affected by a variety of production, market, technological, social and managerial forces.



**Figure 1: Factors affecting the sustainability of media companies. Adapted from Picard (2002: 47)**

The figure above depicts many constitutive elements of the factors that affect the sustainability of the media in general. The figure shows that sustainability of media is a multifaceted process. This thesis interrogates these major forces in relation to the operations of the sustainability of the *Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. Meanwhile, Picard looks at sustainability at two levels: the firm and the industry. He contends that sustainability in this study refers to the capacity of a newspaper to bear any prevailing production, market, technological and other forces and maintain consistent publication. At another level, it refers to and the capacity of the industry to enable newspapers to continue operating. In light of this, in order to examine the forces that affect the newspaper industry, this thesis asks the question: to what extent is economic stability necessary for the sustainability of a free press in Zambia? Indeed, this question is based on the general assumption that in order to create an enabling environment for

a free press, it is also assumed that economic structures must be stable (Price and Krug, 2000). In light of this, Rozumilowicz (2002) notes that basic questions as those of ownership, taxes, and the provision of state subsidies influence the degree to which a free press may be able to develop. In the case of the Zambian press, the impetus manifestations of the democratic transition were evident through what is herein referred to as ‘newspaper explosion’ of the early 1990s which appeared to have been a major step towards press freedom. However, it has been observed that most of the newspapers that registered during this period completely failed to take off due to financial challenges (Banda, 2004). Some of the newspapers were registered, but never published; some were registered and published, but short lived; others have had an irregular existence, yet only one (*The Post*) among the 75 has been consistent and is still in existence.

The challenges and reasons for the death of some newspapers and the survival of others may vary greatly; from lack of clear vision, administrative problems, and lawsuits to political and economic factors. However, Banda (2004) states that most of them failed to economically sustain themselves because they were not successful at attracting adequate advertising. Pessimism towards prospects of a free press in the Third Republic is expressed by Phiri (1999) when he argues that the press has basically failed to survive economically. “The hopes alluded to earlier that privatisation and other MMD economic policies would release more advertising revenue that would support an independent press have not come to fruition” (Phiri, 1999: 61).

This is why in line with the focus of this study, market forces and advertising in particular constitutes the most important of all the factors influencing the sustainability of newspapers. Many studies have shown that advertising is key to the survival of newspapers. However, it has also been established that advertising can influence the editorial independence of newspapers (Bagdikian, 2000; Hadland, 2007; Soley and Craig, 1992). This is further supported by Altschull (1984) when he says the media content always reflects the interests of those who fund its means of production. In Meyer’s (1987) survey evidence showed that newspaper people reported that ‘pressure from advertisers’ was quite frequently discussed as an ethical issue (McQuail 1992: 133). To this effect, Baker (1994: 99) cites evidence of advertisers using their market power to attempt to block particular communications that damage their interests and also the pressure of advertisers which influences personnel as well as editorial decisions in the media. Other studies including Siebert *et. al.* (1956) and Ochilo (1993) have established a strong correlation between ownership and control of the media and

their ability to be free and independent. They argue that patterns of media ownership reflect the degree of control and freedom. Literature reveals a complex relationship between the media interest in advertising and editorial autonomy. It is therefore indisputable that advertising can generally be considered as a double-edged sword, whose consequences may be favourable or unfavourable. On one hand, news production is a commercial enterprise and the necessities for economic survival, whereas on the other hand, newspapers are responsible for accurately informing readers in order to make choices in a democracy (McManus, 1994; Schudson, 1995). But all this determines a variety of factors including advertiser demand, size and type of audiences, number of competitors, the state of the economy and the regulatory systems (Picard, 2002). This implies that on both sides, the influence of these factors on the relationship between advertising and a free press differ from one media system to another.

In as much as economic considerations are the focus of this study, other factors including media law reform are evaluated in relation to their substantial influence in creating a media-sensitive society. Also in question are the dynamics for sustaining differently owned newspapers, i.e., state or privately owned. On this subject, Price and Krug (2000) identify three principal regulatory forms: the first is the *state monopoly ownership and media control* which in most cases relies on government subsidies; the second is the *public or public service monopoly* which is usually associated with the electronic broadcasting system and enjoys substantial autonomy from the direct rule of the state; and lastly, is *private ownership*, which is market driven. Price and Kruger acknowledge that these three systems overlap substantially and come in various combinations to the extent that the state is considered to be participating in the market. On the other hand, O'Neil (1998) warns that the dividends of liberal democracy may be perilous to the media sector, especially in cases where a newspaper may be privately owned but the owners might be state - run or connected to the state leading to collusion with those in power in terms of the type of public communication or even the participation of alternative voices in the media (Chirambo, 2011). However, two problems arise: firstly, whether in whatever form they take, newspapers can withstand the different forces on sustainability; and secondly, do these systems serve the interests of the public, the state and owners or advertisers?

Indeed, it appears that the struggle for economic survival by newspapers has had a bearing on the sustainability of the free press. Much as it may seem, private newspapers are not alone in the struggle for economic survival. This study shows that historically, even state owned newspapers in Zambia have faced economic challenges. For example, the Parliamentary

Committee on Information and Broadcasting in 2002 revealed that the *Zambia Daily Mail*, a state owned newspaper which is also a subject of this study owed different companies over US\$1.3 million for newsprint, taxes, telephone bills and unremitted funds for workers' compensation schemes (Banda, 2004). Despite the huge amount of debt, the newspaper continued to operate, which according to Banda's observation, would be impossible for privately owned newspapers. He notes this is largely because the state tries to 'take care of its own' (Banda, 2004). However, Phiri (1999) points out that the state's subsidies to the media does not necessarily mean that the government would like to see the press become more aggressive in reporting or more critical of the status quo. He argues that government and party officials desire a well-financed state-run media network to consolidate and advance their own political agenda. Given this background, this study is thus interested in establishing whether a newspaper under such economic conditions would manage to operate as a free press.

It appears that in the case of privately owned newspapers, apart from the start-up capital for operational costs, most, if not all of them are partly, if not entirely, financially dependent on newspaper sales and advertising revenue (Banda, 2004). The trend of newspapers being registered and struggling for economic survival, and eventually folding seems to have run through the history of the press in Zambia. Seeing that newspaper sales alone may not raise enough to cover operational costs of a newspaper, revenue from advertising may become the life blood for sustaining the press. However, it has to be borne in mind, as intimated by O'Neal (1998), that societies or states differ in size, political and economic development and in other geopolitical particularities. Accordingly, this entails that these forces are likely to affect the media markets of such states differently. Saliency is given to the fact that particular economic realities in small African states, with small media and advertising markets such as Zambia have implications for their media landscape, regulation and the sustenance of a free press. It therefore has to be established whether the structural peculiarities of Zambia as a small country, with a small advertising market is sufficient enough to financially sustain the diversity of the media and subsequently promote the freedom of the press.

Nevertheless, as already stated, it is generally assumed that, for countries in the process of democratic transition such as Zambia, the press "should progress ever nearer to an ideal of freedom and independence and away from dependency and control" by government and business (Rozumilowicz, 2002: 12).

## **Rationale and Objectives**

The history of the development of the press in Zambia is well documented (Ainslie, 1967; Kasoma, 1986; Makungu, 2004). What seems to be missing is the historical perspective covering how advertising and other political economic factors influence the sustainability of a free press. This thesis investigates the factors that contributed to the development of the press in the shadows of the political economy in Zambia. In so doing, it explores the influence of economic and political transformation on the development of press freedom in Zambia. Explicitly, one of the questions is: how has the growth of the advertising market influenced the development of a free press in Zambia?

It is not the intention of this thesis to offer a comprehensive critical interpretation of the relations between the press and the state as many African studies have conventionally already done. In Zambia, studies such as those by Kasoma (1986), Moore (1991) and Makungu (2004) have looked at media and state relations. However, they have overlooked the role of capital on the development of media in Zambia. This thesis pays particular attention to ways in which the emergence and development of advertising impacted the sustainability of the print media industry and its influence on press freedom in Zambia. As has already been discussed, media sustainability is influenced by a range of forces (Picard, 2002), but at an operational level, political and market forces take centre stage in the thesis. Thus, to the extent that it is the major source of newspaper revenue, the subject of advertising is also very pertinent to this thesis.

Furthermore, this thesis attempts to depart from the conventional and dominant approach to work on advertising in media and communication studies. On the one hand, studies have focused on the meaning of adverts. Using discourse analysis, these studies have looked at the way in which adverts construct and reproduce power relations such as stereotypical gender roles. On the other hand, audience scholars have looked at the effectiveness of adverts by researching how messages have influenced audiences. What has been ignored though is the role of capital and advertising in particular on the sustainability of a free press. The problem seems to be stemming from the original conceptualisation of the four theories of the press, and Akhavan-Majid and Wolf (1991) acknowledge that Siebert *et al.* (1956) original four theories of the press also ignored the role of economic influence in media structures. The four theories of the press instead, centred on media – state relations.

From the perspectives of the theories of the press, while foregrounding the significance of capital and economic sustainability, the goal of this study is to contribute to the discussion on the appropriate framework for creating an enabling environment for a free press in the country. This is in relation to the prevailing media systems of a liberalised media industry and the state owned and controlled media. To this end, it examines the market conditions bearing in mind that Zambia is a small country whose political economic factors differ from those of the affluent society on which models for determining press freedom are developed. Furthermore, the general propositions of the notion of the political economy of communication are examined against Zambian conditions, thereby interrogating its constitutive concepts such as the libertarian theory (Siebert *et al.*, 1956), which the MMD government was seemingly eager to adopt in 1991, is interrogated on ground of its viability as a standard for press freedom in Zambia. Owing to the standards of independence that support the libertarian model of the press, requiring critical arguments, the thesis sets out to achieve the following objectives:

1. To explore the historical role of advertising in the sustainability of a free press in Zambia in the Third Republic in order to contribute to the debate on the role of its influence on media content;
2. To explore the influence of advertising and political transformation on the development of press freedom in Zambia;
3. To establish the effects of media management strategies on the sustainability of newspapers in Zambia;
4. To examine how the advertising market influences newspaper content and editorial autonomy.

It must be stated here that this study provides a historical perspective of changing dimensions of sustainability and media freedom in Zambia. Therefore, it reviews literature which frames concepts of the political economy of the media and theories of press freedom. Using this theoretical approach, the study examines the state of press freedom framed against economic forces of advertising.

### **Research Approach: A Transitological approach to Political Economy of Communication**

The study is historical in nature and qualitatively employs historical analysis as the method for exploring the phases in the development of advertising and its subsequent influence on the

sustainability of a free press in Zambia. The problem of political and media transition is of considerable theoretical and practical significance for states undergoing change. Part of the objectives of this thesis is to interrogate the political economy communication framework used by Western scholars. It argues that the Western conceptualisation of the political economy of communication does not address the realities of the Zambian media and communication landscape. It advances the notion that third world countries such as Zambia should break away from the Western conceptualisation of the political economy of communication. Perhaps, it should be stressed that the Zambian media system is in transition. However, the concept of transition is obviously not a straightforward one, and needs to be framed within specific contexts to be relevant in a discussion of the political economy of communication. Specifically, this study applies this concept to how the political transition in Zambia has influenced the transition in the media system towards achieving and sustaining press freedom.

Conceptually, the transition paradigm is linked to politics as an approach used for studying shifts from dictatorial to democratic regimes and has since been dubbed as *transitology* (Sparks, 2008; Levitsky and Way, 2010). What is basically referred to as “transition is the interval between one political regime and another” (O’Donnell and Schmitter, 2013: 5). Different scholars have attempted to establish the driving force behind *transition to democracy*. The O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986) model contends that the primary reason for the initiation of a transition is the schism between the opposition elites and the authoritarian power-holders. Przeworski (1992) stresses that in many cases transitions respond to internal factors, thereby resulting in splits within the regime and defections to the opposition. Accordingly, transitions take a process of negotiation between the two groups. Mainwaring (1989) adds that the early stages are shaped by complex interactions involving an intermediate category determined by the relative powers of the negotiating parties. However, Wnuk-Lipinski and Fuchs (2006) explicitly attribute the driving force behind to the search for liberty. Logically, the opposition elite desire to break free from the authoritarian regime to form a more liberal political environment.

However, transitions from authoritarian rule can be highly uncertain phenomena that can have a number of outcomes: democracy, renewed authoritarianism, or some combination of both (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 4). Implicitly, the transition process may take a meandering route through in which other countries reach democratic outcomes and others stagnate. Many scholars working in this tradition generally agree with Easton’s (1965) model which prescribes

that the transition process needs to undergo the liberalisation to transition to consolidation/persistence to democracy. Yet some seem to have different views on the question of modalities related to the legacies and prospects of democratic consolidation. Huntington (1991) believes that transitions take place in circumstances which are different from one country to another. He, therefore, argues that historical structures and political, economic and social legacies of particular states, among others, determine the outcome of a transition and consequently affect democratic consolidation. “Less violent transition provides a better basis for consolidating democracy than do conflict and violence,” (Huntington, 1991: 276).

On the contrary, Adam Przeworski (1992), one of the prominent political science theorists, does not find a strong historical connection between modality of transition and democratic consolidation in the emerging regime. He categorises transition into three phases by suggesting that a transition to democracy is complete when:

1. There is a real possibility of partisan alternation in office
2. Reversible policy changes can result from alternation in office
3. Effective civilian control has been established over the military. (Przeworski, 1992: 105)

Huntington, Przeworski, Mainwaring and other scholars’ conceptual elaborations of the ‘transition to democracy’, ‘transition from authoritarian rule’ or ‘democratic consolidation’ and related trends in global politics are mostly located in South American and European contexts. Scholars have observed variations in the modalities of transition from country to country. The discriminate plotting of cases leaves transitology in African countries such as Zambia with very thin empirical detail. It therefore is doubtful that the conceptualisation of transition thus far can be applied to the understanding of Zambian politics.

In Zambia, the 1991 general elections have been the hallmark of the political and economic transformations. This 1991 experience was characterised by changes in economic reforms and political leadership. In relation to the Zambian context, this study therefore specifically conceives transition as not only the process of regime change from communist/ authoritarian rule to democratic politics, but change from one president to another. The fundamental assumption is that different types of political process are marked by changes in ruling parties; political leadership such as the presidency; and other political and economic reforms are

integrated into the discussion. Integrating the political and economic process, which most works on transition do not strongly relate with, is key to understanding the circumstance that determine the transition process. Munck (1994) clearly admits that debate on the role of economic factors in transitology has not crystallised. Serious analysis is hindered “because the linkage between economic and political aspects of transitions has been formulated in quite different manners” (Munck, 1994: 365). Whether short or long term, it can be assumed that economic factors at play are likely to influence democratic transition. Using the political economy approach, processes of democratic transition are integrated into this study’s analysis (Roland, 2002). Thus, with a deeper focus on the early 1990s, the chapter uses the political economy approach to trace the impact of economic crises on the terms of the transition and nature of new political process. The economic conditions on the bargaining power and interests of incumbents and oppositions are also explored. The study therefore works on the general assumption that as a component principle of democracy and a driving force to transition as embedded in the notion of liberty, press freedom would be achieved with the realisation of a democratic society.

The study is historical in scope and centres on the Third Republic, 1991 to date. It is motivated because Zambia seems to be geographically and conceptually lacking in the political economy of communication approach to studying the relationship between advertising and the free press. Graham (2007) asserts that the political economy of communication approach has mostly been applied in developed Western countries by scholars who are most influential in the field and who, through their work, define the field. These scholars include Garnham (1990); McChesney, (2000); Schiller (1996); Mansell (2004); Wasko (2004); Mosco (1996); Smythe (1960).

Most of these Western scholars of political economy of communication over-emphasise their focus on media concentration and conglomeration of traditional media and technological institutions. This study’s niche lies in its proposition to go beyond the Western perspectives that focus on concentration. It explores the extent to which advertising sustains newspapers, while at the same time investigating how capital shapes editorial practices and gate keeping to determine content and ultimately influence press freedom in Zambia. The effects of the political economy of communication approaches may differ from continent to continent, region to region, and country to country. This implies that the Western characteristics and approaches of the political economy of communication may be different from the African perspective. Mosco (1996) cautions scholars in making general assumptions and argues that despite

similarities in North American, European and Third World approaches, “the political economy approach to communication is not sufficiently developed theoretically to be explained in one analytical map” Mosco, 1996:19. Hence, each region bears idiosyncrasies that warrant distinction. Generally, in many African countries and Zambia in particular, the field of media studies remains “an uncontextualised set of textualised metatheories that have little or no relevance to local conditions” (Tomaselli, 2009: 14). Therefore, following Mignolo’s (2009) terminology, this study engages in *epistemic disobedience* by delinking from the Western conceptualisation of the political economy of communication which has implications on the typology of factors influencing the sustainability of a free press.

From the pedagogical standpoint, the study’s propositions focuses on the demand for locally driven political economy within the discipline of media and communication studies. A number of scholars including De Beer (2008), Okigbo (1987) and Skjerdal and Tomaselli (2016) have established that the standards of media and communication studies in Africa are low. Therefore, they advocate local competence and a home grown paradigm within the African context. In fact, in relation to the lack of locally generated teaching materials, a global survey of educational materials for communication studies, a project which was spearheaded by Kaarle Nordenstreng in the mid-1980s, found overwhelming use of foreign textbooks in African communication programs (Skjerdal and Tomaselli, 2016). “In Anglophone black Africa (i.e. all countries in Sub-Saharan Africa except South Africa), 93 percent of the textbooks used in the instruction were of Western origin. Sixty-nine percent were published in the U.S. alone. Only six percent of the textbooks came from Africa itself, mainly Nigeria. This is comparable with Francophone Africa, where only eight percent of the material was produced on the continent,” (Skjerdal and Tomaselli, 2016: 460). The persistent lack of literature, especially in political economy of communication in Africa renews and stresses the relevance of these findings to the current situation. A microscopic scan of Zambian literature in media and communication research reveals that the field of political economy has been under researched.

### **Type of Study**

Given its historical and institutionally focussed nature, this thesis takes a double case study approach and is constructed as an exploratory study. It examines two newspapers’ capacities to achieve and sustain their editorial independence. The study is located in Zambia, which is a land-locked country in Southern Africa. The country has a human population of 15.02 million

(Central Statistics Office, 2014). The study explores and investigates areas that have previously not been examined in prior research in Zambia (Babbie and Mouton, 2008). Yin (1994) posits that as an empirical inquiry, a case study is suitable for studying complex social phenomena. As a study that analyses the difference between newspapers in a larger industry context, the double case study approach enjoys a natural advantage in research of an exploratory nature (Gerring, 2006). This exploratory case study approach therefore culminates in cross-case confirmatory analysis between the two newspapers. The study employs a narrative style of description in which a specific chronological association between events is proposed (Mouton, 1996). Due to its historical nature, it also uses transitological analysis as the methods for exploring the phases in the development of advertising and its subsequent influence on the sustainability of a free press in Zambia. It does so in order to present an in-depth description of specific institutions and interactions of concepts.

Furthermore, researching in an exploratory mode “calls for the qualitative strand to have greater priority within the design” and “researchers generally work from constructivist principles to value multiple perspectives and deeper understanding” of phenomenon (Creswell and Clark, 2007: 87). “Although this design typically emphasises the qualitative aspect, the inclusion of a quantitative component (numbers) can make the qualitative approach more acceptable “for descriptive findings (Creswell and Clark, 2007: 89; Maxwell, 2010).

The thesis uses charts, tables and graphs to illustrate the findings by helping identify patterns that are not apparent simply from unquantified qualitative data. The numbers in the illustrations are generated from market surveys and simple compilations of trends and events. However, the use of numbers in qualitative research remains a very controversial debate. Some qualitative researchers believed that numerical data are incompatible with a constructivist stance, because such data imply the existence of a single objective reality that can be measured and statistically analysed to reach generalisable conclusions. However, in his article *Using Numbers in Qualitative Research*, Maxwell (2010) contends that qualitative studies can and do make use of quantitative data. He argues that counting the number of instances of things in different categories must be interpreted in process terms of merely presenting a particular claim in numbers without necessarily conceptualising it in terms of variable. Unlike most quantitative studies which seek statistical generalisations, Yin (1994) indicates that qualitative research seeks analytic generalisation, even with the help of numbers.

For the type of analysis employed in this thesis where numbers illustrated by graphs and tables are interspersed with respondents' perspectives, Maxwell (2010) claims that numbers merely complement the respondent's views in providing a clearer and more in-depth understanding of phenomena because individuals are often unaware of larger patterns beyond their immediate experience. It is further argued that interpretations derived from, or supported by numerical values are not incompatible with understanding the respondents' own perspectives and constructions; on the contrary, a strong case can be made that in qualitative studies, a full understanding of social phenomena may require the use of numbers (Bohman, 1991; D'Andrea, 2006).

### **Sampling procedure**

The study used purposive sampling to select the two newspapers: *The Post* and the *Zambia Daily Mail*. It uses two newspapers to examine the sustainability of a free press. The newspapers have different ownership patterns - the *Zambia Daily Mail* is state owned and run whereas *The Post* newspaper is privately owned. The study has taken this approach in order to appreciate how newspapers with different ownership patterns are influenced by advertising. The *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers have been chosen for this study for the following specific reasons. Firstly, the major determinant is ownership between private and state owned newspapers. Secondly, the study is interested in understanding the economic influences of advertising on different ownership patterns. The *Zambia Daily Mail* is the only other daily newspaper other than the *Times of Zambia* that are state-owned. However, the *Zambia Daily Mail* is chosen over the *Times of Zambia* because historically the former has unique ownership characteristics in relation to the state. The former seems to have had closer state relations as compared to the latter which was mostly privately owned, and changed hands to UNIP before later becoming a state owned newspaper in 1975. The *Zambia Daily Mail*, which was formerly called the *Central African Mail* was bought by the government in 1965, and as will be shown in the thesis, later become state owned and controlled.

On the other hand, *The Post* is chosen because it happens to be the longest surviving privately owned daily newspaper. The other one is the *Daily Nation*, though it has only existed since 2012. Other consistent weeklies include the *New Vision* and the *Moon*, but they are relatively new and not as visible as *The Post*. *The Post* made its appearance during the 'newspaper

explosion' in 1990, and has since maintained consistency in terms of publication and being an alternative source of news to the state owned *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail*.

The two newspapers (*Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post*), therefore characterise the shifting dynamics of the private press on one side, and state-press relations through the country's three republics. Their respective historical developments, organisational structures and different roles in sustaining press freedom *vis-à-vis* the influence of advertising will be discussed later in the thesis. The study acknowledges that some scholars may have documented this argument, but it contests that no systematic empirical study has been undertaken to determine how advertising affects press freedom in Zambia. In order to establish this objective, the thesis asks the following question: how does advertising influence newspaper content and editorial autonomy?

Purposive sampling technique was also used for selecting various respondents associated with the work of the two newspapers and others with vested interests in advertising, press freedom and media development. However, snowball sampling, which is a type of purposive sampling was used for recruiting information-rich respondents. In snowballing, one with whom contact has already been made use their professional networks to refer the researcher to other people who could potentially participate or contribute to the study (Mack *et al.*, 2005).

As already said, the study mainly focuses on the Third Republic, and selects the period between 1991 and 2015. For news holes analysis purposes, the Third Republic was systematically divided in five five-year periods. 1991-1995; 1996-2000; 2001-2005; 2006-2010 and 2011-2016. Then systematic random sampling was used to select one year from an interval of five years, starting with 1992 then 1997, 2002, 2007 and 2012. Thereafter, each year was divided into thirds, and the months of January, May and September systematically selected. Furthermore, two weeks (first and third) were selected from each month, after which two days were selected from each week. This was applied to both newspapers. Finally, the front pages of newspaper were picked, and measured in column centimetres.

### **Collection of data**

One methodological way for critical discourse analysis is to minimise the risk of critical bias by following the principle of triangulation (Cicourel, 1969). One of the most salient features

of the discourse historical approach is its endeavour to work with a variety of different empirical data (Wodak, 2001). As such, in line with Yin's (1994) recommendation for case studies, this thesis uses the following data collection methods: semi-structured interviews; desk research and document analysis; structured interviews; organisational questionnaire and; content checklist. Policies and media statements by some authorities regarding advertising in the media were reviewed in constructing historical, political, advertising and media developments. This process also involves the collection of readily available materials and information from the internet, newspapers and books on advertising and the media from as far back as the signs of advertising could be traced to the present. The rationale for using multiple sources of data is the triangulation of evidence. Triangulation increases the reliability of the data and the process of gathering it. It also serves to corroborate the data gathered from other sources (Tellis, 1997).

*In-depth Interviews* involved an open-ended questionnaire which was used to collect information to guide the process. Using semi-structured interviews, interpretations were sought because case studies are multi-perspectival analyses. This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the respondents, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them (Tellis, 1997). The respondents included former and current directors and editors of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. These were senior journalists from the industry and representatives of media professional associations. These people are either directly or indirectly involved in the management of newspapers. In addition to their personal experiences, respondents also presented official positions on various matters related to press freedom, advertising, management and political transitions. Even if the interview guide was standard, there were variations to the flow of questions to respond to in each context, depending on the depth of knowledge and experience of specific respondents. The main reason for these interviews is to unravel the power relations between proprietors and editors and explores the influences on press freedom.

A *newshole template* was developed and employed to collect data relating to volumes of advertisements and editorial content on the front pages of the two newspapers. The template captured different aspects (sophistication, technological, design elements and formats) of advertisements in the two newspapers from 1991 to date. The newspaper articles and advertisements were measured to determine the newshole allocation for each newspaper.

*Document Review:* Among the documents examined were the strategic plans and editorial policies of both the *Daily Mail* and *The Post*. Other documents included government policy documents, Hansards (*official verbatim records of debates in parliament*) and financial statements. Furthermore, market and readership surveys by different agencies and Afrobarometer studies on the media in Zambia beefed up the analysis. News reports from different media organisations were also used to give evidence to the state on media reforms and press freedom in the country. The documents above were used in different capacities, but were mostly examined and scrutinised in shaping political, historical and media developments in the country.

*Organisation questionnaire:* Hard data on circulation figures and advertising spending was obtained from independent consultancies and top spending corporations. Accessing financial data proved very difficult because financial reports could not easily be provided as they were deemed to be ‘sensitive’. As a result, a questionnaire was developed and administered to these corporations. This data was arranged thematically and corroborated with evidence from interviews to comprehend the nature of the market challenge that the press face in a small market media system.

### **Analysis and Discussion of findings**

This study adopts that political economy analysis and critical discourse analysis frameworks. It considers political economy to be “the study of how values of all kinds are produced, distributed, exchanged, and consumed (the economic); how power is produced, distributed, exchanged, and exercised (the political); and, empirically, how these aspects of social relations and everyday life are organised and enacted synchronically and diachronically” (Graham and Luke, 2011: 104). Therefore, the approach to political economy of communication generally involves understanding the position of communication in political economic formations (Innis, 1950). Scholars of political economy have generally focused on how the dynamics of capital accumulation and class power manifest themselves in the capitalist mode of production and production process of the media industry (Calabrese, and Sparks, 2004: 2).

On the other hand, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context (Norman, 1992; Van

Dijk, 2003). Critical discourse analysis has now become a very diverse area of study and has attracted different approaches from different scholars in different disciplines. For example, Sidnell (2009) focuses on discourse related to conversation analysis, whereas Potter and Wetherell (1987) developed a discourse analysis model for social psychologists. More critical approaches include the critical linguistics of Fowler (1991), and the French approach to discourse analysis developed on the basis of Althusser's theory of ideology by Pecheux (Pecheux 1982).

Furthermore, Foucault has had a huge influence upon the social sciences and humanities, and the popularization of the concept of 'discourse' and of discourse analysis. Foucault's (1972) approach to discourse analysis focuses on power, knowledge and identities. He uses the 'discourse' to refer to statements which produce a language for talking about a way of representing knowledge about a particular historical moment. Considering the differences in interpretation, what is therefore important to note is that most kinds of CDA will ask questions about the way specific discourse structures are deployed in the reproduction of social dominance, whether they are part of a conversation or a news report or other genres and contexts. Thus, the typical vocabulary of many scholars in CDA will feature such notions as 'power,' 'dominance,' 'hegemony,' 'ideology,' 'class,' 'discrimination,' 'interests,' 'reproduction,' 'institutions,' 'social structure,' and 'social order,' besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions (Van Dijk, 2003).

This study attempts to transcend the linguistic, language and knowledge dimensions and include more or less systematically the historical, political, sociological, and economic dimensions in the analysis and interpretation of a specific discursive occasion. As such, it largely adopts Fairclough's social theory of discourse approach. This approach defines discourse with particular reference to inequalities of power and how they might figure in the most pressing social problems of the day: those aspects of the structure, organization and functioning of human societies that cause suffering, injustice, danger, inequality, insecurity, and self-doubt (Fairclough, Graham, Lemke, and Wodak, 2004).

The key issues of focus for this study which include the media markets, political transitions, strategic media management, separation of ownership from control, and sustainability of a free press require analytic frameworks that begin from a synthetic view of the relationship between discourse and political economy. Critical discourse studies and political economy of

communication can usefully inform each other to explicate the dynamics of political economic relations, their histories, and the media (Graham, and Luke, 2011). With such dissident research, as this study is undertaking, critical discourse analysis takes explicit position alongside political economy of communication in order to examine and, expose power relations in the media and understand the different epistemic and theoretical typologies of developed and underdeveloped societies. To do this, the study approaches CDA abductively by recursively oscillating between political economy of communication as theoretical frame and numerous textual instances, looking for patterns that connect and repeat at multiple levels (Graham and Luke, 2011).

In this light, transcripts of conversations during interviews are subjected to critical discourse analysis. While ‘extended samples of text and talk’ (Fairclough, 1992: 3) are tabled here, discourse analysis can focus on whichever modes are typically used in any given social context to make meaning (Lemke, 1995). The same method engages newshole analysis, it also captures visual data on newspaper pages. As such, CDA is used for meaning making in connection to dominance of commercial elements against editorial.

Furthermore, considering that this is a double case study of two newspapers, pattern-matching and explanation are also employed in the analysis framework. Yin (1994) argues: *pattern-matching* and *explanation-building*., in which the analysis of the case study is carried out by building an explanation of the case. This implies that it is most useful in explanatory case studies, but it is possible to use it for exploratory cases as well. Explanation-building is an iterative process that begins with a theoretical statement, refines it, revises the proposition, and repeating this process from the beginning. The analysis therefore takes an explanatory and descriptive approach in unpacking the political and economic transformation of the Zambian media. In the process it compares empirically based patterns and searches for some of the theoretically salient explaining conditions in the findings. Since the study uses numbers matrixes, tabulation of frequencies, charts and graphs are used to provide a vivid demonstration of trends in media advertising and ratings. This helps create patterns of meaning making in the relations between political and economic institutions such as business corporations, the government and the press.

Finally, theory related analytic generalisability is possible, especially for multiple case studies and is achieved by showing the relationships between the evidence in the data and previous

studies (Babbie and Mouton, 2008; Yin, 1994). The results are synthesised and thematically arranged to create chapters responding to the key areas of the study: sustainability, historical perspectives, political economy and press freedom.

- 1) Separation between ownership and control in newspaper institutions;
- 2) Theoretical perspectives: de-westernisation of the political economy and the public sphere;
- 3) Zambian media in transition: economic liberalisation and commercialisation;
- 4) The newspaper environment: a small country/ market approach.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study faced two main challenges. Firstly, the scarcity of literature in the area of political economic communication in Zambia posed serious challenges patterning to manageability and viability. Secondly, the study was considered to be sensitive as it investigated the professional nature of two longstanding competitors in the country's newspaper industry. Interrogating their professional practices and discussing editorial and business strategies in the context of this rivalry touched on their soul. This subsequently proved difficult to recruit respondents. In fact, some completely declined to be interviewed. However, this is where snowball sampling proved significant to the study, as the researcher improvised and ensured that most data was obtained without ethical risks. Another limitation relates to the lack of independent research bureaux and institutions to investigate and document different types of data relating to media advertising, circulations, and listenership and viewership trends in the country. This implies the lack of verification for such data provided by different companies and media institutions can inflate their figures for purposes of attraction advertising.

### **Chapterisation**

Chapter one offers an introduction by providing a brief context of the state of press freedom as it relates to its sustainability of newspapers in Zambia. It presents a media sustainability model and examines the influence of market forces on the press. The chapter discusses how press freedom facilitated or impeded by advertising contributes to the democratisation of the country. It centres on the watchdog role of the press in providing checks and balances not only to political elites, but also to economic elites and economically powerful business organisations. The chapter highlights the relationship between media, advertising and democracy. The chapter also offers a brief introduction to the general structure of the thesis by highlighting the central

features of each chapter. It states the general aim and specific objectives of the thesis, followed by research questions and explains the justification on the relevance of the study and how it contributes to the wider body of knowledge in communication and media studies.

Chapter two provides a detailed discussion on Zambia's history, the evolution of advertising flanked by episodic developments of newspapers. This discussion is framed by the country's political and economic transitions through the first, second and third republics as background. The chapter engages in a detailed discussion of concepts of press freedom interspaced with advertising and political economy by successively contextualising them in Africa and narrowing them down to Zambia. In terms of the Zambian situation, a historical approach is taken to provide a critical analysis of the development of the free press and the political and economic factors underpinning this development in the different three republics as they have developed across time. The different factors identified in this chapter, such as market forces, economic feasibility, political and legal systems and ownership trends are further examined in relation to their influence on press freedom during political transformation.

Chapter three is an extended review of literature on the dynamics and influences of ownership on sustaining a free press in Zambia and beyond. It critically examines the pros and cons of the different types of media ownership with a view to understand the most appropriate model for sustaining a free press in Zambia. It examines the effectiveness of different patterns of newspaper ownership within the context of sustainability of a free press in Zambia. It elucidates the discussion by exploring state and private interests by using political and economic concepts about capital, control and power of media enterprises. It scrutinises managerial and economic conditions that emerge between the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers, and their respective implications. By discussing ownership and control, this chapter places the newspaper organisation's editorial management within a framework of interacting forces, consisting primarily of readers, advertisers and owners.

Chapter four follows with a focus on an analytical discussion on the theoretical standpoints of political economy, and later the public sphere concepts, successively dissecting their relationship with the sustainability of newspapers. It mainly unpacks the political economy approach and how it applies to communication studies with related concepts such as media concentration, liberalisation and regulation forming part of the analysis. Finally, within the conceptualisations of the political economy of communication, the chapter stresses the

Zambian perspective which foregrounds the typology of peculiar characteristics of the Zambian political economy of communication.

Chapter five provides the historic perspective of the Zambian media in transition. Essentially, this is a data presentation and analysis chapter which discusses the developments relating to advertising and media freedom from the standpoint of the two newspapers by using a historical policy analysis approach. It focuses on how the national liberalisation policies affected the two newspapers and examines their respective organisational and administrative structures and how these have been changing over time. In the context of each newspaper, this thesis is justified by highlighting their editorial policies and their desire to uphold press freedom and journalistic professionalism. Thus, the study takes particular interest in how the editorial policies of the newspapers under study have affected or been affected by the prevailing political and economic factors in the country. In so doing, a searching evaluation of the business models for managing the newspapers is undertaken. As earlier alluded to, this is a case study of how the two newspapers are influenced by advertising and other political-economic factors, but at the same time the thesis acknowledges that these papers do not operate in a vacuum. As such the perceptions of the national media governing bodies and associations on advertising and press freedom are considered. This has mostly bordered on the support to the two newspapers and the media industry as a whole in relation to upholding editorial independence and professional standards.

Chapter six takes a small country approach to examine how political economic forces influence the sustainability of newspapers in Zambia. It presents and discusses empirical evidence on the influence of advertising on editorial autonomy in Zambia. The place of advertising in institutional management structures of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* and the media industry as a whole is critically examined against editorial considerations. Drawing on propositions of a small country with a small media market, the chapter argues that it is practically impossible to sustain newspapers without compromising their editorial independence. It tests the viability of a free press with and/or without advertising, thereby making inferences that survivalism has taken over the practice of journalism in Zambia.

The conclusion and recommendations of the study will be outlined in Chapter Seven.

**CHAPTER 2:**  
**THE PRESS IN THE SHADOW OF THE POLITICAL-ECONOMY:**  
**A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

**Introduction**

Colin McDonald and Jane Scott (2007: 18) wrote:

Studying a subject without an appreciation of its antecedents is like seeing a picture in two dimensions - there is no depth. The study of history gives us this depth as well as an understanding of why things are as they are.

This chapter draws its aspirations from the foregoing assertion in order to understand the development and sustainability of the free press in Zambia. In their seminal work, *Four Theories of the Press*, Siebert *et al.* (1956) were preoccupied with trying to explain why the press is as it is. Why do newspapers serve different purposes; are they different at different times in history; and why do some titles die while others survive? These fundamental and, indeed, universal questions and other related issues are situated in the Zambian context to form the centre of investigation in this chapter.

Using the lens of political economy of communication, the chapter attempts to discuss economic change and the development and sustainability of newspapers in Zambia. It is a historical review of literature, analysing developments of newspapers and advertising from the early signs of mass media communication in Zambia up to date. It examines the evolution of the press and the changing nature of the economic environment in the country. It is based on the assumption that in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the evolution of advertising and newspapers in Zambia, there is need to undertake a historical investigation of cross-cutting social, political and economic issues. This chapter hence sets out to discuss the following:

1. The development of newspapers and advertising in Zambia.
2. The influence of the different economic environments on advertising and newspaper sustainability in Zambia.
3. The concept of press freedom and the role of the press in the Zambian society.

Advertising is generally believed to be one of the oldest forms of modern communication. It is actually believed to be as old as humankind. According to Okigbo (1990), biblically it is safe to assume that the first advertisement on earth first happened when the serpent advertised the qualities of the forbidden fruit to Eve who later, in a captivating manner, re-advertised the fruit to her husband, Adam, who yielded easily to her enticement. Therefore, Adam and Eve were the first victims of the overwhelming power of advertising.

However, advertising seems to be a phenomenon that has only recently become fully visible in the Zambian media and business scene. The tempo of growth of the advertising industry coincided with the change in the political and economic environment in the country. The reversion from the one-party communist style to a multi-party democracy in the 1990s is what gave birth to liberalisation of the country's economy (Rakner, 2003) and conceivably to the visible growth of advertising. It appears that the acceleration in the growth of advertising in Zambia increased after the 1990s and is a reflection of the world trend in the development of mass communication. Many African countries, including Zambia have been caught up with this trend which is predominantly reflected in advertising of household goods in the mainstream media. However, before this chapter dwells on the contemporary, it firstly attempts to explore the historical developments of advertising and how it may have influenced the sustainability of the Zambian press.

### **Contextualising the Concept of Advertising**

According to Park (1923), the modern newspaper has been accused of being a business enterprise. In his attempt to justify and respond to this accusation, Park presents a very interesting answer when he says "yes, and the commodity it sells is news. It is the truth shop," (Park, 1923: 275). Newspaper organisations in Zambia are a business, just as they are anywhere else (Cass, 2004). This is regardless of the sources of revenue. But whether they are truth shops is highly questionable. Thus McQuail (2010: 218) cautions that much as they respond to economic forces, newspapers are "not just any other business" because they are also deeply rooted social and cultural institutions. Whether revenue is generated by advertising or subsidised by the government or any other means, newspapers need money to stay alive (Cass, 2004). Subsidies from governments as Picard and Grönlund (2003) note are also a significant source of revenue.

Studies in different media markets across the world have established that producing news is a commercial enterprise, and a newspaper is expected to operate in accordance with the demands of the marketplace and the necessities of economic survival (Carroll and Delacroix, 1982; Hadland, *et al.*, 2007; Thompson, 1989), especially so for private newspapers (Bagdikian, 2000). Advertising revenue forms that larger portion in the media's revenue collection basket (Curran, 1981). Literature shows that income from newspaper sales also constitutes an important portion of revenue. It is clear that there are diverse views about the significance of the economic environment to the survival of newspapers. Bakker (2011) points to research from the different scholars including Picard (2001), Wilkinson (2001), and Bakker (2002) which mainly proves the value of free newspapers to potential advertisers. Although Wadbring (2007) is of the view that sales from paid newspapers complement revenue from advertising, Bakker (2008) found that in Europe, free newspapers have been more successful where traditional paid newspapers have been struggling to sustain circulation.

The discourse of the newspaper economy is partly based on the nature of the audience and the newspaper market. In line with Bakker's (2002) observation that free newspapers are more viable in areas with relative homogeneity, McQuail (2010) argues that homogenous audiences are often more cost effective and attractive to advertisers than heterogeneous audiences in dispersed markets. What Bakker (2008) acknowledges however, is the overwhelming lack of research regarding the success of free or paid newspapers in relationship to attractive advertising. The available studies on the subject are limited to European audiences and markets.

Many scholars (Pollay, 1985; Curran, 1981) have established the dependence of newspapers on advertising revenue. Furthermore, Picard (2008) found that revenue from advertising accounts for about two-thirds of the content and 75 to 85 percent of income for an average newspaper in the United States and similar situations are found in many European nations. Cowling, *et al.*, (2008) and Hadland *et al.*, (2007) indicate a similar trend in the South African print media. Regardless of how familiar these assertions may sound, in many African countries including Zambia, empirical studies seeking to confirm this are either scarce or non-existent. It may be expected that due to different media structures and media markets, the situation may be different between developed economies and Third World countries.

Even if Picard, *et al.* (2004), argues that the newspaper industry has become the most profitable of all media industries and one of the most profitable of all manufacturing industries, it should

also be noted that just like in Europe, USA and elsewhere in the world, early newspapers in Zambia were frequently not profitable (Hallin, 2004; Banda, 2004). Picard (2008) seemed to have reconsidered his position about the success of newspapers when he observed that the industry was showing little growth potential and facing the potential for decline. In fact, Schoenbach *et al.* (1999: 225) were even more pessimistic when they pointed out that “newspapers are an endangered species”. These observations about the struggles of newspapers seem to point back to the difficulties faced by early newspapers.

Literature on the history of newspapers shows that the highs and lows in the industry were connected to political, economic, social or technological events. According to Park (1923), the growth of great cities in the United States, coupled with the increase in environment literacy, increased the size of the reading public and created a conducive atmosphere for the increase in the number of newspaper titles. The continued increase in newspaper popularity reached its peak in the 1920s with a household penetration of 130 percent (Lucena, 2011). However, Meyer (2009) states that the industry started to show a steady decline ever since. This decline was attributed to the ongoing technological revolution. The emergence of radio threatened the existence of newspapers (Abramson, 2003). Abramson indicates that newspaper performance suffered again in the early 1950s immediately after the introduction of TV. According to McQuail (2010) the effects of the technological revolution on newspapers have been twofold: loss of circulation and; loss of advertising revenue resulting from competition with radio, TV and now online media.

However, it is expected that the nature of the challenges faced by modern newspapers is different from those of the early publications. Furthermore, the dearth of literature on the struggles and mortalities of the early African newspapers may not directly imply that the American and European situations can be imported. As already indicated in the introduction chapter, studies on the media in Zambia have mainly focused on the state-press relationship, neglecting economic factors, particularly how advertising may have contributed to the development of newspapers. There is very little on the on-the-ground studies. What were circulation figures; who bought newspapers; who read newspapers; how were they produced; where did they source newsprint; who owned newspapers and who edited them (and for what reasons). The history of the African press is, in fact, in its infancy.

### **Biographies and Mortalities of Early Newspapers: Survival of the Richest**

Generally, the Zambian press descended from newspapers which were established to serve the needs of the white settler population. They were owned by whites; hence this chapter uses the political economy approach to the corresponding growth of advertising and newspapers in order to provoke some issues regarding ownership and control of the press. These include how the country's capital was dominated by the British; the white press was a tool for sustaining the interests of the white community and; the reflection of African news in the white press. In attempting to address these issues, this study also discusses the state of the public sphere and how white capitalism sustained a free press.

Zambia was under foreign rule from 1890 to 1964 after which the country attained independence. The region was firstly ruled by the British South Africa Company (BSAC), from 1890 to April 1924, and thereafter as a British crown colony under the Colonial Office of the British government (Chipungu, 1992). Much of what the first section of this chapter examines falls in this period.

Francis Kasoma (1986) did the tremendous work of documenting the trends in the history of the press in Zambia, and this study need not cover the same ground here. Several points, however, merit emphasis and situating in a deeper economic dimension.

Research on the history of the advertising industry in Zambia is devastatingly scanty. Ainslie (1967) and Kasoma (1986) are among the earliest researchers in the media industry in the country; however, the scope of their work did not capture the influence of advertising on the press. In fact, Ainslie (1967) takes an inventory approach which lacks political-economic depth. Some researchers from countries such as South Africa (Hugo-Burrows, 2001) and USA (Pope, 1983) studied the advertising industry respectively. However, the connection of how advertising influences the sustainability of the free press, in many countries including Zambia, has either been anecdotal or completely missing.

Due to the intertwined nature of the relations between advertising and the media, it may be safe to assume that the advertising industry in Zambia has been developing alongside the media. Newspapers in Zambia started as small individualised and differentiated businesses with very small print runs. However, there are some differences in literature regarding the chronology in appearances of early newspapers. Contrary to Kasoma's (1986) work which shows that the

*Livingstone Pioneer* was the first newspaper in Zambia, Gann (1964) states that *The Pioneer* was the first, followed by the *Livingstone Pioneer and Advertiser*, though both were successively published in 1906 by W. Tranter. Also in 1906, Leopold Frank Moore (1868-1945), a chemist, established a rival newspaper called the *Livingstone Mail* (Gann, 1964). Gann (1964) suggests that Tranter's newspaper was displaced by the competition from the *Livingstone Mail* due to what is referred to as the "limited carrying capacity" (Carroll and Delacroix, 1982: 279) of Livingstone town to simultaneously run more than one newspaper. Moore financed the *Mail* from the profits of this chemist. It appears that he used the businesses – the chemist and the newspaper to support each other (Kasoma, 1986). This was a manifestation of media economies, and how a newspaper business can be part of a group of companies that financially and strategically impact on each other. Murdock and Golding (1973) confirm this when they point out that media companies are locked into a wider economic situation through reciprocal investments and shareholdings with other companies, and through advertising. The *Livingstone Mail* was a six paged publication with page one totally reserved for advertisements, with the publisher's own Moore Chemist taking the coveted 'ears'. It carried heavy advertising and less news with an average ratio of 90 to 10 percent (Makungu, 2004).

It was no coincidence that the first three newspapers were all published in Livingstone town. The town was strategic for three main reasons extracted and deduced from Gann (1964: 139). Firstly, as the capital city and administrative centre of what became Northern Rhodesia. Secondly, Livingstone was a strategic trading centre for the BSAC with the Victoria Falls Bridge as the major trade route between the north and the south. The third reason was that the town had natural resources and fertile soils around it which supported a relatively large European farming population. Due to these factors, Livingstone town had a strong economy which attracted a population of white settlers. And the economic environment of the town supported the establishment of newspapers. In their ecological study of the newspaper industries of Argentina and Ireland, Carroll and Delacroix (1982) found that the availability of economic resources is key to the founding of newspapers. During this period, the economy of Northern Rhodesia was run by the white settlers. Hence, in addition to the advertising of small businesses which the town's white settlers had set up, the newspaper also carried a number of official government advertisements (Kasoma, 1986). Apart from using the *Livingstone Mail* to advertise their businesses, the whites also used it as their political mouth-piece to encourage the Colonial Office in London to "pay more attention to their concerns and aspirations; part of

which included emerging resistance by the African majority population to emerging settler subjugation” (Phiri, 2006: 14).

Although it was the only newspaper in the country at that time, the *Livingstone Mail* never really acquired the status of a national newspaper (Makungu, 2004). Carroll and Delacroix (1982) suggest that the name of a town or region in the newspaper’s title usually determines its local anchorage; hence the *Mail* was limited to Livingstone town. The population growth rate of Livingstone was very slow. In fact, the town’s white population showed an increase from about 85 in 1905 to about 277 in 1910 (Gann, 1964). This had direct implications on the circulation of the *Mail*. Kasoma (1986) shows that between 1924 and 1927 the *Mail* circulated a mere 600 copies per edition. Carroll and Delacroix (1982) argue that human population and literacy rates are determinants of the success of the press. Hence in Zambia, after the *Mail*, the years that followed were sterile – without the founding of any new newspaper title. For about 26 years (between 1906 and 1932), there are no visible traces of any other newspapers existing in the country.

During World War I (1914-1918), the economic power of the national bourgeoisie had grown stronger (Arrighi, 1967). Northern Rhodesia, which dated from 1911, experienced relative economic development which was “speeded by the introduction of the motor car which was now beginning to make its appearance in the country” (Gann, 1964: 170). However, most of the developments taking place in Northern Rhodesia were a backwash of the more significant events in Southern Rhodesia and also in the Union of South Africa which was established in 1910. The latter two were politically and economically more important to the British because of their rich mineral resources which had not yet been discovered in Northern Rhodesia (Gann, 1964). Commerce and trade had not yet matured in the territory. The BSAC’s attitude towards Northern Rhodesia had been that of a convenient labour reservoir for the mines in Southern Rhodesia (Chipungu, 1992).

It was not until the late 1920s that the Northern Rhodesia copper revolution showed remarkable signals of economic growth (Gann, 1964). The northern part, the Copperbelt province, to be specific, was endowed with abundant minerals. The British South Africa Company discovered a lot of mineral resources and many mining companies were established. Over the years there was a shift in political and economic powers from the south to central and northern parts of Northern Rhodesia.

The mining activities on the Copperbelt province attracted a lot of business activities. The transformation of the economy through the opening of copper mines created opportunities for numerous business enterprises for both blacks and whites (Chipungu, 1992). It is, therefore, safe to say that this economic environment created a breeding ground for the many newspapers that were established in this region, with the *Copperbelt Times* as the first born in 1932 (Makungu 2004). The *Copperbelt Times* was established by two miners, E. C. Wyterd and E. B. Hovelmier. It ran for 11 years. Kasoma (1986) argues that the *Copperbelt Times* was mostly a channel for social gossip among the white miners in the mine camps.

The second paper born on the Copperbelt was the *Northern Rhodesian Advertiser* in 1935, set up and edited by F. Mackenzie. The operating company was the Northern Rhodesian Advertiser Limited, owned by a local company, though ownership of the *Advertiser* was not proclaimed (Kasoma, 1986). In its first editorial, the paper declared its intention to pursue an independent policy which accommodated everyone and provided a forum for all who desired to reach the public on the Copperbelt. A typical issue of the *Advertiser* ran to ten tabloid-size pages. For the first 12 years, the newspaper lived up to its name by reserving the entire first page for advertisements (Kasoma, 1986). However, there is no documented literature about the nature and appeals of the advertisements carried in this paper and how advertising generally affected its sustainability. What has been established, however, is that the *Advertiser* did not seem to have a clear separation between editorial and advertising. In fact, its advertising manager fully conducted editorial responsibilities and even had a chit-chat column called 'Federal Notes' (Kasoma, 1986).

The period of the 1940s and 1950s brought mixed blessing for the press. It was a time of crises and eulogies for dying newspapers, though also the birth of a few new publications. Sometime in mid-1942, Wykerd and Hovelmeier started planning for a new newspaper called the *Northern News*. They stopped publishing the *Copperbelt Times* because during World War II (1939-1945), newsprint was in short supply. World War II did not only bring demand for news, it also meant that the authorities assumed powers to suppress any newspapers deemed subversive or because of a shortage of strategically important news print through restrictive regulation. Consequently, in May 1942, the government of Northern Rhodesia declared Emergency Powers Control Regulation No. 110, among other things, prohibited publication of any new newspaper, unless exempted by the director of Civil Supplies. This newsprint

rationing impacted negatively on the freedom of the press. However, as a strategy to fit into the needs of the time and probably to please the authorities, Wykerd and Hovelmeier wrote to the government proposing that the policy of the *Northern News* was be “the furtherance of the war effort and, maintenance of amicable relations between all sections of the community” (Kasoma 1986: 36).

With the association of a very prominent politician by the name of Sir Roy Welensky, who at the time was the leader of both the Labour Party and of the ‘Unofficial Members’ in the Legislative Council (Legco), the setting up of the *Northern News* was unprecedented. The government was convinced and on 26 May 1943, the *Northern News* was introduced under circumstances which Kasoma (1986: 36) describes as a “more complicated birth”. However, it is argued that the founding of the *Northern News* was the beginning of the national press enterprise in Northern Rhodesia (Ainslie, 1967).

Welensky’s interests during the setting up of the *Northern News* were known when in 1944 he bought out the entire shareholding and became sole shareholder. From 1943 to 1953, the *Northern News* was a monthly publication with a circulation of 2000. However, in 1951 Welensky sold the paper to the Southern Rhodesia-based Rhodesia Printing Company and the South African-based Argus Group of companies, who later turned it into a daily, and within five years increased circulation to 20,000 copies (Ainslie, 1967). This meant the *Northern News* was the only daily newspaper as well as the first in the country to be foreign owned.

It may be argued that in line with the standards of journalism, the *Northern News* was not a free newspaper. It serves as a typical example of how a newspaper can be used as a political mouthpiece of the owner. Kasoma (1986) writes that the *Northern News* repeatedly declared that it existed to support Welensky and his cause, which was the federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesia. Welensky completely controlled the editorial of the newspaper by ensuring that all stories supported his cause. He also wrote a column called ‘Think Piece’ in which he endeavoured to influence public opinion by convincing readers to agree with his point of view (Kasoma, 1986). Ironically, even after he sold it, he was still in a position to manipulate the paper’s policy. This has been prevalent in other countries in Africa and beyond and studies such as those by Price (2003) and Patterson and Donsbagh (1996) show how media owners and journalists have used newspapers to advance their individual goals. A conspicuous example is that of how Rupert Murdoch used his media to reflect his personal and political ideals

(McKnight, 2003). Another prominent example is how Italy's Silvio Berlusconi's tendency to use his own media empire to achieve his political ambition in Italy served to undermine journalistic autonomy and the notion of journalistic objectivity (Shah, 2009).

The purchase of the *Northern News* by the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company and the Argus Group was a significant development in the political economy of the press. It was the first time in Zambia for a foreign company to own a newspaper. The implications of this development on the sustainability of the newspaper are discussed later in the chapter. Even if the Argus Group already was chiefly present in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, it now also existed in Northern Rhodesia (Silber, 1993). This move to run a newspaper in Northern Rhodesia was mainly initiated to secure the company's greater business interests in mining, rather than any great interest in the local press (Ainslie, 1967). Furthermore, Shah (2009) suggests that situations where big corporations control newspapers may lead to less aggressive news coverage and a more muted marketplace of ideas. However, supposed effects of the Argus Group on newspapers in Zambia are yet to be established.

But then, amidst all these developments in the newspaper business on the Copperbelt, in 1935 the capital city of Northern Rhodesia was moved from Livingstone to Lusaka. But it was not until 1948 that the first newspaper appeared in Lusaka, the *Central African Post*, owned Dr. Alexander Scott (Makungu, 2004). Kasoma (1986) described Scott as a politically minded retired physician who took to newspaper journalism more or less as a full-time hobby. And indeed, the *Central African Post* was very political in its content. It was very critical of the Northern Rhodesia Government and the Federation, and Scott used it to campaign for elections to the Federal Parliament in Salisbury [Harare] (Kasoma, 1986). However, the *Central African Post*, probably because of its political stand, did not attract much advertising and ran at a loss, leading to its eventual demise in 1952.

The brisk developments in the press on the Copperbelt during the 1940s were notable for one thing – all the newspapers in the country were so far owned by whites. This was because of the booming mining industry, which also bolstered emerging British interests (Gann, 1964). Economic expansion facilitated by mining attracted thousands of European immigrants. At the beginning of the war, there were 15,000 whites in the territory; by 1945 the figure had risen to 21,798; and by 1953, the white population had reached 50,000, with about 50 percent on the Copperbelt (Chipungu, 1992). By the end of the World War II Northern Rhodesia was among

the leading producers of copper in the world (Gann, 1964). One of the major reasons for the rise of newspapers after the World War II was that there was an increase in European migration into Northern Rhodesia following the boom in the copper industry which attracted many due to the high salaries being paid (higher than most mining areas in the world). This period is referred to as the “Second Colonial Occupation”. Many of these settlers came from Southern Rhodesia and South Africa. The emergence of these new newspapers were targeted at this rising settler population (Cain *et. al.*, 1993). It appears that the combination of the gradually increasing population and economy growth provided a conducive environment for the rise and continued existence of the press.

Apart from the white and privately owned newspapers discussed so far, the Northern Rhodesia government was also making attempts at establishing newspapers to cater for the needs of the local African population. The first such attempt was *Mutende* in 1936 which was later succeeded by the *African Eagle* in 1952.

Kasoma (1986: 49) notes that *Mutende* was the first “penny newspaper” in Northern Rhodesia. It was launched with an initial cover price of two pence (2d), but in order to encourage more readers to buy the paper, the price was dropped to one penny in 1940. The *Mutende* described itself as an African newspaper of Northern Rhodesia (Makungu, 2004). The government emphasised that *Mutende* was set up not only to provide news, but to provide reading matter and educate the readership (Kasoma, 1986). The *Mutende* was not established to reflect African interest but as a counterblast to *Watch Tower*<sup>3</sup> literature which was usually antagonising government policy (Hall, 1976). Nonetheless, the government efforts to provide education to a highly illiterate black population were complimented by the introduction of primary and secondary schools (Chipungu, 1992). In addition, Kasoma (1986) points out that *Mutende* was published in five local languages, as strategy to capture all ethnic groups in the country. Whereas this idea has succeeded and even contributed to the increase in media literacy in countries like India (Jeffrey, 1993), it failed lamentably in some Pacific island countries (Cass, 2004). Moreover, Babalola (2002) in Nigeria found that English medium newspapers were far more effective in facilitating literacy empowerment than local language newspapers. In a country of 72 local languages, Northern Rhodesians from other ethnic groups felt side-lined,

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<sup>3</sup> The *Watch Tower* is the name given to the religious magazine published by the Jehovah's Witnesses and distributed worldwide.

hence their apathy towards *Mutende* (Chipungu, 1992). In this light, *Mutende* failed to sustain a healthy circulation.

Economically, *Mutende* existed at the time of great improvements in the transport infrastructure, wholesale and retail trading, and commercial agriculture as well as fish trading (Chipungu, 1992). With such an economic environment, this study is sceptical with Kasoma's (1986) observation that *Mutende* ran at a loss because of lack of advertisements. It would be expected that these commercial activities were reflected by the advertisements carried in the newspapers at the time. This provokes some questions regarding the nature of advertising, advertising volumes and rates. It may be necessary to interrogate the media market structure and dynamics of the time. In the following chapters, this thesis partly argues that market size matters when it comes to newspaper sustainability. It also examines how advertising clutter and news-hole influence profits and editorial integrity. Indeed, a few traders might have been willing to advertise in *Mutende*, but what if the advertising rates were very low? Hence it was most likely that even if the whole paper was completely filled with adverts, it would still not sustain the high cost of newsprint and printing. Most likely, these economic factors compounded by its lack of popularity contributed a 'pick and shovel' to digging the grave for *Mutende*. According to Kasoma (1986), in December 1952, *Mutende* was buried.

The government of Northern Rhodesia immediately embarked on a succession plan for *Mutende*, and within the same month signed a contract with C.A.G. Paver which was representing African Newspapers, a Salisbury-based company. Under the contract, the government agreed to suspend the publication of *Mutende* and the company agreed to publish in Northern Rhodesia a newspaper designed to meet the needs of the less affluent African (Kasoma, 1986). This newspaper was called the *African Eagle*. Unlike *Mutende*, which was entirely owned by the government, the *African Eagle* was partly owned by a private company. In addition, African Newspapers bought the Lusaka-based government printing press. Kasoma (1986) reveals that the government paid £39,000 to African Newspapers, an advertising appropriation in the sum of £6,000 pounds annually for the first two years, thereafter diminished yearly by £600 until it depleted. In consideration of the payments of advertising appropriation, the company agreed to reserve, it was also required to spare at least one column in each newspaper for the purpose of government advertising or for such other purpose as the

government might require<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, Kasoma (1986) also notes that part of the deal was that the *Eagle* was to maintain the closest liaison with government to ensure that government's policy was efficiently and continuously carried out.

The *African Eagle* presented a unique pattern in which a foreign company and the government shared ownership of a newspaper institution. It would appear that government would only continue to subsidise and advertise provided the newspaper maintain close relations with the former.

However, the cordial relations did not seem to last, as the *African Eagle*, in one of its editorials promised to oppose any attempt by government to influence or control the paper (Kasoma, 1986). In its endeavour to fulfil its pledge of being an 'independent' newspaper, the *Eagle* found itself in conflict with the government. Thereafter, the paper tried to cautiously deal with matters relating to government (Kasoma, 1986). In his analysis of editorials carried in the paper, Kasoma reveals that there were as many pro-government as anti-government editorials, but this did not go well with the government. Consequently, in 1957 in the Information Department annual report, the government stated:

The press is further limited in its effort because of the lack of popularity of *Mutende's* successor, and also because inadequate distribution arrangements persist and will continue to do so because it is purely commercial concern and therefore only distributed where it pays to do so commercially. Moreover, though government subsidised, it is not subject to government control, and the views it purveys and manner in which it presents news are often in conflict with government policy (in Kasoma, 1986: 62).

The undertone in this statement was that of the government's intention to financially detach itself from the *African Eagle*. The impact was devastating to the 'independence' of the *African Eagle*. It caused a drastic swing in its editorial stand, the timing for change which Kasoma (1986: 62) described to be "remarkable".

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<sup>4</sup>Federation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasland, Auditor General's Report for Northern Rhodesia for Financial year 1957-58, p.4)

The case of the *African Eagle* is a typical portrayal of an authoritarian government that gags its press. This is similar to Coronel (2003) observations that governments use various methods, including economic sanctions to clamp down on critical press. Consequently, in 1958, the paper only carried two anti-government editorials, a remarkable indication of self-censorship. Apparently, the timing was because of the paper's dependence on government subsidies and advertising revenue. It also appears that as the government planned for the final blow, it knew the soft spot for the survival of the paper – the financial/ commercial side. This marked the beginning of the government's tactics of imposing financial sanctions on 'un-cooperating' newspapers. The relations between the government and the *African Eagle* soured and in 1961, the paper was eventually sold to the London-based, Canadian newspaper tycoon Roy Thomson, who closed it in 1962. Following the Argus Group's earlier intervention, this is another example of foreign corporate intervention in colonial Zambia. Kasoma (1986: 64) contends that the "*African Eagle* died of 'multiple wounds' inflicted on it by itself, the government and the readers – the Africans. The *Eagle's* editorial policy brought it into head-on collision with its sponsors - the government, and led to the cancelling of the subsidy. It was the paper's editorial policy which drove away its readers."

Running parallel to the *African Eagle*, was the *African Times*, established by Dr. Alexander Scott in December 1957. Kasoma (1986) contends that, even if it was short lived, the *African Times* was the first truly African newspaper as it reflected the aspirations of the African and criticised the Federation. Although the paper was his brainchild, Dr. Scott was not the sole owner. The *African Times* was funded by the First Permanent Building Society, in which Scott was a prominent shareholder. The managing director of *African Times* was Frank Burton and the editor was an experienced African journalist, Elias Mtepuka (Ainslie, 1967).

For the four months it was operational, the *African Times* maintained its critical anti-government stand till its death in March 1958. Its sudden death was because the First Permanent Building Society was absorbed by the Founders Building Society of Southern Rhodesia. The new parent company, whose chairman, A. E. P Robinson, was a well-known supporter of the Federation, simply withdrew financial support from the *African Times*.

Similarly, Sikota Wina's *African Life* suffered the fate of economic hardship. The *African Life* started off as a magazine in 1958 and sold for six pence (6d) per copy. It later changed to a fortnight newspaper in 1959 and its cover price dropped to three pence (3d). Other than its

revenue from advertising, Kasoma (1986) suspects that the paper was financed by a local Asian business house. The *African Life* was not only for Africans, it was pro United Nation Independence Party (UNIP). Wina later joined the party as its publicity secretary. This move concretised the *African Life's* position as part of the propaganda organs of UNIP. He later became a very prominent political figure and served on different portfolios in the government of Zambia. The *African Life* closed down in 1961.

It appears that Scott took his 'hobby' very seriously. For the third time he happened to be at the centre of setting up another newspaper called the *African Mail*. It also seems that during the late 1950s and early 1960s it became fashionable to name a newspaper with the word 'African' as adjective. It is most probable that they wanted to appeal to the needs and aspirations of the new African middleclass who recognised the imminent political change. In 1960 Scott, Richard Hall and David Astor, with funds provided by Astor, joined forces to start the *African Mail* (Kasoma, 1986).

Like, the *Northern News*, the *African Mail* portrayed some qualities of good journalism. It was a 24-page publication. The layout and design of the newspaper was also remarkably different from the other publications and better edited than the others (ibid). The "*Mail* was the most professional and the most militant" (Ainslie 1967: 95). It was a well organised publication, probably owing to the experience of the founders. Scott had great experience, having previously been proprietor and editor of two newspapers. Richard Hall was the managing editor of the information department publication and David Astor was also the editor of the *London Observer*. However, the substantive Managing Editor of the *African Mail* was Richard Hall, being assisted by Titus Mukupo.

The *African Mail* was launched at the time that the African nationalist movement was becoming very active, and it was a pro-African private newspaper which covered African nationalists in Rhodesia and elsewhere in Africa, argues Kasoma (1986). It was a radical paper which fought for the African cause (Ainslie, 1969). It became so successful that within two years in operation, its circulation nearly doubled from the initial 13,000 to 24,000 copies (Kasoma, 1986). Its cross border influence led to its change of name to *Central African Mail*.

However, the editorial success of the *Central African Mail* did not automatically render it an economically viable entity. In Kasoma (1986), Richard Hall outlined the challenges that

crippled the *Mail*. Among them was the faulty printing press which required a lot of maintenance; the high cost of distribution, which resulted from inefficient strategies; and, even more importantly, because of its editorial policy of opposing Welensky and the Federation while supporting UNIP, many white businessmen did not advertise in it. Hall (as quoted in Kasoma, 1986: 77) notes:

It (*Central African Mail*) suffered from a virtual boycott of advertisers most of whom were based in Salisbury or South Africa and regarded the thing (the newspaper) as hopelessly pro-African from their point of view. And so they just didn't advertise with us very much. We found it very hard going to get advertising, indeed, even though I had a white advertising manager based in Salisbury and I quite deliberately picked somebody who was notably right wing in order to try to get somebody who had credibility with the white advertisers. But it was very hard. Only when we got near independence, when they saw that we were on the winning side, did they start to change their tune.

The *Central African Mail* presents an interesting dimension of how the press' pursuit for freedom can conflict with economic factors which might challenge the sustainability of a newspaper. McManus (1995) argues that commercial imperatives have a strong influence on journalism values that a clash between the two most likely results in victory of the former. With such retrospection, an examination of the economic sustainability of this pro-African policy of the *Mail* is very important. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of the demographic character of the population and how it affects the advertising and media markets is required. The *Central African Mail* still survives, and is today called the *Zambia Daily Mail*.

### **Black and White Press – the Struggle for Dominance**

Controversy about the role of the press and its interaction with different socio-economic classes in the pre-independence era reflects broader debates about the nature of political and economic changes in Northern Rhodesia and the other countries in the region. In Northern Rhodesia, this discourse principally involves the contest between African nationalism and white dominance. It is, therefore, noteworthy that despite the different classifications – black press or white press, the pre-independence newspapers, were mostly owned and controlled by the whites. Thus, participation in the Northern Rhodesian public sphere was limited to “white hegemonic interests” (Tomaselli, 2002: 130). Even those that were established with the label of ‘African’

newspapers were owned by whites, except of course, for Sikota Wina's *African Life*. These press divisions barred the growth of a significant homogeneous public sphere regarding media production and consumption. Moreover, even the financiers of *African Life* are believed to have been Asian.

*African Life* remains a very important publication in the history of the press in Zambia because it was the first newspaper to be established by an African. Clearly, the white capital constituted the dominant economic section and the press situated itself as governing political factor. As would have been expected, in September 1961 *African Life* "suddenly ceased publication due to hard economic realities" (Kasoma, 1986: 71).

As earlier noted, the black and white press controversy was not peculiar to Northern Rhodesia *per se*. The press in Southern Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and other Southern African countries was developed around the colour divide (Ainslie, 1967). The development of the black press in South Africa earned a label of the "alternative press" (Switzer, 1997), with the agenda of representing the interests of Africans (Kolbe, 2005). The equivalence and role of the alternative press in Northern Rhodesia was played by government owned *Mutende* and the *African Eagle*, the privately owned and militant *Central African Mail* and other newspapers with the 'African' adjective. Since the government press (*Mutende* and *African Eagle*), which were African oriented failed to account themselves in the public sphere, the most prominent exception was the *Central African Mail*. A strikingly miscellaneous relationship existed regarding the white-owned *Central African Mail* which advanced and reflected pro-African news (Kasoma, 1986).

Another newspaper worth bringing into this discourse is the *Central African Post*, which the Argus Empire bought from B.F.G. Paver, a company which purchased the paper from its initial owner, Scott (Ainslie, 1967). This meant that Argus had two newspapers – the pro-white *Northern News* and the pro-African *Central African Post*. However, almost immediately Argus closed down the paper. Ainslie (1967) made an observation which is perhaps the most worrying. She suggested that since Argus was pro white, he killed the *Central African Post* in order to leave the field free for the *Northern News*. Hence, even the *Central African Mail's* endeavour to represent African interests, as the principal voice of dissent was however challenged by the white-driven *Northern News*.

Argus provided the *Northern News* with a pool of resources which included the news services of the Inter-African News Agency, the Southern Rhodesian agent of the South African Press Association, which according to Ainslie (1967) used to colour the news. This, coupled with the good will from white advertisers gave the *News* an economically competitive advantage over the *Mail* (Kasoma, 1986). In the black and white inequitable situation which had an exceedingly higher African population of more than 2.5 million (against a white population of about 70,000) the white-owned *Central African Mail* claimed to understand the daily lived experiences of the majority – or did it? Nevertheless, it is safe to state that in the process, the *Mail* also represented a budding black consciousness during the late 1950s to the early 1960s, which was reflected in the nationalist movement (ibid.). There is a strong indication that during this period, the press contributed to the enlightenment of Africans. The media are the major source of information and explanations of social and political processes argues Murdock and Golding (1973). In this case, the press actually played a key role in determining the forms of consciousness and the modes of expression and action which were made available to people. Further, these indirect tiffs between the two ideologically different newspapers (*Central African Mail* and the *Northern News*) launched the African nationalists into the conventional sphere.

There was a strong indication that the commitment by the white owned *Central African Mail* to represent the ideals of the Africans did not auger well economically as capital was controlled by the whites (Hall, 1976). This situation points to the already stated reasons that crippled the operations of the newspaper. Circulation figures dropped and white businessmen avoided placing advertisements in the *Mail*.

The Northern Rhodesia colonial discourse regarding the failure of the press to break racial boundaries draws a parallel with the South African apartheid experience. With reference to the latter, people were consigned into particular sign and interpretative communities with different ideologies and ways of life (Tomaselli, 1997). Just like in apartheid South Africa, the difference in colonial Northern Rhodesia was between blacks and whites. Both the African and the white press failed to appeal to the readership of either side. The situation required an ideologically moderate press system to be the solution for bridging these racial differences. Hence another newspaper called the *Leader* was established in Zambia.

The early 1960s did not just experience the height of conflict between the blacks and the whites, even the newspapers that reflected their respective ideologies were at loggerheads. Independence was imminent in Northern Rhodesia. To calm the atmosphere, in 1961 the Roman Catholic Church decided to start a newspaper whose role was to act as a referee or peacemaker. In its inaugural editorial, *The Leader* pledged to be a completely free forum for all the existing parties in the Territory (Kasoma, 1986). Apparently, this was the same stand taken by *The Leader* of South Africa.

Such a stand as *The Leader's* was definitely unprecedented in the history of Northern Rhodesia. Contrary to Kasoma's (1986) observation that *The Leader's* position was out of tune, this study insists that the timing could not have been better. The political atmosphere was volatile, as the whites were trying to maintain their political dominance; the Africans were fighting for independence. The press was the anchor of the struggles. The *Leader's* proclaimed role was to repair the mutilated public sphere which was marred by racial differences. The paper operated in line with Curran's (1996) radical democratic perspective on how the press can mediate in an equitable way in conflict and competition between social groups by seeking to redress the imbalances in society (Becker and Vlad, 2009).

A seemingly similar stance was taken by the *Rand Daily Mail* in South Africa. As the first newspaper to venture into 'Extras' (special news supplements aimed at black readers), the *Rand Daily Mail* eventually established the *Rand Daily Mail Extra* edition (Tomaselli, 1987). The *Rand Daily Mail Extra*, designed as an intercultural newspaper desired total integration, but whether or not the readers were ready for it, was an area of great concern (Tomaselli, 1987). Perhaps, even for the *Leader*, the assumption that both sides would 'dine at the same table' was an overestimation of the influence that the press would yield over ideologically different communities.

Anyhow, in 1962 "hard economic realities" killed the *Leader* (Kasoma, 1986: 81) and the following year the Roman Catholic Church started another weekly called the *Northern Star*. The *Northern Star*, which was to continue the legacy of its predecessor, appeared amidst the euphoric atmosphere after the end of the Federation. An African majority government had taken over political power under the leadership of Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda (Phiri, 2006). Barely after that it tried to set its hallmark on the scene, but the *Star* folded in 1964, citing the usual reason, – "lack of funds" (Makungu, 2004: 13).

## **Entry into Independence: The First Republic: 1964-1972**

### **Economic Profile**

At the time of Zambia's independence in 1964, out of a population of about four million, only about 1,200 Africans in the country had attained secondary school certificates and only 109 had graduated from a university (Faber, 1968; Tordoff, 1974).

From the outset, copper mining was the life line of the Zambian economy. The growth of mining activities which started "in the 1930s attracted foreign capital, and multinational corporations developed one of the largest mining complexes in the world on what was later to become Zambian territory" (Rakner, 2003: 44). Indeed, at independence in 1964, Zambia inherited a buoyant economy and highly specialised mining industry (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). There were over four million people including 70,000 white Europeans; 15,000 Asians; 15,000 people of mixed origin and the rest were black Africans. Over 40 percent of the people were located along the line of rail which runs from Livingstone through Lusaka to the Copperbelt (Beveridge, 1974).

Urban centres were created and Zambia became one of the most industrialised and urbanised states in Africa (Rakner, 2003). The Gross National Product (GNP) was close to US\$2 billion at independence and had one of the highest per capita incomes in independent Africa (Rakner, 2003: 44; McPherson, 1995).

Economic development was further enhanced by the effects of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in neighbouring Southern Rhodesia in 1965. The United Nations (UN) imposed trade sanctions on Southern Rhodesia; as a result, a number of companies that previously supplied Zambia from Rhodesia commenced operations locally in an attempt to protect their markets (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). This investment further expanded local manufacturing (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). These and many other factors contributed to the increased growth rate of the economy in the first decade after independence. Between 1966 and 1970, GDP growth averaged 11.4 percent (CSO, Zambia; Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). In fact, McPherson (1995) indicates that from the end of World War II to 1974, Zambia saved and invested in excess of 30 percent of GDP. He points out that the country's average per capita income grew at close to four percent per annum adding that this was one of the best growth performances in the world (McPherson, 1995).

However, besides the booming economy, the country also inherited some challenges. Beveridge (1974) indicates that the development which came along with the copper mines provided financial resources, but such development also meant that overcoming European domination would not be easy. The copper industry was completely under the control of two large multinational mining groups – Anglo American Corporation and Roan Selection Trust (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997). They were part of a large business network headed by the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa. In fact, Anglo-American Corporation group produced about 53 percent of the country's copper with the rest being produced by Roan Selection Trust (Tordoff, 1974).

Due to, among other factors, the disproportionate economic power wielded by foreign and multinational private businesses and also that the participation of the state in the economy was limited to very few basic services, Zambia started taking measures towards achieving economic independence.

The first step made by the state into economic involvement was in 1968 through President Kenneth Kaunda's political speech commonly known as the Mulungushi Reforms. Through the Mulungushi Reforms policy pronouncement, the government nationalised a wide range of commercial enterprises which ended up in the government assuming 51 percent ownership in 28 companies mostly in manufacturing, transport distribution, construction, "retail shops, meat packing plants and quarrying operations" (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997: 5; Kaunga, n/d). These, however, did not include copper mining companies. The nationalisation policy was also aimed at encouraging black Zambians to venture in entrepreneurship (Beveridge, 1974).

The government later reviewed the position of the 1968 policy by taking a second step into economic involvement by including the mining industry. Hence, in 1969 in another speech known as the Matero Reforms (named after the Lusaka suburb where the policy was announced), it took measures to acquire 51 percent equity holdings in the mines owned and run by Anglo-America Corporation and Roan Selection Trust (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997; Kaunga, n/d).

By the conclusion of the acquisitions negotiations in 1970, the mines were re-structured into categories of the Nchanga Consolidated Copper Mines (NCCM) and the Roan Consolidated

Copper Mines (RCM). To oversee the operations of the mines, government created a holding entity called Mining Development Corporation (MINDECO) which was to hold 51 per cent of the shares each in NCCM and RCM on behalf of the state. Later, the Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) was incorporated to provide a single holding company for government's numerous investments (Kaunga, n/d). It was hoped that the reforms would help guarantee economic dominance over foreign ownership, hence the speech at the Matero reforms being titled: "Towards Complete Independence" (Burdette, 1988: 87).

The government policy of nationalisation and participation in the economy created public sector companies known as parastatals or state owned enterprises (SOEs). Nationalisation was seen to be a form of African Socialism (Faber, 1968) which manifested in a mixture of private and state enterprises, partnerships, individual entrepreneurs, and independent trade unions. Most importantly, however, Zambia was a direct beneficiary of revenue from the copper industry with the control of government investments vested in ZIMCO (Burdette, 1988).

### **The Press in the First Republic**

Like the economic landscape, the post-independence Zambian press scene seemed to have changed face. The changes can be attributed partly to political declarations and partly to economic policy adjustments. In 1965, the *Central African Mail* changed its name to the *Zambia Mail* and later became the *Zambia Daily Mail*. The *Central African Post* was integrated into the *Northern News*, which later changed to the *Times of Zambia*. The *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia*, with its Sunday version, were the only newspapers that dominated the newspaper market for a long period.

The *Times of Zambia*, the successor of the *Northern News* operated as a private newspaper owned by Lonrho. Richard Hall, formerly of the *Central African Mail*, became the editor-in-chief of the *Times of Zambia*. The *Times* became a successful publication which devoted to covering politics and was very critical of the government (Makungu, 2004). In 1979 circulation hit a record high of 66,084, a near quadruple increase from 17,000 in 1966 (Kasoma, 1986: 113). Later, in 1988, the paper decided to move closer to the corridors of power and opened new offices in Lusaka, but the head office remained on the Copperbelt.

The *Central African Mail*, the predecessor of the *Zambia Daily Mail* crossed into independent Zambia as a privately owned newspaper. However, in 1965 David Astor sold the *Central*

*African Mail* to the government at the price of £100,000, of which the government only paid £40,000, reneging on the full payment (Kasoma, 1986). The government changed its name to *Zambia Mail* and continued as a weekly publication until 1969 when it became a daily once again and changed its name back to the *Zambia Daily Mail*.

Kelvin Mlenga, as editor of the *Central African Mail*, continued in the same capacity until February 1966 when he resigned due to his failure to adjust to the idea of editing a government newspaper (Kasoma, 1986). Ainslie (1967) however, observed that in the first few months under government ownership very little had changed both in tone and content. In the same vein, Kasoma (1986) points out that despite being government owned, the *Zambia Daily Mail* was very critical of the government adding that on several occasions it carried editorials which contradicted official government position. During the First Republic, the *Mail's* relations with the state are to be understood on the basis that the government took over a private newspaper with a liberal personality (Ainslie, 1967) and its independent character was not going to change overnight.

The circulation of the *Mail* steadily rose from 20,000 in 1965 (just after it was acquired by the government) to over 26,000 in 1969 when it reverted to being a daily newspaper. However, the paper's record high of 55,000 was in 1979 (Kasoma, 1986: 113). This was compared to the 66,084 for the *Times of Zambia*, in the same year. The low circulation of the *Daily Mail* against the *Times* may perhaps be explained by the low operational capacity of the *Daily Mail*. Banda (2004) observed that the privately owned *Times* had heavy advertising compared to the state owned *Daily Mail*. Consequently, the latter had fewer reporters, fewer offices and relied more heavily on official press releases from the government and its agency, than the *Times* which had the resources to gather fresh news (Chirambo, 2011).

Alongside the foregoing explanation, an alternative would be that government ownership "brings a loss of prestige to the newspaper" (Innis, 1942). This may be because of the levels of trust readers attach to government and privately owned newspapers. While Meyer (2009) subtly indicates that trust implies quality and is key to the profitability and sustainability of a newspaper, Ha and Litman (1997) strongly consider circulation to be the bottom-line indicator of readers' satisfaction with the editorial quality. Studies by Thorson *et al* (2008) and Picard (2001) show connections between the quality of newspaper content, circulation and business success. It is expected that the increasing readership might have caused concomitant shifts in

relation to the financial success of the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*. However, it is not known how changes in circulation figures influenced advertising revenue and the general newspaper market. Literature on the newspaper economics in countries such as Britain and Ireland (Thompson, 1989) has generally emphasised the relationship between circulation and advertising revenue. The interactions of these concepts, and how they influence the development of a free press, are still open for inquiry on the Zambia media market.

Nonetheless, the two newspapers, the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* were the most dominant in the media market for the greater part of the First Republic. The *Daily* and the *Times* ran parallel to each other as government owned and privately owned respectively, to the time that UNIP decided to buy the *Times* from Lonrho, as part of its nationalisation policy.

### **Enter Second Republic: 1973 – 1990**

#### **Economic Profile – Humanism**

The shape of Zambia's economy seemed to have gradually improved since independence. State interventions in the late sixties introduced the parastatal sector which became so dominant that by 1972 it was estimated that parastatals accounted for 53 percent of the total manufacturing GDP and its share in employment was 42 percent (Kaunga, n/d). The parastatal sector created the infrastructure perceived as necessary for further economic growth (Rakner, 2003). As a consequence of the economic situation, opportunities were given to small individual Zambian businessmen who became empowered and enabled to gain an "economic leg" (Burdette, 1988: 93). Therefore, economic development was expected to spread to all sectors, and like most other media, newspapers play significant roles as facilitators of commerce, promoting consumption by creating consumer wants for products through advertising, and serving the financial interests of newspaper proprietors as part of the competitive economic system (Picard, *et al*, 2004). However, it is not known whether this was the case for newspapers in Zambia at that juncture. Another vexing problem is the lack of literature on the development of advertising agencies and their assumed effects on the media industry in Zambia. The non-existence of research that links advertising to the press provides a fertile ground for inquiry. Otherwise the apparent fast becoming and competitive businesses environment (Burdette, 1988) caused a trickle-down effect<sup>5</sup> (Rawls and Parijs, 2003) on many business activities in Zambia, a ripple effect which supposedly extended to the emergence of advertising agencies.

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<sup>5</sup> John Rawls' idea of economic growth, onwards and upwards, with no specific end in sight.

Economic progress had been so spectacular that by 1980, the shares of parastatals in total GDP and formal employment were put at 56 per cent and 54 per cent respectively (Kaunga, n/d). However, it should be noted here that these business ventures were being undertaken in the spirit of Humanism<sup>6</sup> under which small capitalists were accommodated, but cautioned against accumulation of too much wealth by individuals (Burdette, 1988). The national political philosophy of humanism, which was introduced in 1967 was grounded in a commitment to freedom and dignity of the individual above material possessions (Roberts, 1976).

### **The Press in the Second Republic**

Despite different types of businesses burgeoning in the strong economic environment of the late sixties and early seventies, there was no record of black Zambians investing in the newspaper business. For a long time, the two newspapers, the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* dominated the press scene. However, it was observed from the type and nature of advertisements carried in the newspapers that they enjoyed the monopoly and savoured the opportunities presented by the flourishing economy. It should be noted, however, that during the Second Republic “parastatal activities covered all aspects of business including: mining; agriculture; hotels and tourism; milling; brewing; housing provision and construction; transportation including airlines and passenger bus services; electricity and water; timber and wood products; and bakeries,” (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997: 5). Furthermore, Fundanga and Mwaba (1997: 5) actually point out that “private sector participation in the economy virtually ceased, with the exception of a few activities and mainly in the banking sector. Barclays Bank, Standard Bank and Grindlays Bank – all foreign private banks were dominant in the commercial banking sector”.

Moreover, the major Zambian towns were becoming more and more industrialised. With both private and public enterprises offering a variety of services ranging from retail shops, wholesale, banking and manufacturing, competition become a stimulant for traders and companies to advertise.

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<sup>6</sup>Burdette (1988; 77). A doctrine that President Kenneth Kaunda introduced and sought to establish a “man-centred society” with “people above ideology” and “man above institutions.”

It was not until 1972 that the church in Zambia started another national newspaper called *The Mirror*, yet Banda (2004) applauds the timing due to the harsh social, political and cultural environment of the seventies which needed a prophetic and sanctifying voice. The *Mirror* was started by Multimedia Zambia, the communications organisation of the Christian churches in the country. The *Mirror* proved to be more successful than its two predecessors, *The Leader* (1961 - 1962) and the *Northern Star* (1962 - 1964) (Kasoma, 1986). In 1983, the paper was renamed the *National Mirror*.

The *National Mirror* was very critical of the government and it saw itself playing the role of an opposition political party (Banda, 2004). It criticised the government on a number of issues including dictatorship, corruption, bad leadership and press freedom (Makungu, 2004). It strongly opposed the government's proposed Press Council Bill through which UNIP attempted to make the press submissive to it. As a result of its critical stance against the party and its government, the *National Mirror*, on several occasions, came under attack by UNIP leaders including President Kaunda who spitefully referred to the newspaper as the *little Mirror* (Kasoma, 1986).

The *Mirror* benefited from the donor support through the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and the Christian Churches of Zambia (CCZ), hence did not see the need for a commercialisation and sustainability strategy, until donors became inconsistent (Banda, 2004).

The controversial and critical role of the *National Mirror* against the state made its advertising drive difficult. As noted earlier, the country's economy was largely controlled by the state and the parastatal companies increasingly threatened to cut off advertising support to the controversial newspaper. Thus, in its February, 1980 editorial, the *National Mirror* complained against being subjected to economic sanctions by parastatal institutions and state functionaries which referred to the paper as a dissident newspaper which did not deserve to be supported by advertisements from state companies (Kasoma, 1997). Indeed, this position was reinforced by the official government directive instructing all parastatals and government departments to desist from advertising in the *National Mirror* (Banda, 1997: 13). Consequently, in 1986 the *National Mirror* stopped publishing.

Since the government's expression of interest in participating in the ownership of the *Times of Zambia* in 1968, it was not until 1975 that Lonrho responded and sold the paper to UNIP

(Kasoma, 1986). Henceforth, the paper operated as a UNIP mouthpiece. However, for a long time, it was not clear who really owned and controlled the *Times*, be it UNIP or the government. To date, the *Times of Zambia* still operates as a 'quasi government' institution, with a management structure and state relations which are notably different for its counterpart, the *Zambia Daily Mail*, which ironically has closer relations with the state.

For a long time, during the First Republic, it appeared that the domineering character of the already existing and well-established newspapers (*Zambia Daily Mail*, *Times of Zambia* and *the National Mirror*) blocked new entrants in the newspaper market. However, in the Second Republic, the Zambian press scene saw a few new players including the *Weekend World*, the *Sunday Post*, and the *Sunday Drum*. The *Weekend World* was a tabloid newspaper which appeared in 1978. It was an inconsistent publication which constantly changed its publishing schedule between weekly and fortnightly and the unpredictable number of pages from between 16 and 40 (Kasoma, 1986). The challenge with such newspaper instability is it usually makes it unattractive to higher advertising (Innis, 1942). Kasoma (1986) seems to suggest that shortage of newsprint in the country was the cause of the unhealthy state of the *Weekend World*. Nonetheless, the paper quietly died in 1979 without bidding farewell to its readers.

Another attempt in 1982 was made by the *Sunday Post* published by the Film and Television Co-operative. The *Post* started as a broadsheet, but like the *Weekend World*, it too had newsprint problems, hence it later reduced to a tabloid (Kasoma, 1986).

The *Sunday Drum* which was registered by Sikota Wina in 1983 remains in the categories of the newspapers that will never be. However, considering the fate of his previous newspaper, *African Life*, and indeed that of the *Weekend World* and the *Post*, Wina wanted to ensure that everything was set. In order to avoid printing problems, he ordered his own printing press. He recruited four reporters and two advertising agents<sup>7</sup>, one typist and an office messenger (Kasoma, 1986). However, hitherto the *Sunday Drum* has not appeared. The study will show how, in the Third Republic, many other newspapers were registered and suffered the fate of the *Sunday Drum*.

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<sup>7</sup>It seems Sikota Wina's understanding the significance of advertising was because his brother, Arthur Wina owned an advertising agency called Industrial and Advertising Promotions.

### **Ownership: Takeovers and Concentration - *Implication on the Press***

From the appearance of the first newspaper in Zambia during the colonial period to the end of the Second Republic, the evolution of the press has not been a 'straight line'. Prominent among the political and economic factors that affected the curvy and sometimes cyclic newspaper life cycle was ownership. This section is a review of how ownership and, to a certain extent, concentration has affected the performance of newspapers thus far. White ownership, foreign ownership, multinational ownership, black ownership, colonial government ownership, black government ownership and church ownership are the patterns that are examined in relation to their effects on the press.

This part of the chapter highlights challenges relating to how ownership influenced the functions and financial sustainability of newspapers during the period before Zambia's Third Republic. Additionally, it will establish whether the newspaper market showed concentration trends or was a single industry. In view of this, it is important to start by noting that unlike other well developed economies in the world, the concept of morning and evening edition newspapers has never been practiced in Zambia.

A stock taking exercise of the press in Northern Rhodesia thus far reveals that 17 newspapers were established in the country since 1906. Fifteen of them were privately owned and two were owned by the government. Twelve were pro-white, while five were pro-African. Only four were started and owned by an Africa – *African Life*, *Weekend World*, *Sunday Drum* and *Sunday Post*. The longest surviving newspapers were: *Livingstone Mail* – 44 years, *Central African Mail* and the *Northern News* – still existing at the time of independence. However, of the 13 that were started in the colonial period, only two newspapers (*Northern News* and *Central African Mail*) made it to the time of independence in 1964. As in many other countries (Emery and Emery, 1984), failure rates of the early newspapers in Zambia were extremely high. Carroll and Hannan (1989) indicate that financial difficulties accounted for most failures due to a lack of full consumer acceptance coupled with legal, political, and civil difficulties. This appears to have been equally true for Zambia where most of them were ailing and short lived and failed to economically sustain themselves as a result of lack of adequate capital or poor management systems and editorial policies which failed to appeal to their readers and advertisers.

Clearly other factors, such as changes in the economic conditions, the political environment and technological innovations played a role. For example, both the economic and political atmosphere during, between and after World War II influenced the performance and sustainability of the press.

Another important aspect to consider is the political and economic structures of the newspapers, which gave them an ideological dimension deserving deeper scrutiny. In this case, there was a mixture of both local and international newspaper ownership, aspects of differentiation and concentration. Though the colonial period depicts an oligopolistic environment, with a particular space and time having not more than three newspapers, there were examples of local and international acquisitions. The example of L.F. Moore Chemist and the *Livingstone Mail* was basically the first synergy of the press engaging into a commercial corporation with a business in a different industry, but by the same owner. Moore's case demonstrated that this symbiosis was expected to generate greater economic efficiency (Peltier, 2004). To date the *Livingstone Mail* may take pride in having been the longest serving newspaper in Zambia.

Another noteworthy newspaper structure is that of the *Africa Times*, the predecessor of the *Central African Post*. The *African Times* was a subdivision of the First National Building Society where it received financial backing. When the Founders of Building Society of Southern Rhodesia bought First Permanent Building Society, the new parent company withdrew funding from the *African Times*. Kasoma (1986) reveals detachment for the newspaper was because the chairperson, E. B. Robinson did not agree with its ideological stand. Literature on the political economy of communication mostly emphasises synergies and integrations within the industry among print, radio, music, television, satellite, film, cinema, telecommunication and internet (Arsenault and Castells, 2008). Cross industry synergies and mergers are mostly overlooked.

One of the significant indications towards Northern Rhodesia's role in the political economy of the media was the transition of *Mutende* to *The Eagle*. In 1952, the Northern Rhodesia government suspended *Mutende* to pave way for an agreement for a new publication with African Newspapers, a company based in Salisbury (Kasoma, 1986). As noted earlier, this was the first time a foreign company owned a newspaper in Northern Rhodesia. African Newspapers was a Southern Rhodesian subsidiary of the Bantu Press. It also owned the *Bantu*

*Mirror* in Salisbury (Ainslie, 1967). The contract obliged that the government paid £39,000 to African Newspapers, an advertising appropriation in the sum of £6,000 annually for the first two years, thereafter diminished yearly by £600 until depleted (Federation of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1959).

The acquisition and control of the *African Eagle* by a foreign company had implications on editorial content. Much of the content came from Southern Rhodesia. Its major source of news was African News Distributors, a news agency based in Salisbury (Kasoma, 1986). Therefore, the paper's news content was dominated by political developments in Salisbury.

The change of political administration to black rule in the early 1960s witnessed significant shifts in the previously white dominated Northern Rhodesian commercial press. These took the form of mergers and acquisitions between local and international capital, and the obtaining of previously white owned newspapers by the new black government. Changes also occurred in political and ideological allegiance of each of the newspapers which entered the post-independence Zambia.

The Argus Group of companies accounted for most of the acquisitions that took place in the Zambian press. Argus Holdings was an investment company with 100 percent stake in Argus Newspaper Group and a shareholder in many other media companies including M-Net, CTP newspaper and magazine group and Times Media Ltd (Silber, 1993). The major investor in the Argus Group was an organisation called Central-Mining-Rand-Mines, a South African mining and land conglomerate that embraced Anglo American Corporation which had, and still has large mining interest in Zambia (Kasoma, 1986). Argus Newspapers Group was a multinational publishing company with subsidiaries in East, Central and Southern Africa (Ainslie, 1967).

Argus Group activities in Northern Rhodesia started in December 1950 when the South Africa-based Argus Company and its Southern Rhodesia-based Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company bought controlling shares in the Northern News from Roy Welensky (Kasoma, 1986). It was the first time a foreign company had ever owned a newspaper in Northern Rhodesia, thus it was a significant development in the political economy of the press. Later in 1951, the company acquired the *Central African Post* (Kasoma, 1986) increasing the number of its newspapers in Northern Rhodesia to two.

However, in 1964 after Northern Rhodesia became the independent Republic of Zambia, South African-based Argus Group together with its Southern Rhodesia-based subsidiary, the Rhodesia Printing and Publishing Company, withdrew from the new nation-to-be as newspaper publishers. According to Kasoma's (1986) observation, they feared that the pro-white record of their newspaper would negatively influence the attitude of the new black government towards them. Makungu (2004) adds that the company also wanted to avoid embarrassment since they were based in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia which Zambia's new leaders considered unfriendly.

Consequently, Argus integrated the *Central African Post* structures and resources into the *Northern News*. The official company reason was to allow the *Northern News* to play its full role as the country's national daily newspaper. Soon after independence, Argus sold the *Northern News* to the London and Rhodesia Mining and Land Company - Lonrho. Ainslie (1967: 96) described this development in the Zambian press scene as a "surprise" and a "mystery" considering that the newspaper was flourishing and in no danger of competition from any other newspaper in the country.

But just before acquiring the *Northern News*, Lonrho had also bought control of Heinrich's together with the *Zambia Times*, Northern Rhodesia's only other daily newspaper and its Sunday edition, the *Zambia News*. The two newspapers had been established in 1963 by Max Heinrich who financed them with profits from his opaque beer business. After this acquisition, Lonrho assumed control of the only two dailies and the only Sunday newspaper in Zambia.

Interestingly, this acquisition between the Argus Group and Lonrho happened to have remained within the axis of the Central-Mining Rand-Mines Group, a South African mining conglomerate which had financial stake in both Lonrho and Argus Group. This paradox seemed to have created a vicious circle in which the characteristics of all the parties involved remained constant. Thus, other than its concentrated newspaper publishing, Lonrho had mining, ranching, beer manufacturing and other interests in Southern African.

Whatever the eventual implication of the changes in ownership of newspapers, their financial sustainability and editorial values were affected. Inevitably, the government was concerned with ownership of the press by white dominated capital and the imminent change of ownership. During debates in the Legislative Council, Kaunda's parliamentary secretary and UNIP

publicity chief, Sikota Wina, provided a clear account of the feelings of the new government towards the role of Argus Group and its subsidiary when he said:

This history of newspapers in the country, right from their establishment has been to serve a minority group, the European, and now that things have changed hands, the so-called wind of change has blown, the newspapers find themselves in a bit of a spot. How can we change overnight? We still get our advertisement revenue from the European section because the Europeans are still in charge of firms and companies, but at the same time we have now got an African coalition government. How can we commit this change-over without losing our advertisement revenue?

Therefore, you will find, Mr. Speaker that the press today still suffer from the nostalgia for the past, lives in fear for the present and completely confused about what to do in future (Kasoma, 1986: 174).

However, the history of newspapers and trend in their ownership and their concentration in Zambia is different from that of the many highly developed parts of the world today which Edeani (1970) contends are dealing with problem industries that may probably have reached the optimum point of efficiency in business due to monopoly of newspaper concentration. In many African countries, with an exception of a few such as South Africa, the degree of concentration appears to have been low. Research on newspaper concentration shows that underdeveloped media industries have low merger opportunities due to a small number of newspapers that are also short-lived (Carroll and Delacroix, 1982). Carroll and Delacroix therefore postulate that such a situation leaves open the possibility that the same organisation may have published several newspapers simultaneously. Furthermore, Edeani (1970) pointed out that the problem for the developing countries in Africa was how to structurally well-organise the media industry in order to build a viable system and bring some semblance of efficiency into an erratic industry. Thus, the African case is indicative of the unique approaches demanding political economy of communication research in Africa.

### **Colonial Period: *Libertarianism?***

The fact that the early newspapers in Zambia were privately owned might stimulate conjectures that the press were born free. This is mostly because discourse on the free press is heavily

approached with common assumptions that privately owned newspapers are freer than the government owned (Ostini and Ostini, 2002).

Kasoma (1986) made a very cardinal observation that the press in the protectorate government was left to follow Lord Cudlipp's famous expression of, 'Publish and be Damned' and practice according to the traditional libertarian British style of freedom of press. Kasoma adds that newspapers were left alone to publish whatever they deemed fit, including racist content. However, Chirambo (2011) observed that even if newspaper ownership was private, the owners were white and mostly leaned towards settler or colonial sympathies. This underscores Nerone's (1995) observation that libertarianism relates freedom of the press closely with property rights, implying that whites, who in this case were the owners of the means of publication had monopolistic power of expression. "The myth of the free press in the service of society exists because it is in the interests of media owners to perpetuate it" (Nerone, 1995: 92). In fact, blacks were not allowed to establish and own businesses (Chipungu, 1992).

In this vein, Martin (1998) indicates that generally in colonial Africa, independent broadcasting was allowed; print media needed prior licensing approval to operate and a range of legal instruments were applied to prevent the growth of any meaningful privately owned media. He notes that this intolerance was in itself a prohibition of free expression. Despite Africans being economically challenged, it is perhaps safe to say that these prohibitions were meant to deny them communicative space. Even so, wouldn't the economic barriers in this case be prohibitive to the development of a free press? This perhaps, is the reason Martin (1998) argues that colonialism, by its nature, is an antithesis of democracy. He states: "if colonisers were to allow freedom of expression among the colonised, the latter would use that freedom to be critical of colonialism, and logically to call for its end. By its very nature, therefore, colonialism precludes any freedom of expression of the colonised and demands the active suppression of attempts at its exercise" (Martin, 1998: 64).

### **The Post-Colonial Era: Press Freedom**

During the initial period of independence and after, many changes occurred which altered the outlook of the press in the First Republic. Eventually the press scene remained with only two main players – *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily Mail*. Before transitioning into their current state, the two newspapers were very outspoken as arch-rivals during the liberation struggle. They exercised their freedom to publish whatever they wanted in line with their respective

ideologies (Hall, 1976). On the other side of the fence, the partition continued as one of them (*Zambia Daily Mail*) become government owned. However, even if the *Times* as a private newspaper was more critical than the *Daily Mail*, it also showed some tenacity in its freedom to report fearlessly (Lungu, 1986).

Nonetheless, the press in Zambia enjoyed more freedom than in most African countries (Roberts, 1976). For a good number of years, the press seemed to be working without much interference from the government, though Kasoma (1986) isolates the *Daily Mail* as practicing subtle self-censorship by virtue of being state owned. In fact, in 1966 the editor of the *Daily Mail*, Kelvin Mlenga resigned a few months after it was acquired by the government because he failed to adjust to the idea of editing a government paper. Furthermore, Kaunda did not want the press to be critical of his government, he would therefore use his powers as president to fire and hire editors of the *Times* and *Daily*, even if the former was a private newspaper (Kasoma, 1986). Kaunda's interference in the management of the *Times*, was a result of the prerogatives he drew from his strategic alliance with Tiny Rowland, the Managing of Lonrho - the company that owned the newspaper Chirambo (2011).

According to Sardanis (2003), Rowland was a benefactor of Kaunda's financially struggling UNIP in the colonial era. After independence, Kaunda and Rowland cemented their alliance, and in order to secure his business interests with Lonrho in Zambia, Rowland is reported to have paid a bank guaranteed cheque of £250,000 (\$700,000) to UNIP (Chirambo, 2011). Through exchange, Rowland earned Kaunda's "eternal gratitude and friendship" (Sardanis, 2003: 142). Presumably, this reveals why the nationalisation of the *Times* took so long, yet the *Daily Mail* and other companies were easily acquired by the state. The possible explanation for this is drawn from O'Neil (1998) who argues that ownership does not necessarily mean control. O'Neil contends that a newspaper may be private, and may be state run, thus leading to a collusion between economic elites and government.

This is probably the reason Lonrho expanded its investments from the automotive industry to copper mining companies, brewery companies and other manufacturing firms, besides the *Times of Zambia*. Rowland continued making strategic decisions that enabled the Lonrho conglomerate to gain political favour with the state and accelerate its expansion in Zambia in 1970 (Libby, 1983). Contrary to Kaunda's philosophy of humanism, state alliance with Lonrho is a clear manifestation of capitalist tendencies in the political economy of the country.

Garnham (1986) contends that the system of exchange relations between those with political power and economic power creates dominant and powerful organisations in society.

However, as years went by, Kaunda became more and more intolerant so that in January 1972 he deported *Times of Zambia* Deputy Editor, Vernon Wright over an editorial on the Military coup in Ghana in which President Busia was toppled. The editorial insinuated that the same could happen to Zambia if the economic wellbeing of the common man was not addressed (Makungu, 2004).

Later in the same year, the government held a two-day national mass media seminar at which in his address, Kaunda told journalists to reflect the Zambian society and use the media as an instrument of national building. He said freedom of the press was based on the right of the people to know and to have access to information and reporters to decide what the people were to be informed about (Makungu, 2004). The manner in which Kaunda expected the press to operate would be applied to the development theory of the press alongside the Marxist approach (Altschull, 1984; Hachten, 1981; McQuail, 1983). The development theory of the press recognizes that societies undergoing a transition from colonialism and underdevelopment to independence often face economic challenges, hence a more positive version of media theory is needed which focuses on national development (McQuail, 2010).

At this stage of the country's development, McQuail seems to suggest that as opposed to the libertarian press theory which is framed as a negative concept – freedom from government, the development theory would be more beneficial for Zambia. However, other scholars (Pettman, 1974; Makungu, 2004) argue that the authoritarian theory of the press was the dominantly evident, especially with the introduction of the Second Republic which came with political declarations which again changed the degree of freedom exercised by the press. Indeed, it has to be born in mind that in most cases the press may not constitute a single and distinctive philosophy (McQuail, 2010). However, for Chirambo (2011) this is attributed to the concentration of political and economic power in the Kaunda government which had authoritarianism tendencies resulting from the country's post-colonial challenges of nation building and security. This is further reinforced by Robert's (1976) proposition that the development of authoritarianism was inevitable due to the government's determined quest for national unity and economic development. Hence, in order to deeply entrench his powers and prevent dissidence, President Kaunda declared Zambia a one-party state towards the end of

1972. However, the growth of the president's powers became a threat to civil liberties including freedom of expression. Pettman (1974) posits that Kaunda's *Philosophy of Humanism* became so ubiquitous in Zambian political communications such that in 1972, the government held a national media workshop where Kaunda declared that the media were to be an instrument of national building and instructed journalists to report responsibly (Makungu, 2004). This took place just before the inauguration of the one-party state. In his 'brutally frank' address to Zambian journalists, President Kaunda directed them:

- a) Not to conduct themselves as if they were an alternative government,
- b) To serve Zambian Humanism, not Capitalism or to live in the colonial past
- c) To eschew sensational news, and
- d) To remember that freedom of the press was based on the right of the people to know, to have access to information. (Lungu, 1986: 405)

After Zambia was declared a one-party state, the government came up with a new constitution which banned all other political parties. The Second Republic was a one-party participatory democracy in which Kaunda made commitments to uphold the freedom of the press (Phiri, 2006). The new constitution was based on the fundamental rights and recognised the freedoms below. Article 22, of the 1973 Constitution of Zambia read:

Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to impart and communicate ideas and information without interference (whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons) and freedom from interference with his correspondence.

Despite the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution, it also had many restrictions. Since it recognised UNIP as the only political party with provisions to ensure that no other political party could be legally constituted or supported, and no one in the country could lawfully express an opinion in support of any alternative political organisation or claim a constitutional right to do so (Makungu, 2004). Apparently this was a contrast to the expected role of the press in a democracy. The press is supposed to be a conduit of relations between society and the state

(O'Neil, 1998). Ironically, how effectively the press was expected to achieve such a task in a one-party participatory democracy is open to question.

“The Watershed Speech” of 1975 was a critical development in the history of the press in Zambia. On this historic day, President Kaunda addressed the National Council of UNIP and raised a number of issues ranging from politics, legislation, the economy, to culture and media. Regarding the media, he mostly addressed the *Times of Zambia* and announced its complete takeover by UNIP. He issued editorial instructions to the *Times* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* in which he reiterated that the mass media must be an instrument of Humanism and not decadent values. He ordered journalists to be fully committed to the *Philosophy of Humanism* in their respective and personal capacities and promote local cultural values. The two newspapers were also ordered to reflect official party and government thinking (Kaunda, 1975: 32 - 35).

In the subsequent years of the Second Republic, the press was almost completely under the control of the government and Kaunda considered it a propaganda tool for propagating his philosophy of humanism and silencing all opposition and criticism (Kasoma, 1997). Kaunda (1989), clearly indicated that the journalistic profession, in all its ramifications, must develop as an integral part of the humanist transformation of Zambia just as those who practice it are an integral part of its people.

Makungu (2004) observed that the period between 1975 and 1983 was characterised by unprecedented struggles for press freedom, by the *Daily Mail* and the *Times*. Kasoma's (1986) view was that journalists and politicians were in disagreement about the meaning of press freedom. While journalists viewed freedom as fundamentally the right of every individual to spread and receive ideas, as guaranteed then, in the preamble of the country's 1973 Constitution; politicians construed it as the right to stop the press from publishing news and ideas which painted the party in unfavourable light.

Turock (1992, quoted in Kasoma, 1997: 137) poignantly describes the Zambian press under Kaunda:

While Kaunda's regime was not as vicious as many in Africa, the need to keep one's mouth shut and opinions to oneself was substantial. Individuals might speak out here and there, only to be met with public threats from the President himself if

the individual was prominent enough. Zambia became a society of gossip and speculation based on rumour... Meeting at night in private houses was one of the most serious allegations that could be made. Yet permission to meet openly was refused and it was near impossible to publish a dissident newsletter or journal (Turock, 1992: 15).

These events clearly show the intolerant position of the state, and it appeared as if the press would be subdued. Thus Kasoma (1986) indicates that both the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* which were already controlled by UNIP and the government respectively became more docile to the administration. However, Lungu (1986) maintains that due to the fact that the tradition of a critical press was fairly well-established in the first Republic, the press became even more critical in the second Republic. He claims that despite efforts by the party and government to tone down the press, it was not long, before “Kasoma's gloomy assessment could be contradicted, for not only did the press report sensational news more frequently than ever before, but it also became more critical in editorials, commentaries, and satires” (Lungu, 1986: 407).

Lungu (1986) points out that the main task of providing checks and balances to government policy fell partly on the *Times of Zambia* and mostly the *National Mirror*, since the latter was church-run. The *Mirror* was unrelenting in criticising the government such that in 1982 it had to withdraw an issue from the newspaper stands throughout the country on grounds that one of its popular columns, ‘Our Comrade Says’ had gone too far in its criticism and the editorial board apologised to the government for permitting this particular piece of satire to appear in its paper (Lungu, 1986; Kasoma, 1986).

The economic environment in the 1980s was not conducive for a newspaper business (Banda, 2004), even worse for the survival of an independent newspaper. The economic reforms had ramifications for the development and sustenance of privately owned media as the major source of revenue - advertising - was now held by the state (Chirambo, 2011). During this period, except for the *Mirror*, the birth rate of newspapers decreased and their mortality rate increased. As already indicated, the three newspapers that appeared in the early 1980s hardly survived a year. It is safe to attribute these newspaper ‘miscarriages’ to poor planning and a weak financial base. Hence, even as the *Mirror* put up a strong fight for freedom, its resolve started wavering (as has already been indicated) because the state subtly eliminated all critical publications by

starving them of the necessary advertising they needed in order to survive as successful on-going commercial undertakings (Banda, 2004).

Until 1990, it appears that the press was under siege with increasingly waning influence and freedom. The development of a free press faced serious challenges. It may seem as though it was that country's poor economic performance that created a hostile environment for the newspaper business, but the dominance of political interest which persisted in spite of the growth of advertising might have made it extremely difficult for private and critical newspapers to survive (Innis, 1942). Conceivably, this was a deliberate type of rule by which the state centralised news services within oversight frameworks and restricted alternative publications by imposing economic sanctions on critical newspapers (O'Neil, 1998).

Generally, this suspicion for press freedom possibly stemmed from the government's philosophies of humanism and nationalism. Martin (1998) points out two important manifestations nationalism had on post-independence African states:

Firstly, nationalism provided a solid ideological foundation for questioning the desirability of free expression itself. Free expression could be painted as a "Western" thing, a foreign importation that was at variance with authentic African values. Thus, free expression was not simply unnecessary or at odds with the demands of development; it was, in and of itself, bad.

Secondly, this scepticism is found in the argument that the media are Western – or foreign-owned – and that any talk of free expression is simply a smokescreen designed to conceal these facts (Martin, 1998: 69 – 70).

The events that unfolded in post-independence Zambia in relation to ownership of newspapers clearly support the above argument. These are reasons that may have driven government to form the National Media Corporation (NAMECO) in 1988, to which it transferred ownership and management of the state owned dailies of the press (Chirambo, 2011). Under this system NAMECO was directly answerable to the president.

However, the nationalist argument for free expression was suppressed and overcome by the wind of change in the 1990s. Humanism had become unpopular and failed (Makungu, 2004);

the economy weakened resulting in food riots and looting; University of Zambia students started demonstrations; Lieutenant Mwamba Luchembe attempted a *coup d'état* in June 1990 and calls for change to multiparty politics intensified (Chirwa 1997). Chirwa states that there was a clear feeling of political discontent among the people and argues further that these events accelerated the need for a suitable media system and free expression of political thought and speech.

The agitation consequently paid off resulting in the growing number of registered newspapers such as *The Weekly Post*, *The Daily Express*, *Sunday Express* and the *Zambia Crime News* among others (Chirwa 1997). In this transition period the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) in 1990, was registered as a political party on 4 January 1991, following the amendment of Article IV, of the Republican Constitution that permitted multi-partyism.

## **Conclusions**

In accordance with Siebert *et al.*, (1956), it has been so far observed that through the different phases in Zambia's pre and post-colonial history the media have adapted the form and pattern of the political economic systems in which it has been operating. During the colonial period, the press displayed libertarian features, whereas in the First Republic the press' predispositions could be argued to have adopted the development and authoritarian theories of the press. The Second Republic was predominantly authoritarian. It is apparent that the press appeared in different forms and served different purposes in the various political and economic stages of the countries. Accordingly, in relation to the chameleon-like character of the press in different situations Keane (1998) states that a society which contains no controversies over freedom of expression and representation is a society that is surely dying, or dead.

During these evolutionary periods, the chapter discusses "why is the press as it is?" (Siebert *et al.*, 1956). This discussion continues in the chapters ahead as it adopts Hallin and Mancini's (2004) comparative model of media systems to construct a time series model of the performance of the press in Zambia's different historical epochs. This is based on the newspapers pluralism, economic status and political interference over the years.

Meanwhile, the debate shows that major changes in the press were fostered by powerful individuals and institutions. Just as Carroll and Delacroix (1982) argue that political turbulence at the national level accounts for the launching of most new press ventures, in Zambia,

institutional regime changes and economic cycles appear to have had an effect on newspaper founding and press freedom in general.

Press freedom has not had a happy history in Zambia, and Martin (1998) postulates that there is little evidence to suggest that the immediate future will be brighter for Africa. This gloomy prophecy indicates the weight of challenges for press freedom. The chapter argues that advertising as a main source of newspaper revenue is key in sustaining a free press. The gravity of this challenge is expressed by Ainslie (1967: 234) who contends that the biggest among the many problems confronting the press is that of finance: “who is to finance them?”

This shows that the economy is vital to the survival of the press and it is widely recognised that the press is central to society. However, the understanding of the economic role in the construction of a free press has been poor and anecdotal. Due to the lack of communicative alternative voices, which has been necessitated by financially crippled and short-lived newspapers, to a large extent newspapers and free expression have shared the same graveyard, the major executioner being economic factors, particularly, the lack of advertising.

### CHAPTER 3

#### **CONTROL, AUTONOMY AND POWER: STATE VERSUS PRIVATE NEWSPAPER OWNERSHIP IN ZAMBIA**

Zambia's return to multiparty politics in 1991 marked the inception of the Third Republic. This change was characterised by the general elections which led to the fall of President Kaunda's United National Independence Party (UNIP) to President Fredrick Chiluba's Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). Along with this change in political governance were noticeable changes in the country's economic profile. The MMD government liberalised the economy which previously under UNIP was strictly state controlled. Prior to this, the UNIP government had resisted the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but after realising that its socialist policies were largely unattainable (Kasoma, 1995), Kaunda welcomed the recommendations to implement the SAPs. Despite this gesture, the government seemingly lacked the necessary commitment to meet the agreed targets and consequently suspended the agreements. As the economic situation worsened, however, the government was perceived as having been responsible for the economic crisis, and this led to the demand for full democracy in Zambia (Simutanyi, 1996).

After taking over, the MMD government decided to resume the implementation 1990 SAP agreement between UNIP and the World Bank. The MMD embraced SAP as the panacea to the country's economic problems (Phiri, 2006). Included in this economic reform package were notable liberalisation and privatisation policies which promised a new dawn in Zambia's socioeconomic and political life (Simutanyi, 1996) including complete freedom of the press.

The transforming political economy in the Third Republic bound the once suppressed business capital to more open structures and presumably allowed for the development of a commercial media system and business focussed management style in Zambia. Debates on media ownership and control are mostly anchored on the effects of globalisation and liberalisation and based on the premise that media institutions have commercialisation and are profit driven (Nain, 1994; Rantanen, 2005). Nonetheless, what is apparent is that liberalisation has produced a very strong imprint on the development of the press in Zambia. This chapter examines the effectiveness of different patterns of newspaper ownership within the context of sustainability of a free press in Zambia. It elucidates the discussion by exploring state and private interests

by using political and economic concepts about capital, control and power of media enterprises. It scrutinises managerial and economic conditions that emerge between the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers, and their respective implications. By discussing ownership and control, this chapter places the newspaper organisation's editorial management within a framework of interacting forces, consisting primarily of readers, advertisers and owners (Ohlsson, 2012; McManus, 1994). Focus is hereby put upon editors for whom reference is interchangeably made for managers, professionals and technocrats. These are trained experts who by the standards of the journalism profession are qualified to publish newspaper products.

In his work, *Large Corporations and the Control of the Communications Industries*, Graham Murdock (1982) describes media products as peculiar commodities. He notes that media commodities are different from other products and services because they play a pivotal role in shaping social consciousness, thereby forming a special relationship between economic and cultural power that has attracted academic interest into the issue of their ownership and control. Murdock, however, acknowledges that the arguments in his work, just like most literature on the subject, are mostly applicable to Western and other advanced capitalist countries. As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, this study continues to stress the dearth of research on newspaper ownership in Zambia. Most literature on media ownership in Zambia embraces a rudimentary approach of how media owners use the media as tools to achieve their own interests, and how newspapers and the editors “are constrained not to offend the hand that feeds them” (McQuail, 1992: 135). Moreover, in many cases, these have been mere anecdotal and fleeting statements, lacking considerable focus on the institutional ownership, control and capital structures and management styles of specific newspapers. Scholars indicate that the problem of ownership is significant and admit struggling with assessing the influence of ownership on editorial autonomy (Baker, 2007; Lacy (1991; Napoli, 1997). However, McQuail (1992) offers a pathway by suggesting that the relationship between ownership and autonomy can be established through a detailed descriptive case study approach. Thus in order to pursue this approach and to develop a better conceptual understanding of the mentioned structures, this study employs a comparative case approach of two newspaper firms: the state owned *Zambia Daily Mail* versus *The Post* which is privately owned. The control processes of how decisions are made, who influences them and their consequences are examined (Couldry and Curran, 2003). The gist is to comprehend the ways in which the different ownership patterns are exercised and driven and their guarantees towards the sustainability of a free press. Hence, this chapter sets out to:

1. Evaluate the degree of ownership and control separation in newspaper companies.
2. Examine the managerial revolution approach to newspaper sustainability.
3. Assess the consequences of ownership and control on editorial autonomy in Zambia.
4. Discuss the influence of the political and economic environment on newspaper management in Zambia.

In fact, this is an extension of the previous chapter, with much focus on ownership patterns of the two newspapers. The discussion places the newspapers in the context of the changing political economic environment of the Third Republic.

### **Capital and the Newspaper Market**

At the beginning of the Third Republic, there appeared to be a transition taking place in Zambia; a move from the parastatal monopoly in the broadcast industry. The airwaves were 'freed' and allowed for diversity which led to the establishment by private players of diverse radio and television broadcasting stations. Similarly, dozens of private newspapers, including *The Post* entered the market. According to Phiri (1999), the liberalisation of the market during the transition was thought to mark the end of the repression of the media and the beginning of an era in which the press would be an autonomous contributor to the country's social, political, and economic life. Phiri indicates that there was optimism that the state-run media (*The Times of Zambia*, *The Daily Mail*) would stop serving as the mouthpiece of the ruling party and become a platform for the objective discussion of public affairs.

However, by the late 1990s, the initial optimism that had characterised Zambia's transition to multiparty politics had waned and the future seemed gloomy for the press (Phiri, 1999). Strangely, despite the growing number of newspapers, most of them did not actually reach publication stage (Chirwa, 1997). In addition, one area in which the MMD government was elusive was, what turned out to be, the false promise to privatise the state owned dailies and the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation. As such, contrary to its promises of a free press, what characterised the MMD era was continued control of the state owned press and a growing hostility towards, and concerted intimidation of the private press (Phiri, 1999).

In Zambia, government has applied legal, political and economic means to exercise control of the press (Matibini, 2006; Makungu, 2004). This control has been accomplished through

legislation, including a requirement for licensing of newspapers with the National Archives of Zambia through Article 19 of the constitution of Zambia. Political control has been applied through intimidation of journalists and control of appointments of media heads (Matibini, 2006), whereas economic control has been achieved by applying economic sanctions on erring private newspapers (Banda, 2004). The main instrument of legislative control and intimidation of the privately owned press in Zambia has been by charging them with very high legal fines for defamation (Chanda and Liswaniso, 1999).

In the case of state owned newspapers, studies indicate that government controls the press by extending their arm's-length of ownership, which in most cases obviates the need for legislative and economic control (Kasoma, 1997; Edge, 2014). However, even private newspaper owners have been found guilty of exercising degrees of control which is likely to influence the professional conduct of managers and editors. For example, studies (Demsetz, 1983; Demsetz and Lehn, 1985) established that newspaper owners as businessmen regularly interfere with the decisions of their managers/editors. Indeed, as shown in the previous chapter, a plethora of literature shows how owners use newspapers for personal interests and in most cases to attain political power (Makungu, 2004; Meyer, 2009; Schwoebel, 1976). Similarly, studies have also established that state owned media have been used by governments for propaganda and other political goals (Kasoma, 1997).

Gallagher (1982: 149) points out that generally, the significance of control in the media rests in the way in which it is, or can be, exercised. She asserts that control has meaning primarily in terms of the ability of communicators to shape output. She provides perspective by raising the following questions in relation to communicators' abilities:

What is the relative importance, for example, of external political, economic and social factors against internal factors such as professional ideologies, ownership and management structures, editorial policies, and technical and financial constraints? How does the communicator preserve creative autonomy within the organizational setting? How and why, finally, does media output come to be as it is (Gallagher, 1982: 149)?

More important to this study is how ownership and management structures influence professional ideologies and editorial policies to determine media output. As such, a more direct

question is: do newspaper owners - private or government always succeed in controlling the press for their own good? To establish this, the study advances this discussion by investigating the notion of separation of ownership and control in newspaper firms.

### **Separation of Ownership from Control**

Generally, different types of organisations have different types of ownership and capital structures, the simplest being the single manager/shareholder which Alchian and Demsetz (1972) refer to as the classical firm. In such a case, the owner/manager possesses two principal attributes which include making management decisions, at the same time having a claim to the profit of the firm (Marks, 1999). This resonates with Picard and Wezzel's (2008) classification of private ownership which they indicate exists when individuals, partners, families, or privately held corporations hold the ownership rights of a firm. Accordingly, state ownership entails the state holds the rights of a firm. In the Zambian context, there appears to be a challenge regarding interpreting the classification of public or state media. This classification is presented in Article 19 (Article 19, 2006: 37) and generally defines the different categories of state media systems in relation to public participation:

- *State Broadcasting* is controlled by the state and represents state interests. They may however be partly funded by the tax payer.
- *Government media* is controlled by the government of the day and represents the viewpoint of the executive. They too would be partly public funded.
- *Public Service broadcasting* is entrusted with the role of broadcasting material in the public interest. They may not necessarily be public owned but should be characterised with a commitment to public duty.
- *Public Broadcasting* on the other hand is owned by and accountable to the public. The funding is largely public.

The Article classifies forms of broadcast media, but can help decipher interpretation with regards to the general media systems, including the print media. Therefore, within this legal framework are different broadcast and print media institutions including the *Zambia Daily Mail*, the *Sunday Mail*, the *Times Newspapers*, the *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation* (ZNBC), the *Zambia Information and News Service* (ZANIS) and the *National Agricultural Information Service* (NAIS). Practically, all these institutions are integral to the state

communication systems under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS), funded by tax payers, controlled by the government and expected to project uniformity to a great extent on the tone and nature of their coverage. There seemingly is no major difference between state media and public media to such an extent that the terms can be used interchangeably (Chirambo, 2011). This appears to be very true for the *Zambia Daily Mail* on which historically the state has had tight reins, and has been heavily financially dependent on the state (Banda, 2004) and therefore (like any other state media) expected to play the role of national building, the notion which scholars have challenged for promoting intolerance for diverse views among members of the public (Banda, 2007; Chirambo, 2011).

A number of studies have attempted to address and analyse the impact of different types of newspaper ownership on media products and society in general. One such notable study is by Picard and Weezel (2008: 23) who suggest that “the form of ownership and the nature of influence of the sources of capital are fundamental for understanding the behaviour of managers and firm performance”. Newspapers as either private or state owned institutional forms of business enterprises enter into structured relations with owners of capital, workers and suppliers to provide facilities and other resources for effective operations (Picard and van Weezel, 2008). These relations are translated into hierarchical levels of owners, managers and employees (Napoli, 1997) and are mostly based on written and unwritten contracts upon which an organisation is the nexus (Fama and Jensen, 1983).

Using the Western stock corporation perspective of ownership, Picard (2005) suggests that every shareholder is considered an owner and therefore entitled to voting rights with regards to the operation of the corporation (Claessens *et al.* 2000; Ohlsson, 2012). However, in most cases these voting rights simply go as far as electing directors, whereas the day-to-day management of the corporation is left to managers (Marks, 1999). Nevertheless, voting could still be an effective instrument of control (Marks, 1999). In relation to this, Murdock (1982) distinguishes between allocative control and operational control. Allocative control, according to Murdock, “consists of the power to define the overall goals and scope of the corporation and determine the general way it deploys its productive resources”, whereas operational control is confined to lower level “decisions about the effective use of allocated resources and the implementation of policies already decided upon at the allocative level” (Murdock, 1982: 118). The general standard, according to Berle and Means (1968), which qualifies a single individual

or a small group in dispersed ownership to enforce allocative control is a minimum of 20 percent shares in a simple corporate structure, making them the majority shareholder.

A substantial proportion of the arguments on media freedom are based on the nature of control and influence resulting from ownership. Addressing this dichotomy of freedom against ownership requires examining management studies literature on the problem of separation of ownership and control. Drawing from economic and managerial theory about ownership and control of organisation, this study compares state newspaper versus private ownership. Some scholars such as Picard (2005) contend that capital is key to the conception of ownership as it forms the productive engine for an organisation. Picard's thinking gives salience to the idea that the owners of capital are cardinal to the functioning of an organisation to the extent that their say in decision making cannot be ignored. Hence capital becomes the thread that ties ownership to control.

One of the influential scholars of the modern corporation, Berle and Means (1932) conceived a corporate system where control over wealth could be exercised with a minimum of ownership interests. Berle and Means (1932: 66) suggest that "ownership of wealth without appreciable control and control of wealth without appreciable ownership appear to be the logical outcome of corporate development". Thus, Marks (1999) asserts that the notion of separation of ownership and control generally refers to the idea associated with publicly held business companies in which the shareholders possess little or no direct control over management decisions. Separation of control is generally attributed to either owner managed firms or dispersed share ownership. Mark (1999) appropriates this concept to how owners and or shareholders are involved in decision making, control and ultimately claims to the profits of a firm. Accordingly, he contends that although shareholders in publicly held companies have the rights to elect directors, they have limited legal rights to engage in any day-to-day management and control of the company. As much as the separation of ownership and control maybe costly, it seems to promise a lot of benefits especially for socially accountable institutions like the media, because they, as Murdock (1982: 118) states, "produce peculiar commodities". This may especially resonate with the normative expectations on media performance articulated by McQuail (1992).

A body of mostly non-media literature and studies examine the separation of ownership and control. La Porta *et al.* (1999), for example, investigate the issue of ultimate control and trace

the chain of ownership to determine that ownership and control can be separated to the benefit of the large shareholders. In a similar study, in East Asian countries Claessens, *et al.* (2000) examined the separation of ownership and control and found that separation of ownership and control is most pronounced among family-controlled firms and small firms which are mostly controlled by a single shareholder. Furthermore, La Porta *et al.* (1999) found that control is enhanced through pyramid structures which they defined as an ownership structure which displays a top-down chain of control in which the ultimate owners are located at the apex and what follows below are successive layers of firms. It is argued that the result of this pyramidal ownership structure is a separation of actual ownership and control in firms located at the lower part of the pyramid structure (Claessens *et al.* 2000). However, the study in East Asia found that separation of management from ownership control is rare, and in most cases the top management positions are held by relatives of the controlling shareholder.

Furthermore, many studies (Edwards and Fischer, 1994; Franks and Mayer, 2001; and Gorton and Schmid, 2000; La Porta *et al.*, 1999; Claessens *et al.* 2000; Valadares and Leal, 2000) establish that in most European, American, and Asian countries, including some South American countries, control and ownership structures are characterised by a high concentration of equity capital ownership. It appears globalisation took its toll on many parts of the world including some developing countries. However, there seems to be little evidence for African firms, though in La Porta's *et al.* (1998) study of 49 countries in the world, it was established that there was a shift towards concentrated ownership in developing economies.

Nonetheless, even after the trends of privatisation there seem to be many companies, especially in developing countries, which are still state owned (Ariyo and Jerome, 1999). One of the issues that make the study of ownership and control important is that different ownership structures may influence management process differently. It is generally understood that state ownership and control as a separate category has a tendency of using firms to pursue political objectives, while the public pays for the losses (Shleifer and Vishny, 1994). This is because the task of monitoring managerial performance in state owned companies is entrusted to political figures in government. Therefore, in terms of separation of ownership and control, one of the major differences between private and state owned companies is that managers of the former are answerable to shareholders whereas those of the latter are answerable to the voting public (Yarrow, 1996). Underscoring this point was a study by Djankov *et al.* (2001) on *who owns the media* in 97 countries. The study found pervasive evidence of bad outcomes associated with

state ownership of newspapers. Specifically, they found that state owned newspapers were generally associated with less press freedom, and fewer political and economic rights.

Yarrow (1996) sanitises and qualifies the foregoing revelation by stating that governments are the guardians of public interests, but also cautions about the highly imperfect nature of the 'market' for political control. Yet some scholars justify this imperfect nature by arguing that much as state owned firms may be focussed on profitable operation, they must also pursue other objectives, which impair their ability to achieve efficiencies and financial objectives (Martin and Parker, 1997; Backx *et al.*, 2002). These are neo-Marxists who support state intervention to rectify the distorting market influences on news production values in order to achieve what Thompson (1990: 260) refers to as "regulated pluralism" (Golding and Murdock, 1997; Lee, 2000).

Moreover, the nature of the company and industry seems to matter profoundly. For example, there are companies where management decisions are likely to affect the government's electoral prospects. The activities of such a company must have "highly visible impacts on the wealth of identifiable interest groups, generating pressures to use public enterprises ... often at the expense of efficiency" (Yarrow, 1996: 11). How then does this apply to media organisations?

Owing to the fact that managers bear few of the consequences of their decisions and that their personal objectives may differ from those of shareholders, the separation of ownership and control poses undesirable challenges to owners (Marks, 1999). Among the mechanisms for mitigating such potential conflicts is to provide managers with incentives to induce behaviour beneficial to the shareholders. In the case of weeding out incompetence, boards of directors are appointed to provide oversight (Adams *et al.*, 2008). They are constituted to prevent abuse of powers and ensure accountability on the parts of both the owners and technocrats who are mandated to manage the affairs of a company. For managers, the task generally is to deliver outputs demanded by customers and owners at the lowest prices, while respectively covering costs of production (Fama and Jensen, 1983). According to Coase's (1937) theory of the firm, the manager is at the service of the stakeholders and the objective of any firm is to strive toward profit maximisation and to increase the value of the shareholders' wealth. The differences are clear. However, since some scholars suggest that a single model of ownership and competition cannot be expected to be superior for all industries in all countries (Shirley, 1999; Yarrow,

1996 Backx *et al.*, 2002), what model then best fits the media industry? Drawing on McQuail's (1992) assertion that a newspaper's effective contribution to a democratic society depends on its ability to stand free from external pressures, what is also yet to be established is whether professional autonomy would determine a sufficient condition for a free press in Zambia.

### **Separation of Ownership and Control in the Zambia press**

Since ownership bestows control (Grossman and Hart, 1986), it will most likely influence the information offered to readers. Thus, ownership is a cardinal path to exploring the question of why we get the news we get (Murdock 1982; Baker 1994; Ohlsson, 2012). The trends of newspaper ownership worldwide reflect that nearly 60 percent is private ownership by families, three percent publicly traded, and four percent employee owned, whilst the remainder is government owned (Picard and Weezel, 2008). The picture in most African countries, however, shows governments' strong hand in ownership and control of newspapers (Kasoma, 1997). Previous chapters have outlined the focus of most studies on media and communication in Zambia. This chapter additionally highlights the scarcity of studies on separation between ownership and control, allowing for review of mostly Western (U.S.A. and U.K.) literature. This cultural and geographical bias produces a number of contextual challenges regarding the adaptability of Western concepts to African and Zambian conditions in particular. The first difference which may limit the adaptation of Western concepts is the existence of direct involvement of the Zambian state in newspaper ownership. Secondly, there are notable differences in the legal framework for newspaper ownership in terms of press regulation. The third challenge relates to organisational and industry structure differences in corporatism and concentration of ownership. These are discussed in more detail in the next chapter. The distinct structural setting of the Zambian newspaper system may limit the applicability of most Western findings, but for reasons of reference and comparison, this chapter cautiously reviews Western literature. Moreover, the ultimate for both contexts is examining whether separation of ownership from control guarantees editorial autonomy<sup>8</sup>.

In Zambia, there are many privately owned newspapers, although of the four major dailies: two (*Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia*) are state owned, whereas the other two (*The Post* and the *Daily Nation*) are privately owned. These different forms of ownership are affected by

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<sup>8</sup> Matibini (2006): Editorial autonomy entails that publication decisions should be made by editors on the basis of professional criteria, and the public's right to know should be guaranteed and respected in practice.

management and economic influences and the nature and strength of those factors are affected by the type of ownership (Picard and Weezel, 2008). Thus one of the roles of this chapter is to examine the differences between state and private ownership, and suggest that these differences impact on editorial autonomy and performance. In so doing, an exegesis of this proposition is examined in context of the ownership and control structures, monitoring, capital, and editorial independence.

### **The Managerial Revolution and the Private versus State Ownership Debate**

It is generally believed that individual newspaper owners mostly tend to have acquired their wealth in other industries as entrepreneurs involved in civic, political, and philanthropic activities within a specific geographic area (Picard and Weezel, 2008). Whether to supplant or supplement state efforts, private newspaper ownership in Zambia is proving to be a viable news forum (Chirwa, 1997). One of the obvious distinctions between state and private ownership lies in respective control mechanisms placed on newspapers. Although some scholars argue that ownership does not necessarily mean control by dictating what the press should publish, Kasoma (1995) shows that for most African states, ownership indeed bestows control. “When African governments own the media, they invariably also control them by making them publish or not publish certain information” (Kasoma, 1995: 539). This perspective has led some scholars to argue that private ownership is a panacea to the social performance problems and blamed state ownership for the limited or absolute absence of editorial independence in newspapers (Kasoma, 1997; Nyamnjoh, 2004). Yet others have indicated that resulting from the quest for profit over public interest, private ownership has been a culprit of the same ills experienced by state ownership (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). As already discussed in the previous chapter, besides the profit motive, evidence shows that private newspaper owners usually use newspapers to serve personal interests, such as to communicate their personal and ideological viewpoints.

Various reasons, including national interest, have been given for the African state’s desire to maintain tight reins of control of the flow of information from the press (Kasoma, 1986; Nyamnjoh, 2005). Literature on the press in Zambia strongly shows government control of state owned newspapers. This tendency usually increases towards the election periods (Nkandu, 2009), indicating the desire to control information that reaches the electorates.

On the issue of private ownership, the theory of the firm argues that while owners' self-interest usually leads to profit maximisation (Demserz, 1997; Picard and van Weezel, 2008), managers may not always act in the best interest of the owners (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). The two levels of control indicated earlier (allocative and operative control), are therefore likely to conflict. Since "all capital comes with conditions", as capital investors, owners want to have a high degree of control, but as they try to maximise their utility functions (Picard and van Weezel, 2008), managers are likely to adhere to professional standards which usually work against the interests of owners. A study on newsroom control in America by Breed, (1955) confirmed the conflict between owners and staff. The results established that of the 72 staffers interviewed, 42 portrayed more liberal views than those of owners, whereas 27 held similar views and three were more conservative

To better conceptualise and articulate the problem of who owns and controls the press in Zambia, this chapter uses the *Managerial Revolution* thesis. Championed by James Burnham. This managerialist argument is located within the broader discussion of the organisational structure and posits that "capitalists are gradually ceding control and power in modern corporation to a professional and technical class of workers" (Demers and Merskin, 2000: 107). Advocates of the managerial revolution thesis contend that dispersed ownership and its separation from management have given full-time executives (newspaper editors) influence over allocative control (Murdock, 1982). This approach thrives in an organisation where ownership is widely distributed that no individual or small group can dominate the affairs of the company (Berle and Means, 1968).

Scholars such as Berle and Means (1968), Burnham (1960) and Galbraith (1978) have been instrumental in propounding the managerial revolution argument that managers have seized control and have become the new rulers of corporations, relegating owners to powerless suppliers of capital resources, thereby separating ownership from control. This approach resonates with the liberal pluralist view which sees media and editors as autonomous, responsible institutions and individuals (Blumler, 1969; Gallagher, 1982). It presupposes that editors in newspapers exercise their powers over the influence of shareholders.

However, the management revolution thesis has been criticised by Marxists as an illusion. They argue that the actions of managers (newspaper editors) are always completely subject to the dictates of the owners (Sweezy, 1942). The Marxist approach views organisational structures

and managerial practices as inherently political and media products as an articulation and legitimation of the controlling interests in those institutions (Gallagher, 1982; Murdock and Golding, 1977). These are capitalist theorists expounding the Marxist philosophy of ownership and control of corporate organisations who further argue that owners are capitalists using corporations as instruments to further their interests and consolidate their power and privilege. Using structural analysis, Marxists refute the existence of separation between the levels of ownership and control by arguing that ownership powers are effected through specific interventions in the production process and through the limits set by allocative decisions (Murdock, 1982).

How applicable and to what extent can the managerial revolution approach hold in the Zambian media system in which proprietors of most private newspapers double as editors-in-chief or editorial editors? Murdoch (1982) points out that in modern companies, shareholders tend to be absent owners who leave the responsibility of supervising production to paid professional managers. He describes the system of owners actively intervening in the routine running of their enterprises as old style. The management trend in the West begun in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century stimulated by the increasing scale of newspaper organisations. Does this mean the Zambian media system is more than a century behind in scale and management?

Furthermore, in some media systems, including Zambia, the owner-editor relationship has been portrayed in the clashes between market forces and journalistic values of fairness and objectivity (Lee, 2000; Banda, 2004). Studies have shown that owners' control mechanisms usually threaten managers' job security (Napoli, 1997) making the latter yield to the pressure to avoid offending the "hand that feeds them" (McQuail, 1992). This resounds the neo-Marxian position that the acclaimed separation of ownership and control does not in reality imply a shift of the locus of control within the corporation, arguing that the managers' operational autonomy and probably, their continued employment within the company ultimately depends on their willingness to comply with the interests of the owners (Murdock, 1982). Weber (1964) brought in an even complex and seemingly ambiguous view to the debate. He argued that the shift of managerial functions from owners did not necessarily amount to the separation of control from ownership, but the separation of the functions from ownership.

Generally, scholars consider the board of directors to be the ultimate mechanism of corporate control in companies where ownership is separated from management (Fama and Jansen, 1983;

Murdock, 1982; Picard, 2005; Ohlsson, 2012). Yet Marxists have cautioned about the tendency of owners to influence boards to make decisions that promote their personal, business or political interests (Hyman, 1987). This problem seems to be more pronounced in state owned newspapers in Zambia, where the government usually undermines the responsibilities of the board to appoint managing editors. The *Zambia Daily Mail* has in the past fallen prey to this abuse of power by the government (Matibini, 2006). The Zambian state usually finds a way of influencing its newspapers in the pretext of providing financial support, while in the process binding them to its terms (Phiri, 1999). Along with this are the decision hierarchies in government, spanning from the Head of State through the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services and the Permanent Secretary, which are likely to influence the operations of state owned newspapers in Zambia.

Similarly, there is evidence of private newspaper owners who have abused the powers to threaten or even fire seemingly uncooperative journalists. Uncompromising owners have been found to be perpetrators of unfair dismissal of journalists whom they thought were working against their interests (Kasoma, 1986). However, the line of influence from owner to editorial managers is often indirect and complex and boards of directors usually stand in this gap. Moreover, in most cases, both state owned and privately owned newspapers are legally mandated to appoint board of directors who are required to provide oversight. As such, the board assumes the allocative control of a newspaper. This generally includes the authority to hire, fire and compensate the top manager, and to set objectives for a newspaper (Huse, 2007). Marxists are contemptuous about the role of the boards. They argue that boards are strategically used as interventions through which owners' interests and allocative control are represented through key members of the board. As a result, writes Murdock (1982), boards are the main instrument through which ownership control is exercised.

However, in a formal setting, the process of appointment and composition of board members may vary between the different types of newspaper ownership. It is noteworthy that there has been a common tendency across different regimes in Zambia to appoint top management positions in state owned media based on political loyalty than meritorious and professional criteria (Kasoma, 1986; Phiri, 1999). In fact, the government through the Minister of Information and Broadcasting appoints the board of a state media institution (Matibini, 2006), and at many occasions the President has been involved in appointing media heads, bypassing the boards (Kasoma, 1986; Makungu, 2004).

The preceding contention is captured by Matibini (2006) in his book, *The Struggle for Media Law Reforms in Zambia*, where he analyses media legislation, and highlights two notable issues regarding appointment and operations of the boards of directors. Firstly, Matibini notes that during the election period between April 2001 and August 2002, the government dissolved the boards of the *Zambia Daily Mail*, the *Times of Zambia*, the *Zambia Printing Company Limited* and *ZNBC*. Thus, the media institutions operated under the superintendence of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (Matibini, 2006). Clearly, it appears the aim was to control the flow of electoral information in favour of the ruling party.

The succeeding noteworthy incident was the appointment of the ZNBC and Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) boards by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting. Despite the ZNBC (Amendment) Act No. 20 of 2002 clearly stating that the appointments committees “shall determine their own procedure”, the Minister declared that some names were not suitable, and instructed the committees to remove them, or add more names before taking the recommended names to Parliament for ratification (Matibini, 2006). Again, this was deemed an attempt at influencing the appointment of the board and subsequently controlling the operations of the media institution. However, media bodies which included the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia (formerly ZIMA), the Press Association of Zambia (PAZA), the Zambia Media Women’s Association (ZAMWA), the Society for Senior Zambian Journalists (SSZJ), the Zambia Union of Journalists (ZUJ) and *The Post* newspaper took the matter to court to challenge the legality of the government’s refusal to take all the recommended names to Parliament for ratification. On 23 December 2004, the Lusaka High Court ordered the Minister to present to Parliament the names of board members recommended to sit on both boards (Matibini, 2006).

The foregoing media-government theatrics do not necessarily imply that private ownership is more proficiently organised. These tendencies to bypass and manipulate the board have been observed, especially in companies where one owner or few cooperating owners hold a minimum of 20 percent shares to enforce their control (Berle and Means, 1968). Moreover, members of the board are selected by shareholders (Ohlsson, 2012). This casts a shadow of doubt on the practicability of separation between ownership and control. Advocates of the management revolution, however, are adamant and unwavering about their position. They insist that, on the contrary, it is mostly the policies inspired by managers that influence the

decisions of the board “since they (managers), control the flow of information to the board, can present the available options in ways that favour the policies they would like to see implemented” (Murdock, 1982: 128). Managerialists further argue that the board is usually reduced to rubberstamping strategies and policies conceived by managers. Thus, according to this reasoning, the role of the board is specific to monitoring and moderating the principle-agent relationship in order to ensure the agent (manager) behaves in the best interests of the company (Napoli, 1997; Alchian and Demsetz, 1972; Pratt and Zeckhauser, 1985). Some scholars argue that since in most cases managers own few or no shares in the company, they are less likely to act in the interest of the owners (Murdock, 1982). Berle and Means (1968) suggest that managers who are released from the demands of shareholders are bound to behave more independently and professionally. This realisation entails the separation between ownership and control which, according to managerialists is evidenced by “the relative impotence of owners and the autonomy of administrative and professional personnel” (Murdock, 1982: 125).

Notwithstanding the emphasis on separation, Marxists consider the managerialist argument unrealistic as it fails to take into account the constraints of the economic context in which managers are obliged to operate (Murdock, 1982). This is especially true for most Third World countries such as Zambia, where (as already indicated) the state strongly influences the political and economic resources upon which newspapers depend (Banda, 2004; Lee, 2001). This logic may be extended in reference to the ‘patron-client relationship’ between the state and the press in Taiwan in which the state tries to control the press through a combination of coercion and co-optation (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1981; Wang 1994; Lee, 2000). Perhaps the patron-client relationship in Zambia manifests through a capital dimension. As the main capital investor, the state has justified controlling its newspapers in the name of national building (Banda, 2004), but most notably to consolidate the regime’s legitimacy, subdue opposition participation and advance its own political agenda (Phiri, 1999; Makungu, 2004). The possibilities of capital determining the patron-client relationship between the state and the private media in Zambia is yet to be established. However, using the Western experience, Hallin and Mancini (2004) show that private media owners also develop political connections, which are essential to obtaining government contracts, concessions, and influencing regulation policies and in many other ways necessary for sustaining a business. They suggest that owners often use their media institutions for intervention in the political world. This situation may have a bearing on the management position and may ultimately boil down to influencing the editorial policy of a newspaper firm.

Regarding the issue of whether the consequences of the owners' influence is positive or negative to the editorial independence, journalistic theory argues that managerial editors should be free agents of their professional decisions. However, it is almost always the final publications' decision and its consequences that matters most concerning the implications of media ownership (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Ohlsson, 2012). This analysis however provokes the question about which type of ownership, between state and private has more editorial autonomy.

### **The Influence Model: Societal Goals, Financial Motivation and Autonomy**

Another important facet of the ownership-control problem involves an examination of the relations between organisational structure and outcomes such as profit maximisation, job security, professional autonomy and product quality. In his book, *Media Performance*, McQuail (1992) argues that the independence of newspaper editors is, inevitably, very variable from one organisation to another, presumably private and state owned. McQuail suggests that even as they are restrictive, sometimes political and economic forces in society can facilitate autonomy of staff. Just as economic failure can be restrictive, economic success can allow for more freedom of opportunity. This means power of capital in newspapers can extend possibilities for the media freedom (McQuail, 1992). This, in fact, is the premise on which Marxists debunk the managerialist argument that supports media freedom and professionalism. It is argued that media freedom and professional autonomy are ideologically constructed myths that serve the capitalist class of owners (Schudson, 1978). The notion of professional and autonomous editors, contends Tuchman (1978), relies on *strategic rituals* that allow newspapers to uphold the façade of objectivity when, in fact, editorial decisions tend to be sanctioned by owners.

Thus, capitalistic logic requires that, regardless of who controls the company, it is argued, profit maximisation remains the basic imperative. As such, just like owners, professional managers have to worry about profits. In fact, Meyer and Wearden (1984) noted that sometimes editors and owners have the same opinions about journalistic issues as commercially minded individuals. Even if it may be secondary to the growth and prestige of a company, profit provides that finance for this growth (Glyn and Sutcliffe, 1972). However, different reasons have been given which justify the behaviours of newspapers in pursuing particular objectives. It appears the stakes for survival are higher in private ownership, vindicating the need for more profits to invest in new technology and editorial resources (Doyle, 2002). Financial and other

resources are required if the media are to adequately produce content that satisfies the various needs and wants of audiences (Albarran, 1996). This articulation is also supported by Picard (1989: 7) who contends that “media economics is concerned with how media operators meet the informational and entertainment wants and needs of audiences, advertisers and society with available resources”.

Picard’s definition of media economics identifies two much intertwined objectives of satisfying readers and advertisers. Gustafsson (1979) indicates that the two markets (readers and advertisers) are so interdependent that success in one market depends on the success of the other. In other words, the sustainability of the audience market for news is dependent on the success of the advertising market for consumers. Furthermore, Philip Meyer clearly expresses this duality in what he calls the *Influence Model*. Accordingly, Meyer (2009: 11) postulates that a newspaper “produces two kinds of influence: societal influence, which is not for sale, and commercial influence, or influence on the consumer’s decision to buy, which is for sale”. The model combines social virtue with profit. Meyer interrogates the nature of newspaper business and calls for rethinking of the primary objectives of newspapers. In this model, he suggests that the attainment of societal goals is paramount. His thinking is guided by the supposition that by upholding journalistic ethos, a newspaper gains more believability and credibility and subsequently becomes more influential to society. Consequently, this social influence places the newspaper at the centre of society and translates into commercial influence, which attracts more advertisers.

Over the long term, social responsibility in the democratic system would support, rather than impede, the fulfilment of a newspaper’s business objectives, through the channels of obtaining public trust and achieving societal influence, which then feeds back into further fulfilment of the public mission, thereby creating a virtuous cycle (Meyer, 2009: 26).

The greatest advantage of this model is its ability to provide economic justification for excellence in journalism. Furthermore, in his study of corporate newspaper structure and profit making, Demers (1998) argues that most corporate newspapers are profitable because they place less emphasis on profits as an organisational goal. Instead, he considers profits as a form of reward for newspapers’ noble responsibilities on non-profit goals such as editorial quality, maximising growth of the organisation, professional autonomy and innovation. However,

Demers' argument contradicts the conventional understanding that corporate newspapers are more concerned with making profits than producing high quality products and serving community informational needs (Bagdikian, 2000; McChesney, 1997; Murdock and Golding, 1977). Weighed against the managerial revolution debate, the influence model process generates questions of what type of control (between owners and managers) fulfils the process of editorial independence; performs social responsibility which leads to social influence; attracts advertising and ultimately achieve financial success. This is further cross-examined to determine the most suitable newspaper pattern for sustaining a free press.

Generally, the implications of the influence model to newspaper owners may be direct. They border on the strategic business decision of either pursuing short term or long term financial goals. The problematic questions in this tight spot are whether “newspapers are in the business of delivering eyeballs to advertisers” and focus on maximising short term profitability or whether they are “in the influence business” which prioritises social responsibility (Meyer, 2009: 11). The former requires reducing the costs of production and raising prices to increase financial gains, whereas the latter demands that owners invest in news production and editorial output. The assumption is that “the resulting higher quality earns more public trust in the newspaper and, not only larger readership and circulation, but influence with which advertisers will want their names associated” (Meyer, 2009: 26). Arguably, this models treats newspaper content and editorial autonomy as means to a financially profitable end, thereby arousing suspicions that content is used as a bait to lure readers who are valuable for advertisers (Croteau and Hoynes, 2001).

On the other hand, pursuing short term goals requires cutbacks in editorial quality which Meyer warns may subsequently erode public trust and influence, and ultimately destabilise circulation and advertising. There appears to be some consolation for the professional autonomy of editors if indeed the practice of quality journalism is a prerequisite for financial success. However, considering the differences between state and private ownership patterns of corporations, analysis at this level is also focused on the structures and the underlying dynamics of the different types of newspapers.

It must be pointed out that the impact of the influence model may differ from one type of newspaper to another. For a typical private newspaper in Zambia, long term non-profit goals may seem implausible. Moreover, a typical manager or editorial editor's remuneration may be

based on the profits the newspaper makes. This creates a challenge for such a newspaper to balance the equation which equals financial success to the sum of editorial quality and social responsibility coupled with influence. This is because the paper may be under immense pressure to sustain itself from the onset. As such, suspending financial interests to earn credibility may prove to be a difficult process. Moreover, studies show that the process of earning credibility and public trust is not an easy one and may take long (Kiouisis, 2001; Lee, 2010). Credibility studies have established that there are many key elements such as safety, qualification, dynamism, knowledgeability, accuracy, fairness, and completeness, which need to be fulfilled and upheld before readers can begin to consider a newspaper as believable and credible (Gaziano and McGrath, 1986; Meyer, 1988). But as Meyer (2009: 26) indicates, “trust is a scarce good”, once it’s earned “it could be a natural monopoly”. This implies that newspaper owners have to be very patient as they wait to start reaping their profits. But Murdock (1982) makes an attempt at discrediting this managerialist argument by arguing that financial success of a newspaper may not be determined by this linear process. He brings in a different dimension of competition and consumer sovereignty by arguing that newspapers have to compete for attention and loyalty of readers or consumers. Murdock suggests that it is the needs of readers that determine the nature of products the newspaper will supply. This entails that editors are not free to pursue their interests as their actions and options are limited by the powers of the readers.

On the other hand, the pressure and temptation for immediate profits on the part of owners can be immense. In his analysis of a private corporation, Berle (1959) contends that profits mean a different thing to the owners who are immediately and directly enriched and impoverished, and mean something else to editors whose compensation is not immediately related to them. Berle however, acknowledges that an economic organisation cannot continue to exist and enjoy its acquired social influence unless it makes profits. Therefore, to stay in business, the problem of financial survival becomes the overriding demand. In addition, Demers and Merskin (2000) suggest that a newspaper that is not making profit is vulnerable to outside influence or control. Noteworthy is the literature indicating that state owned newspapers suffer more for lack of credibility. They face an even tougher test. It is therefore not surprising that Demers’ (1994, 1995) findings suggest that journalists at private newspapers are more satisfied and have more autonomy and prestige than their counterparts at state newspapers. The explanation provided by Berle (1959) is that there are expected periodic political interventions into financially struggling state newspapers. This is supported by Banda’s (2004) study on the sustainability of

magazines and newspapers in Zambia which reveals that the state interferes in the management of the *Zambia Daily Mail* partly because of the huge debt owed by the newspaper. This is because the newspaper usually relies on the state for financial bailout. Therefore, in order to enjoy some independence, a newspaper must seek a good balance between sustaining quality journalism and reaping profits. This is perhaps the point where, in line with the Wall Street analysis of being in the business of delivering eyeballs to advertisers, newspapers produce content that supports or promotes the interests of dominant elites and value systems in order to attract advertisers (Gans, 1979; Demers and Merskin, 2000). The debate is complex, but what appears to be the common normative is the need for professional autonomy which is a requisite for quality journalism.

Drawing on Demers' argument, the general essential requirements for achieving and maintaining autonomy and high quality production in a newspaper are, firstly, division of labour and role specialisation that removes editors from concerns about profits and increases emphasis on news production; secondly, financial stability and security, which enables newspapers to pursue goals other than profit; and lastly separation of ownership from control which ensures management by highly skilled and educated managers, who place a premium on professionalism and benefit less directly from profits. The plausibility of achieving and maintaining such a balance in the Zambian media system is what this thesis is tussling with.

In conclusion, Picard and van Weezel (2008) make a significant observation that ownership form in itself may not be a necessary and sufficient condition for autonomy and press freedom and both good and poor performance can result under different forms. In the same regard, Arrese (2005) suggests that regardless of any circumstances, all newspaper organisations are bound to behave prejudicially towards issues that are beneficial to them.

This chapter has examined literature on separation of ownership and control in non-media and media organisations. This has been interrogated against different ownership patterns and grounded in the managerial revolution thesis which has been critically scrutinised by the Marxist approach. By cautiously assessing Western literature, extrapolations and inferences have been extended to the Zambian media system. Contrary to the corporatist newspaper organisations discussed in Western literature, the Zambian situation is characterised by one man owned or small sized private newspapers. Perhaps this is where the gap lies. This provokes

questions regarding the control and autonomy of editors in such newspapers. The research therefore establishes application of the management revolution thesis and the influence model to newspapers in a media system which is yet to be fettered by the globalisation dictates of corporate and concentrated ownership. It breaks new ground in illuminating the previously vague context within which ownership and control was understood to determine editorial autonomy. It is predicated on the proposition that the nature of the newspaper industry is constrained by the degree of liberalisation and effects of globalisation on the country's media and communication networks. Thus, in an attempt to understand the underlying dynamics, the following chapter deals with the political economy of communication and media in Zambia.

## **CHAPTER 4:**

### **THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES: AFRICA'S POSITION IN THE NORTH-SOUTH POLITICAL ECONOMY OF COMMUNICATION**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework employed in this study on political and economic trends in Zambia and how they affect media operations, as well as the general sustainability of the industry. It discusses and problematises how media studies are related to the field of political economy. The chapter also explores the interaction between the communication media and their commercial imperatives, and explains how the political economy of communication can be used as a tool to analyse commercial influences on the sustainability of a free press. Using the political economy of communication as an analytical framework, the chapter discusses how the sustainability of a free press can provide linkages between the political economy and the public sphere.

Most of the chapter is concerned with discussing the main theoretical perspectives that have developed for understanding the relationships between media, economics, politics and power. In so doing, the chapter sets out to discuss the following:

1. The foundation of political economy and its connection to communication studies.
2. Political economy as an analytical tool for media analysis in Zambia.
3. The linkages between advertising, commercialisation, liberalisation and a free press.
4. The main concept of the public sphere and its connection to press freedom.

In the process of addressing these objectives, broad themes that have framed inquiry into the historical development of the political economy approach are discussed. This is followed by a more detailed conundrum of the relationship between political economy approaches and media and communication studies. Consequently, the chapter offers as a proposition a general framework for interpreting the sustainability of a free press in the contexts of the Zambia political economic environment and the public sphere.

#### **Theoretical Foundation of Political Economy**

This section explores the substantive formative influences on the development of the tradition of political economy theories. It identifies the different political economy theories and

highlights their intellectual contributions to the tradition. Extrapolations are derived from the fundamentals to arrive at what is now commonly referred to as the political economy of communication.

Political economy, as Alfred Marshall (1890) notes, is a study of mankind in the ordinary business of life by examining that part of individual and social action which is very closely connected with the attainment and use of material requisites of wellbeing. Similarly, the Scottish economist, Sir James Steuart (1712-1780) generally related the term economy to the art of providing for family needs with prudence and frugality (Steuart, 1767). This line of thought was shared by fellow Scottish Enlightenment figures like Francis Hutcheson (169-1747), to whom economics initially meant household management. This view was carried on and also reflected in the work of founding influences in classical political economy by the likes of Adam Smith who was Hutcheson's student at the University of Glasgow (Ingram, 1888).

However, before Smith's influential work on the *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776), in 1767, Steuart highlighted essential points of comparison between domestic economy and political economy. Regarding their similarities, he stated: "what oeconomy (*sic*) is in a family, political oeconomy (*sic*) is in a state". His key distinction was that while a domestic economy may be formed when and how a man pleases, and he may establish what plan of the economy he thinks fit, political economy depends upon a thousand circumstances, habits and customs of people that a statesman has to consider to model into a set of new and more useful institutions (Steuart, 1767: 9). This is echoed later in Marshall's (1920) assumptions that political economy is a study of mankind in the ordinary business of life. Marshall asserted that political economy examines that part of individual and social action which is most closely connected with the attainment and use of the material requisites of wellbeing. Political economy, "is on the one side a study of wealth; and on the other, and more important side, a part of the study of man. For man's character has been moulded by his every-day work, and the material resources which he thereby procures..." (Marshall, 1920: 1).

This tradition of classical political economy was concretised by Smith's contributions. Using Hutcheson's insights, Smith reaffirmed Steuart's work by emphasising the connection between the economy and the state. Hence, in his *Wealth of Nations*, Smith provides a twofold interpretation of political economy: Firstly, political economy involves the role of the state to provide an enabling environment for people to generate wealth; secondly, it enables the state

to create revenue sufficient for the public service (Smith, 1776). From this standpoint, the key supposition of political economy is to empower both the people and the state. This creates the general assumption that political economy deals with the distribution of national resources and wealth.

Different scholars have suggested various formulations of classical political economy. Mostly stemming from their respective work on social and moral philosophy, their writings have greatly influenced the development of political economy. Other than the ones already discussed are David Ricardo, Thomas Robert Malthus, and John Stuart Mill with whom Smith shared in common essentially one dynamic model of equilibrium, growth, and distribution (Samuelson, 1978).

Yet for many other scholars, including Smith, the fundamental problem that formed the core of classical political economy constitutes the origins and magnitude of economic surplus. Some scholars address this problem by arguing that economic surplus is in the act of exchange, while others contend that it is in the process of production.

An alternative view of Smith's classical political economy is that the wealth of a nation was based on the economic surplus as income produced by labour applied to land and capital equipment. Smith inquired beyond the question of the origins of economic surplus by attributing economic surplus to the activity of social labour. Hence he divides national income into labourers, landlords, and capitalists in the structure of wages, rent, and profits (Brenner, 1977). Based on the analysis of the nature of these social relations, Smith developed a labour theory of value (Howard and King, 1985) which he demonstrated using an example:

If among a nation of hunters, for example, it usually costs twice the labour to kill a beaver which it does to kill a deer, one beaver should naturally exchange for or be worth two deer. It is natural that what is usually the produce of two days or two hours labour, should be worth double of what is usually the produce of one days' or one hour's labour (Smith, 1776: 53).

Smith's classical political economy extended to examining the development of a capitalist society. His analysis illuminated capitalist relations within a society in which productive activity consequently resulted in surplus value and ultimately necessitated the development of

capitalism (Howard and King, 1985). Other contemporary political economists like Vincent Mosco (1996) argue that the fundamental principles of classical political economy were anchored by the concept of value in productive labour. Like Smith, Mosco holds that this view opened the way to the general application of political economy to all forms of industry and trade.

On the other hand, Ricardo's (1891) fundamental proposition was the labour theory of value which asserts that the equilibrium price of a commodity depends solely on the labour and time which is required to produce it. He contends that a wage increase has no effect upon embodied labour requirements (Howard and King, 1985).

However, Karl Marx with a philosophical background provided a richer and comprehensive approach to political economy resulting from his critique of especially Smith's classical political economy. Marx's political economic analysis is deeply rooted in history and social science. Marx held a strong view that economics was the key to both understanding and changing the world (Howard and King, 1985). He formulated his economic theory based on the class struggle and the condition of the working class following the social, political and historical events in Western Europe. His political economic analysis deals more extensively with the capitalist mode of production and focuses on the commodity production process. However, in many ways, his views of capitalism differed from classical political economists. Thus one of his distinct critics was on the version of society provided by classical political economists. Smith and Ricardo used a three-class model of capitalism, with landlords, capitalists and workers enjoying equal theoretical status. Marx on the other hand restructured this model and polarised it into groups of unequal status of capitalists and wage-labourers. He thereby reduced the landlords to a minor appendage of the capitalists. Notably, this class structure was characterised by social conflict which manifested consciously as ideological struggles (Brenner, 1977).

Marx's conception of the structure of society was highly influenced by his economic analysis of early capitalism. From the onset he aimed to comprehend the nature of humanity, including human freedom based on the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly, he views freedom as the ability to engage in consciously planned action directed at the attainment of definite needs. This was in consideration that an individual's interests, abilities and consciousness are social properties, and hence depend upon the mode of production, which extends beyond the

individual (Howard and King, 1985: 17). Therefore, in the capitalist system the concept of freedom is an illusion conceived by the dominant class to serve their interests and perpetuate class relations formed out of relations of production. Similarly, since society is a product of human activity, the legal system and other institutions of society serve the ruling class who own and control the means of production (Milward, 2000: 21). These institutions in society may include communication and media organisations. From this perspective, media institutions are considered to be instruments of control drawn into the Marxist political economy as being part of the economic system with close links to the political system (McQuail, 2010: 96).

Ultimately, Marx conceived a communal society which would act as a single decision making entity with pervasive unity, devoid of conflict and social division. He imagined communism to be a reconstitution of the very nature of human existence and subsequently human freedom (Howard and King, 1985: 17).

Before moving to further discuss the concerns this chapter tries to analyse, it is necessary to identify the key characteristics of contemporary political economy in order to base subsequent discussion firmly within the necessary framework.

Wasko (2012) contends that although this era has experienced the prevalence of neo-classical economics, the approach to political economy still subsists in different versions. She maintains that several versions have emerged including a corporatist approach which generally argues “that individual freedom can be expanded by applying neo-classical principles to a wider range of issues than other economists” (Wasko, 2012: 26).

Garnham, whose work has mostly focused on British media politics, contends that political economy is “concerned with analysing a structure of social relations and social power. But it is particularly concerned to analyse the peculiarities of that system of social power called capitalism” (1990: 7). Garnham notes that the significant aspects of political economy follow from the view that collaborative social structures are the key features of production. He indicates that on one side are those who emphasise technology and organisational structures of production, and on the other are scholars who stress collaborative social relations which determine the production, distribution and consumption system in which unequal power relations are embedded. This is the framework in which the normative question of justice, equality and freedom must be addressed (Garnham, 1995: 63).

Meanwhile, a different version known as “institutional political economy represents an approach that focuses on technological and institutional factors that influence markets” (Wasko, 2012: 26). A considerable amount of “work in communication studies draws on institutional analysis, a radical, critical or Marxian political economy is likely to be the tradition that is represented when one refers to *the political economy of communication*” (Wasko, 2012: 26).

However, Mosco kept with this pattern of analysis in a seemingly Marxist technique and defined “political economy as the study of the social relations, particularly power relations that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources, including communication resources” (Mosco, 1996: 25). He uses a four-point framework to demonstrate the characteristics of the political economy approach.

Firstly, he explains that social change and history for classical theorists meant comprehending the great capitalist revolution, the upheaval that transformed societies based primarily on agricultural labour into commercial, manufacturing, and ultimately, industrial societies. Secondly, Mosco maintains that political economy has been firmly rooted in an analysis of the wider *social totality*. Accordingly, this implies “that political economy spans the range of problems that today tend to be situated in the compartments of several academic disciplines where those with an interest in social class go to sociology, those interested in government to political science, in the market to economics, and so on” (Mosco, 1996: 29). Thirdly, moral philosophy is used to address social values, conceptions of social practices and to clarify and make explicit the moral positions of economic and political economic perspectives. The fourth characteristic is praxis. This is an idea with deep roots in the history of philosophy and refers to human activity and specifically to the free and creative activity by which people produce and change the world and themselves. (Mosco, 1996: 28 - 34).

Drawing on these ways of approaching political economy, which emphasise that definitions “are grounded in social practice and evolve over time in intellectual and political debate” (Mosco, 1996: 25), it is clear that the “primary concern of political economists is with the allocation of resources (material concerns) within capitalist societies. Through studies of ownership and control, political economists document and analyse relations of power, class systems, and other structural inequalities” (Wasko, 2012: 27).

Very closely related to the mandate and core of this work is Gilpin's (2011) interpretation that political economy is a socio-political system composed of powerful economic actors or institutions such as giant firms, and powerful labour unions that are competing with one another to influence government and other matters in ways that advance their own interests. The basic premise, according to John Downing (1996), relates to the interaction between economic vectors and other sets of factors. Whether Marxist or classical, Downing indicates, the common core in all forms acknowledges the necessity of incorporating economic forces and processes into social analysis. Thus, the key defining characteristic is modes of production. Therefore, simply put, political economy refers primarily to questions generated from the interactions of economic and political affairs. Simple as it may sound, however, research still leaves so much to be desired in clearly establishing the interconnections between economy, politics and media (Downing, 1996).

Noteworthy is the long and seemingly unsettled debate regarding the relationship between political economy and cultural studies. This debate was mostly anchored by John Fiske, Robert McChesney, Nicholas Garnham and Lawrence Grossberg among others. Fiske (1994) seemed to have rekindled this debate by arguing that political economy and cultural studies are separate disciplines, each demanding its own methodologies and theoretical frameworks.

Garnham, in his article *Political Economy and Cultural Studies: Reconciliation or Divorce*, contributed to this debate by advocating for a reconciliation of the two disciplines. For Garnham, the debate is rooted in antagonism between Marxist political economy and cultural studies and is based on a deep misunderstanding which can only be successfully pursued if the bridge with political economy is rebuilt. (Garnham, 1995). However, Grossberg (1995) responded to Garnham's proposition for reconciliation, arguing that political economy and cultural studies do not need a divorce because the two were never married, emphasising that the two are totally separate.

Scholars including McLaughlin (1999) and Meehan (2004) describe the trajectory of the debate very well with McLaughlin adding her voice proposing feminism as a solution. She pointed out that one incongruity leading the conflict between political economy and cultural studies is that the former tends to understand class as a key structural determinant in relations of domination, while the latter tends to explore multiple forms of identity and domination.

“Political economy’s analysis of class relations excludes other differences and cultural studies’ analysis of multiple differences fails to acknowledge that these flourish within the capitalist mode of production” (McLaughlin, 1999: 4). She indicates that this has implications for feminism, suggesting that this seemingly irreconcilable difference would be repaired if scholars considered gendering the debate through allusions to feminist sites of conflict.

Robert Babe (2010) joined the debate and advocates a new and urgent integration of cultural studies and political economy. Babe claims that studying culture without considerations of either the influence of the political-economic base or the political-economic consequences of cultural activities is naivety in its extreme sense. However, he also acknowledges that overemphasising the political-economic determinants by neglecting human volition and freedom is tantamount to denigrating human dignity. Thus he argues for a balance, “a dialectical middle ground that must be sought after, achieved, and maintained” (Babe, 2010: 5).

The integration approach to political economy and culture is also maintained by Durham and Kellner (2009) by recognising that the structure of political economy links culture to its political and economic context and opens up cultural studies to history and politics. Durham and Kellner claim that on one side there is production, whilst the other is characterised by consumption. They argue that this approach calls attention to the fact that the production, distribution, and reception of culture take place within a specific economic and political system, constituted by relations between the state, the economy, social institutions and practices, culture, and organisations like the media (Durham and Kellner, 2009: 21).

### **Political Economy of Communications**

This section addresses the significance of studying the sustainability of a free press within the framework of political economy. It outlines a discussion regarding the relations among historical and modern organisational structures of power, production, distribution of resources, and ideology and a free and democratic press.

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally

speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas (Marx and Engels, 1965: 64).

The discipline of political economy has been steeply embedded in orthodox economic concepts. However, like many other areas of inquiry in social science, the scope of political economy has not been spared from shifts, mostly resulting from historical and global transformations. In fact, McQuail (2010) postulates that the main contemporary heir to the Marxist theory is found in the political economy approach.

The modern works of numerous scholars including Dallas Schiller and Hebert Schiller (1981), Nicholas Garnham (1990; 1991), Vincent Mosco (1996), Dan Schiller (1988) Robert McChesney (1999; 2004), Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (2000), Gillian Doyle (2002) and Janet Wasko (2003; 2012) have greatly influenced the growth of the field of political economy of communication. Their focus, however, has generally been with how the dynamics of capital accumulation and class power manifest themselves in the capitalist mode of production and production process of the media industry (Calabrese and Sparks, 2004: 2).

Many scholars including neoclassical and neo-Marxist political economists have provided variations of the discipline and applied its intellectual developments such as the political economy of communication. The connection between political economy and communication is based on the presumption that it would address problems or questions faced by the communication industry. Meanwhile, McChesney (2004) makes a passionate assertion that political economy and communication have a special relationship. He claims that in combination they are concerned with commercial and material issues and its historic rise is closely tied to the rise of capitalism. In addition, each discipline explores issues of social justice, human freedom and political governance and are both indispensable to democratic theory (McChesney 2004: 44).

From this perspective, Mosco (2000) is more succinct by pointing out that political economy interrogates the role of power in the production, distribution and exchange of mediated communication. In relation to political economy of communication, he identifies newspapers, books, videos, films, and audiences as products of communication. Mosco's formulation

describes the “fundamental forces and processes at work in the marketplace. It emphasises how a company produces a film or a magazine, deals with those who distribute the product and market it, and how consumers decide about what to watch, read, or listen to. Finally, it considers how consumer decisions are fed back into the process of producing new products.” (Mosco, 1996: 25). Mosco also emphasises that the primary research interests of political economy include “strengthening the theoretical foundation of communication research by incorporating an understanding of how structures of power operate and contribute to the transformation of communication processes into commodified social relations” (Mosco, 1999: 104).

According to Meehan (2007), political economy is the body of theory from which communication scholars draw knowledge, methods and theories for understanding commercial imperatives and artefacts and procedures that influence communicative freedom. In light of this, political economy contextualises the objects and practices within the communication industry. This provides understanding of the context of the origins of media commodities and how they are freely distributed. In relation to this, Wasko’s (2003) explanation of the political economy of communication sheds light on the processes of how media organisations produce the menu of media artefacts, and how audiences get what they get from the media.

As already established, many scholars have situated political economy within the broad sphere of capitalism. Further, Mosco (1996) stresses how business, the state, and other structural forces in a capitalist society have influenced communication practices. From this standpoint, he claims that the political economy and forms of institutional analysis tend to focus on how communication is socially constructed, the social forces that contribute to the formation of channels of communication and the range of messages they transmit.

To a large extent, these forces of production which include media technologies and creative practices are shaped according to dominant relations of production and are also highly influenced by profit imperatives, the maintenance of hierarchical control (Durham and Kellner, 2009). Of particular interest to this study is how the economic organisation of media institutions influences the way they produce what they produce. Peter Golding and Graham Murdock (2000) provide a good point of entry as they affirm that the political economy approach focuses on the interplay between economic organisation and political and social life. According to Golding and Murdock, the starting point of analysis lies in highlighting the difference between

Left and Right political economy. They note that the central proposition for liberal political economy is on a variety of private media institutions in a market offering different competing commodities for consumers to choose from. The main thrust is that these market forces offer greater freedom of consumer choice. Apparently, leftist political economists concede that producer and consumers make choices, yet they contend that they do so within wider structures of social relations. Golding and Murdock describe these relations shaped by Marxist thinking, critical political economists argue that meaning making and meaning taking is influenced by the “prevailing relations between press (newspaper) proprietors and editors or journalists and their sources, to the way that television viewing (readership) is affected by the organisation of domestic life and power relations within the family... it is especially interested in the ways that communicative activity is structured by the unequal distribution of material and symbolic resources” (Golding and Murdock, 2000: 73).

A very significant feature of Golding and Murdock’s conceptualisation of political economy analysis is instrumentalism. The underlying preposition of this concept is that the capitalists use privately owned media operating in a commercial market system as instruments of domination by ensuring that the flow of information is consonant with their interests. This perspective assumes a Marxist conception of the role of the media in a capitalist society. Similar to this thought is Garnham’s (1995) work which stresses the process through which the meaning of media products is shaped:

A delimited social group, pursuing economic or political ends, determines which meanings circulate and which do not, which stories are told and about what, which arguments are given prominence and what cultural resources are made available and to whom. The analysis of this process is vital to an understanding of the power relationships involved in culture and their relationship to wider structures of domination. (Garnham, 1995: 65).

In fact, Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky (1988) used a propaganda model of the news media to articulate this argument in more detail. The “propaganda model focuses on this inequality of wealth and power and its multilevel effects on mass-media interests and choices. It traces the routes by which money and power are able to filter out the news fit to print, marginalise dissent, and allow the government and dominant private interests to get their

messages across to the public” (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2). The propaganda model is constituted of the following essential elements:

- The size, concentrated ownership, owner wealth, and profit orientation of the dominant mass-media firms;
- Advertising as the primary income source of the mass media;
- The reliance of the media on information provided by government, business, and “experts” funded and approved by these primary sources and agents of power;
- “Flak” as a means of disciplining the media and;
- “Anticommunism” as a national religion and control mechanism. (Herman and Chomsky, 1988: 2).

According to Herman and Chomsky, these elements of the propaganda campaign interact with and reinforce one another initiating a cleansing process where the raw material of news passes through successive filters, resulting into residue which is fit to print.

Most important to this study is the influence of advertising to the sustainability of the press. Golding and Murdock make a connection between the press and corporations that may not be directly involved as producers of media products. They note that such companies can still exercise control over news production through their role as advertisers and sponsors (Schiller, 1989). However, Dallas Smythe (1981) expounds this concept in more detail as he emphasises that for its financial viability, the press depends directly on advertising revenue. Smythe’s work sparked an intellectual debate about the extension of corporate reach which reinforces the concept of audience commodification. The main question Smythe was trying to address is, “what is the principal product of the mass media” (1981: 230)? Indeed thus far, this work has referred to messages, information and images as the primary media products. However, Smythe presents a different view by factoring in advertising as a major component of the equation and claims that the answer is audience power. He explains that in a capitalist market, commercial media trade with advertisers for financial sustainability. Since advertisers are constantly looking for consumers for their products, the media offers them the audience. According to Smythe, advertisers buy audiences with specific demographic characteristics in predictable numbers and at particular times to particular means of communication – newspapers in this case. In so doing, the audience is actually “produced, sold, purchased and consumed, it

commands a price and is a commodity” (Smythe, 1981: 26) and the principal product of the mass media.

Golding and Murdock reiterate that the economics of commercial media revolve around the exchange of audiences for advertising revenue. Their contribution to this analysis is that the price advertisers pay for advertising space is determined by the size and demographics of the audience it attracts. Furthermore, Smythe distinguishes between advertising content and non-advertising content. He points out, as Liebling (1961) did, that the non-advertising content is the ‘free lunch’ which serves as the sufficient attraction for newspaper readers or audiences. He adds that the idea of referring to the space between advertisements as a ‘hole’ which may be filled by editorial content attributes an inferior status to the latter. This thinking also emphasises that the main purpose of the mass media is to produce audiences to sell to the advertisers and that editorial content will be tailored to suit the needs of the advertisers.

These economic factors within which the media operate reveal the constraints and prospects of sustaining a free press. Thus political economy of communication explores the role of the press in providing communicative rights in a democratic society. Jurgen Habermas (1989) explains that a democratic communication system should provide easy access to an open forum for debate on different issues involving political choices.

### **Breaking Away from the West: Towards a Zambian Political Economy of Communication**

It has become routine for universalistic observations about the media to be advanced in English-language books on the basis of evidence derived from a tiny handful of countries. Whether it be middle-range generalisation about, for example, the influence of news sources on reporting or grand theory about the media’s relationship to postmodernity, the same few countries keep recurring as if they are a stand-in for the rest of the world. These are nearly always rich Western societies. (Curran and Park, 2000: 3).

It has been more than a decade since Curran and Park made the foregoing observation, but their concerns still sound fresh. Wasko (2012: 25) renews this concern in relation to the political economy approach to communications and media as she suggests that the field should no longer

be a “marginal approach in media or communication studies in North America and some parts of Europe”. It is expected that the waves of globalisation have blown and spread the political economy approach to communication trends beyond the traditional borders of its initial conception. As such, this study inquires whether the political economic experiences of the West should be universalised in a way that the rest of the world must be seen as an understudy. For instance, McQuail (2010) argues that the trends in media business and technology have greatly increased the relevance of political economy of communication. To this effect, he has formulated a framework of four analytic categories to serve as a prism through which he articulates the consequences of the political economy of communication:

1. First, there has been a growth in media concentration worldwide, with more and more power of ownership being concentrated in fewer hands;
2. Secondly, there has been a growing information economy involving increasing convergence between telecommunication and broadcasting;
3. Thirdly, there has been a decline in the public sector of mass media and in direct public control of telecommunication under the banner of deregulation, privatisation or liberalisation;
4. Fourthly, there is a growing rather than diminishing problem of information inequality. (McQuail, 2010: 97).

Implied in this frame of reasoning is that the trends in political economy of communication are applicable to all parts of the world. Much as it is acknowledged that to a certain extent the approach is globalised, there are unique Third World concerns of political economy as it regards communication in an increasingly integrated world system. This thesis uses these frameworks as a point of entry to analyse and contextualise specific issues related to the Western political economy of communications. Building on its omissions, the study anchors its attempt at a theoretical synthesis around a “Zambian political economy of communication” framework.

Zambia has definitely been influenced by the global free market policies advanced by international agencies (Banda, 2006b). Therefore an attempt to focus on its national state would be captured by Mosco’s (1996) framework on state constitutive activity of the political economy. He postulates that the starting point is to consider four processes including (Mosco, 1996: 202):

- Commercialisation: takes place when the state replaces forms of regulation based on public interest, public service, and related standards, such as universality, with market standards that establish market regulation.
- Liberalisation: a process of state intervention to expand the number of participants in the market, typically by creating, or easing the creation of, competing providers of communication services.
- Privatisation: a process of state intervention that literally sells off a state enterprise
- Internationalisation: strategic alliances that integrate states into communication networks for negotiating terms of development (Mosco, 1996: 202)

Mosco further notes that using the above framework, underscores the notion that both the state and industry are central to political economic analysis and the development of communication. However, the concept of the Western state and the Third World state are different (Johnson, 1999). Hence, globally, media systems are different from region to region and country to country. For instance, Jan Ekecrantz (2011) classifies the media systems into three categories:

- The first group of capitalistic countries with colonial and authoritarian pasts (including apartheid) under military regimes. The media systems are advanced and commercial, especially the broadcast media.
- The second group is a mixed bag of old and new capitalistic economies, including some old empires, some of the largest parliamentary democracies, but also China (though according to other estimates, China belongs to the first group). The media systems mostly operate within strong central or federal governments and big, more or less globalised media corporations with large nationwide audiences.
- The third group includes a number of European countries, many of them, especially in the north (post) welfare societies with public service media as one component of the media structure (2011: 490).

## **Concentration of Media Ownership**

Political, economic and social dynamics separate the above categories. Most notable is the distinction between the first group, representing the Third World and the second group which represents North America. Examined against McQuail's framework, the claim relating to the growth in media concentration worldwide, with more and more power of ownership being concentrated in fewer hands may be true for the North American media system, but may not accurately represent the Third World.

The geo-political economy perspective dictates this analysis. In point of fact, McChesney (2004) states that media ownership and concentration is a concern for political economy of communication in North America. He notes that media systems in this region are corporate-dominated ruled by few firms that are typically vast conglomerates that function as oligopolies in more than one market. Thus studies on media markets have been characterised by debates relating to ownership and concentration. Various issues are of concern, but most prominent, McChesney (2004: 177) writes, are the arguments that, firstly, high barriers to new entrants in the media market, thereby giving the few dominant large firms in the oligopolistic markets considerable control over prices; secondly this consequently limits the diversity of ideas and the notions of a free press are severely compromised.

In order to protect the interests of the public against public interest, the United States government has developed media ownership policies and regulations such as the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970. This law particularly relates to the sustainability of newspapers, with the purpose of maintaining more than one daily newspaper in at least a handful of communities. The other major policies include the broadcast ownership policy<sup>9</sup>, copyright policy and the media antitrust law (McChesney, 2004). This experience may not be shared with the Third World, where apart from South Africa (Tomaselli, 2002), concentration of ownership is not the highlight of the political economy of the media. Moreover, South Africa may be considered an honorary Western specimen in Africa. It is one of the few countries (if not the only country) on the continent with well-developed and sophisticated media market infrastructure.

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<sup>9</sup> McChesney (2004: 230): The U.S. government assigns monopoly broadcast licenses to prospective broadcasters; the government can determine who owns what. The government also puts conditions upon licenses, limiting how many monopoly broadcast licenses a single firm can hold and what other media it can own. To promote competition and diversity, the FCC has prohibited broadcasters from owning newspapers or cable TV systems in the same community where they broadcast.

Tomaselli's contribution to the political economy therefore represents an exceptional case as far as Africa goes (Hyden and Leslie, 2002). Some African scholars have problematised this Western dominance and have attempted to offer 'Southern African' political economy of communication perspectives, but it appears they have mostly offered a slanted viewpoint. Interestingly, these are mostly based in South Africa and try to capture Southern Africa by extrapolating the South African case.

However, it is argued by Hyden and Leslie (2002) that for most African countries, including Zambia, trends in media ownership, especially television, have not changed greatly from before the 1990s when media were almost exclusively owned by the state. Contrary to the North American situation, concentration of ownership is actually in the hands of the state, which in the Zambian case owns one main public broadcaster – the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC), with its two television channels (TV 1 and TV 2); three public radio broadcast stations (ZNBC 1, ZNBC 2 and ZNBC 4) and; two public newspaper companies – *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia*. The state is holding on to ownership of the dominant media institutions in order to maintain total control of what is being communicated (Phiri, 1999). This shows that the state remains a key player in the media business and it will often dictate policy directions in relation to both local and international businesses, Chuma (2010) states. The next chapter of this study continues on this path and asks the question, whether this pattern of ownership would sustain the credibility of the free press model or diminish its effectiveness.

Moreover, African media, including Zambian media are not much integrated into the global media and as such, the trends of consolidation and commercialisation seem to have taken a somewhat different route. In fact, the four biggest global media conglomerates, that is, the Walt Disney Company, the largest media conglomerate in the US, with News Corporation, Time Warner and Viacom have shied away from Zambia (Chuma, 2010). Thus, this thesis argues that the research on the political economy should consider the institutional dissimilarities and look at Africa with 'adjusted lenses'. For example, Hyden and Leslie indicate that media turnovers are higher in other regions of the world as compared to Africa. Regarding the general question of sustainability, they argue that in order for the media enterprise to survive it requires very heavy investment and a solid capital base. "Many African entrepreneurs, for example, start their own newspaper and in order to attract readers, fabricate or exaggerate news which after some time limits their credibility in the eyes of their readers" (Hyden and Leslie, 2002:

18). They add that this is a consequence of the hard economic realities which make competition very fierce such that only the strong survive. In Zambia, it appears newspapers can only be economically sustained in the capital, Lusaka. Thus, unlike in Western countries with diverse markets and no competing general circulation of newspapers (McChesney, 2004), in Zambia for example, they often share the same geographical space and end up chasing the same circulation revenue and the same limited advertising revenue in a not very developed market (Ogundimu, 2002). Emphasis should therefore be given that in addition to problems of owner-control or market-dominance, for Zambia, the issue is also about small size of the market (Berger, 2002).

This may be the case for other parts of the world, but it also suggests the political economy of the media – the examination of the economic feasibility of the media business in Zambia should focus on the complexities of the seemingly elementary factors. These aspects of media development, as Ogundimu suggests, constitute important areas of inquiry to better understand the constraints and opportunities of African media.

### **Media Convergence**

Similarly, McQuail's second claim regarding a growing information economy involving increasing convergence between telecommunication and broadcasting may be an overstatement for the Zambian case. However, in as far as convergence, in its simplest sense implies the combining of old and new media for disseminating news, information and entertainment (Lawson-Borders, 2006), then to a certain extent convergence has taken place. Apparently, almost all traditional news media have since launched parallel online versions. This type of interactivity is limited to the journalistic perspective of sharing and cross-promoting content from a variety of news media (Lawson-Borders, 2006). However, convergence has over the years evolved to focus on multimedia integration between print and broadcast through the internet to produce text, audio, video and many other interactive information services (Lawson-Borders, 2006). Even if the Zambian media and communication landscape seems to be expanding, platforms still appear to be fragmented. It is argued that convergence and concentration have a dialectical relationship (Berger, 2004). On one hand, some scholars (Murdock, 1994; McChesney, 1999) contend that convergence leads to concentration, whereas others (Marthoz, 1999) emphasise the opposite. The important argument however, is that as outlined above, there seems to be lack of cross ownership concentration among the print, broadcast, telecommunication, music production and film

studios and other media platforms in Zambia to sanction a mature technological and organisational convergence. In fact, the situation extends to regulation of convergence. Unlike most Western countries and South Africa where the broadcast and telecommunication industries are jointly regulated, Zambia presents a different case. In South Africa, before birth of the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and the South African Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (SATRA) superintended over the broadcasting and telecommunications industries respectively (Banda, 2006). In Zambia, the broadcasting sector is overseen by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, whereas the Zambia Information Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) regulates the telecommunications industry (SADC, 2013). Presently, there is no legislative agency mandated to oversee the print media. The closest assumption may be that the potential threats it poses cannot match the dangers of the unregulated and volatile broadcasting and telecommunications industries.

On a brighter note, the projections may point towards integration in future, but the current picture seems to show that convergence in Zambia is still what Berger (1998) describes as *embryonic*. Perhaps there may be a few exceptions for the degree of media ownership concentration and convergence in other Third World countries, but literature and evidence for the Zambian situation casts a gloomy image to the acclaimed convergence.

### **Deregulation, Privatisation and Liberalisation**

The years after the 1991 elections in Zambia have seen dramatic changes driven by the government's promises of liberalisation, deregulation and privatisation of the state media institutions. As already pointed out in the previous chapter, the transition was thought to mark the end of the repression of the media and the beginning of an era in which the media would be an autonomous contributor to the country's social, political, and economic life. This roused optimism that the state-run media, including the *Zambia Daily Mail* would be transformed into a vibrant forum for the objective discussion of public affairs (Phiri, 1999). Certainly, the changes on the Zambia media scene were influenced by the intense wave of globalisation which put pressure on the government to adapt (Banda, 2004). The government thus adopted the free market economy which is defined by the fundamental features of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation (Banda, 2006b; Mosco, 1996). The policies of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation suggest the significance of the political economy approach as they portray the mutual constitution of the media industry and the state (Mosco, 1996). Mosco is instructive

when proposing that political economic analysis must equally concentrate on both the state and industry when articulating these policies. Unlike most scholars that contend that deregulation means the absence of state regulation, Mosco argues that market forces too, do regulate the operations of the communication industry.

Fackson Banda (2006b) offers a sequential process of how these policies were applied in Zambia. He posits that deregulation was an attendant of liberalisation. He referred to the government's approach to liberalise the media sector for private investment as "cautious deregulation," because licences were mostly issued selectively (2006b: 461). Nevertheless, the media market opened up to both international and local business interests and it appears there are no quantitative limitations on the numbers of newspapers, radio or television stations for a supplier (SADC, 2013). The law, however, places restrictions that prevent majority foreign ownership of broadcasters. Broadcasting licences are only available to a Zambian citizen, which is defined as a "company in which not less than seventy-five percent of the company's shares are held by Zambians" (Zambia, 2010). However, the government took a more flexible stance regarding newspapers, registering dozens, of which almost all failed to financially sustain themselves due to, among other reasons, hard economic realities (Banda, 2004).

Privatisation is one other fundamental feature of the free market with regards to the media. In 1991, the Zambian government promised to privatise the state media, but later reneged for reasons which, according to Banda (2006b), were political expediency and the fear of loss of state control and hegemony. Banda notes that the government decided to commercialise instead.

Although to varying degrees, each of the policies attracted government's consideration, either the legal framework, or political commitment or indeed the market forces posed serious challenges to the Zambian media system such that it fails to fulfil McQuail's assumption that there has been a decline in the public sector of mass media and in direct public control of telecommunication under the banner of deregulation, privatisation or liberalisation. The strict laws aimed at protecting the local media market against the encroachment by foreign multinationals signals resistance from intrusion. This thereby limits the relevance of the assumptions of the Western political economy approach to the Zambian media system.

Another narrative however, stresses the overdependence on foreign markets for supply of service, content, newsprint and technology, represents yet a different, but typical dimension of the political economy of African media (Ogundimu, 2002: 227). In many cases, African media institutions, lack the capacity to generate local content. In most cases, it is either that local production houses are too expensive or media institutions find foreign, mostly old content cheaper and more convenient. Ogundimu observes that newspapers for example, usually reserve some pages for international news supplied by foreign news agencies. Michael Leslie (2002) attributes this to inadequate industrial technological investments in the media. Most technologies and production materials such as newsprint are sourced from highly industrialised countries. For example, the Zambian press mostly depends on South Africa for newsprint (Banda, 2004). Thus, the high import duty imposed on such products ultimately raises the cost of production, making it very difficult to sustain a newspaper.

### **The Digital Divide**

Digital divide is an expression used by scholars to refer to the subject of whether people have basic access to an internet-enabled computer (Murdock and Golding, 2005); access, usage and benefits from the internet (Fuchs and Horak, 2008); in particular, Norris (2002) points out that it refers to the 'inequality' in access and use of advanced communication facilities.

The general view has been that the ICTs would enhance equality of access to information, social services and improve citizen participation in political processes. Some scholars have argued that opportunity to access ICTs is a fundamental component in measuring the digital divide. In addition, internet access, PC access, user digital capability, and government policy also form a basis for measurement of the digital divide (Doong and Ho, 2012). There appears to be considerable variations in relation to access of information and communication technology (ICT) across the globe.

However, scholars (Hoffman and Novak, 1998, 1999; Strover, 2001) have observed that people with higher economic status are more likely to have higher levels of access and use the internet than those with low economic status. Upon realising this, DiMaggio and Hargittai (2001) were concerned that this would possibly lead to a situation where ICTs wind up exacerbating inequality rather than ameliorating it. These differences are what have caused the digital divide, which Warschauer and Matuchniak (2010) emphasise reflects in economic inequities.

The political economy takes interest in the divisions that arise over who uses and benefits from control over communication resources and imbalances in global communication power (Mosco, 1996). McQuail (2010) postulates that one of the global trends in the political economy is a growing problem of information inequality. Apparently, the arguments regarding the phenomenon of the digital divide have, in most cases, been paradoxical – evolving around causality – whether information inequality causes socio-economic inequality or vice versa.

Christian Fuchs, a political economist whose research interest is in the media and information, and information society studies, classifies society into the political, economic and cultural structures. Drawing from this classification, Fuchs and Horak (2008) further argue that besides general social forms of the digital divide, there is also an economic divide, a political divide, and a cultural divide. From a political economy of communication perspective, it is clear that access to ICTs is associated with power. The more powerful, the greater access to ICTs and information quality; the less privileged, the lesser the access and the poorer the quality of information.

There also seems to be a general agreement that ICTs play a key role in economic growth. However, the resulting digital disparities have, according to Doong and Ho (2012) created many socio-economic imbalance problems in the world. Doong and Ho's (2012) research on global ICT development and digital disparities indicate that cross country digital divides result from social and economic inequalities among developed and developing countries. They identified a great digital divide between developed and developing countries, showing greater ICT penetration in the latter. They further found that for developed countries such as USA, Canada, China, England and most Western countries, the domestic digital divide is narrower than is the case for most third world countries including Zambia.

However, from around 1994, digital technology came to Africa and has been slowly growing since. This increasing penetration of ICTs in Africa has shaped communications, including the development of the new media. According to Internet Society (2012), out of Africa's 1,073,380,925 inhabitants, only 167,385,751 or 15% had access to the internet in 2012. For Zambia, statistics show that only 1,589,010 out of the total human population of 13,817,479 access and use the internet. This represents 11.5% of the population. Among the factors that influence this are digital literacy and economic means to own a computer device and to pay for internet costs. It is predicted that, with a few exceptions, computer technology will continue to

be inaccessible to most of, African populations for a long time to come due to lack of physical infrastructure (Hyden and Leslie, 2002).

The growth of new information technology which has swept the world has both good and bad ramifications for African countries. Hyden and Leslie (2002) argue that it is good in the sense that the flow and exchange of information helps to establish and sustain a transparent and pluralist organisation of society and politics. On the other hand, they (Hyden and Leslie, 2002) argue that a subtle backdrop is the growing dependency on outside sources of media control. Their main argument, however, is that this technology creates a growing separation of information about a given phenomenon from that phenomenon itself and, by implication, a reorganisation of space and power that may or may not help democratisation. A daunting reality is that African elites use the new technology to further consolidate their power, thus thwarting efforts towards attaining democracy (Hyden and Leslie, 2002).

### **Towards De-Westernisation and Zambianisation**

As earlier pointed out, the growth and application of political economy of communication approach has mostly been influenced by the works of Western scholars including Dallas Schiller and Hebert Schiller, Vincent Mosco, Dan Schiller, Robert McChesney, Peter Golding and Janet Wasko from North America and Nicholas Garnham and others from Europe. As a result, Africa has remained intellectually dependent on the West for media studies analytical frameworks (Chuma, 2010). Also implied and in reality, is that the vast body of literature on the subject is based upon data from these dominant regions, with remarkably similar themes that mark them out from most African countries (Downing, 1996). Perhaps even more to the point, the contrasts in the political and economic histories between the imperial powers of colonisers and the underdevelopment of the colonised countries must be considered. For instance, whereas the state in the West tends to surrender to private interests, the state in Africa remains a dominant key player in media ownership and policymaking (Chuma, 2010). Thus Wete (1992) laments that Western approaches to the political economy of communication which focus on convergence and concentration of media ownership are unsuitable for African realities.

In addition to this widely recognised form of convergence, there is another that is most peculiar and which has received very little attention to Western scholars. This type involves the coming together of unrelated businesses with a media organisation as either the core portfolio or just

part of a group of companies. This appears in the form of diversification, with a media institution (newspaper, radio or television station) among a range of businesses in different industries including transport, construction, agriculture etc. owned and controlled by a company.

One of the reasons for the lack of scholarly attention is the different boundary regulations and policies in the communication and media industries. For example, the restrictive regulation in the US, which prohibits such diversification in the communication industry has greatly influenced the articulation and application of the political economy of communication. Additionally, in most countries outside the US, governments have traditionally maintained a monopoly on communication systems (Arsenault and Castells, 2008). The paradox is that most of the intellectual pioneers in the field of political economy of communication, who helped the present generation of communications scholars hail from the US. Their preoccupation, as already indicated, has been on conglomeration and concentration of ownership within the communication industry. Thus, political economy of communication studies have suffered deeply from the Western centred bias. The understanding of the field has been biased by the tendency to analyse media and communication structures of production, distribution and consumption from a Western perspective, anchored by nations with “stable, affluent capitalist democracies” (Downing, 1996: X).

Thus, McQuail’s eclectic assumptions of the approach may, in many instances, not be applicable, especially in most third world countries like Zambia. For one thing, it may be a result of socioeconomic, geopolitical structures or merely a case of global inequality factors. Indeed, one might argue that this is an inevitable result of globalisation, but on the other hand, globalisation itself calls for a deeper focus on the socioeconomic and political differences in space and scope (Ekecrantz, 2011).

The danger in using such a framework as McQuail’s in theorising political economy of communication in Zambia would imply framing questions on some assumptions that may not hold. This indicates the need to construct an African identity for a political economy of communication studies which has so far been articulated with a distinctly Western style and modernity. It appears that simply adopting a western analytical framework might fail to address some atypical issues that come with ownership of the media institutions in countries such as Zambia. This owes to the presumption that the dominant questions and problems facing the

third world may differ from those of the West. By acknowledging this lacuna, it therefore becomes necessary to theoretically extrapolate the interpretation of the political economy to the conceptually marginalised Zambian situation.

In Zambia, as has already been discussed in chapter two, the first newspaper, the *Livingstone Mail* was a part of a group of companies. These open-ended connections of financial partnerships have apparently advanced and matured into business synergies between media and non-media organisations whose powers prevail over the production and distribution of media artefacts constitute some of the questions the political economy must address. Arsenault and Castells (2008) caution that, while the specific roles of each company in facilitating these collaborations may be difficult to document, there is a high probability that these interlocking systems are not without consequence.

From this perspective, these relations are perceived to be strategic uses of power and they link growth in wealth and power of cultural industries to political and business allied interests (McChesney, 2000). McQuail (2010) contends that this is a typical demonstration of political economy in which a media institution within an economic system with close links to the political system.

Hence part of this study's proposition is to de-Westernise (Curran and Park, 2000) political economy of communication in order to align approaches and methods to African political economic and communications systems and adapt it to African realities. This calls for what Thussu (2009: 24) refers to as "decolonisation of thoughts and theory to break free from the hegemony of Western or, more precisely, Anglo-American theorising on media". Thus, the need for this study to go beyond the present domination of the Western conceptualisation of the political economy and draw from the colonial and postcolonial experiences and interpret the Zambian media system within a more responsive and fitting framework.

Considering the foregoing discussion, the study puts forward what may be conceived as the most appropriate theoretical framework for the Third World political economy. As earlier pointed out by many scholars, political economy of communication examines the means of production, distribution and exchange of media products. It may be reasonable therefore to locate this discussion within a context of the nature of the productive environment, resource availability of media systems and politics in Africa. The foundations may be similar, but the

branches and their application may differ. Hence, ‘without throwing the baby out with the water,’ this may not imply a total paradigm shift that alienates those aspects of Western thought that are relevant to the African media and social systems (Chuma, 2010). In summary, the following typology provides a reconstruction that mainstreams the African situation and borrows from relevant models that enhance understanding of local realities.

- State ownership and media concentration
- Limited degree of deregulation (elementary issues regarding media sustainability)
- Limited access to information technologies
- Diversification of media – media institutions existing as part of larger business portfolios among in different industries

Ekecrantz’s classification of the countries in three groups may not exactly mean that all the countries in a specific category are equal. Much as they possess similar general characteristics, their regional and national structures tend to be distinct. The first group for example, consists of Third World countries. However, owing to their different colonial and authoritarian pasts, they tend to have unique national media systems. Curran and Park express this more precisely stating that, “... the nation is still a very important marker of difference. Different nations have different languages, political systems, power structures, cultural traditions, economies, international links, and histories” (2000: 12). They place national at the centre by arguing that media systems are shaped by national regulatory regimes, national audiences and a complex ensemble of social relations that take place in national contexts. For this reason, this study specifically suggests that the debate on political economy in media and communication could inform a more rigorous discussion if located in regional and national contexts such as Zambia in this case.

### **The Public Sphere, Political Economy and Free Press**

The concept of a free press is mainly located within the media debate in relation to fundamental principles of democracy (Gillwald, 1993). It is also based on the general ideal of a communications system as a public space that is open, diverse and accessible, provides the basic yardstick against which political economy of communication measures performance of existing systems and formulates alternatives (Golding and Murdock, 2000: 77). Closely related to the foregoing assertion and indispensable to the concept of a free press is the notion of the

public sphere which is the focus of this section. Generally, the public sphere is an arena where citizens come together to discuss and deliberate on public affairs and eventually form public opinion (Habermas, 1989). The classical liberal theory, according to Curran (1991) describes the public sphere as the space between government and society in which private individuals exercise formal and informal control over the state, through elections and the pressure of public opinion, respectively. The underlying point of this concept is the interconnection and platform of exchange between the governed and the government. However, how does this concept fit in the context of today's Zambian society in relation to advertising and the free press?

This section therefore examines the interactions between political and economic power, and the processes of media production impact of the public sphere. Specifically, it examines economic transformation of the public sphere into newspapers and how they sustain free deliberations. It is on these examinations of the public sphere for newspaper democratic media development that the study focuses by assessing their applicability to Africa, giving particular attention to how the public sphere is congruent with the dynamics of the emerging realities of the press in Zambia.

Jurgen Habermas originally conceived of the bourgeois public sphere as a realm of social life in which “private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state” (1989: 176). For Habermas, the public sphere transcended the barriers of social hierarchy, socially prestigious but politically uninfluential “common human beings” who met at salons and coffee houses to engage in rational-critical debate about issues of “common concern”. Three points qualify Habermas’ conception of the institutional criteria of the public sphere:

- Firstly, the social intercourse was based on equality and parity. It disregarded status altogether. Power, prestige and economic status were suspended. Laws of the market were suspended as were laws of the state. The only basis of authority was a better argument.
- Secondly, discussions problematised areas that until then had not been questioned. These issues of ‘common concern’ were subjected to rational and critical debate.

- Thirdly, the public sphere was established under the principle of inclusiveness. It always understood and found itself immersed within a more inclusive public of all private people, persons who-insofar as they were propertied and educated-as readers, listeners, and spectators could avail themselves via the market of the objects that were subject to discussion. The issues discussed became ‘general’, not merely in their significance, but also in their accessibility: everyone had to be able to participate (Habermas, 1989: 36 - 37).

From this context, the public body is constituted, and private people “confer in an unrestricted fashion-that is, with the guarantee of freedom of assembly and association and the freedom to express and publish their opinions-about matters of general interest”. This represents “a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed” (Habermas, 1974: 59).

However, the Habermas public sphere has since been criticised as a dated concept in many respects (Duvenage, 2007). Different scholars assessed it on different aspects of its wide-ranging arguments. Deane (2005) and Fraser (1990) were sceptical about inclusiveness and equality of the public sphere. Fraser takes a feminist approach and bashes the Habermasian public sphere as illegitimate and masculinist. Deane on the other hand argues for the emergence of a fresh kind of public sphere born from the proliferation, popularity and interactivity of the media and telecommunication systems.

Calhoun (1992) declares as false consensus the notion of agreement in a public sphere. His pessimism is supported by Curran who suggests that the supposed homogeneity of the public sphere is idealistic. Livingstone and Lunt (1994) and Fraser (1990), for example, argue for the existence of multiple or/ and oppositional public sphere. In fact, Kean (2000) distinguishes between micro and macro public spheres. These different contestations about the true nature of the public sphere subsequently melt the argument about public opinion.

However, Habermas’ primary argument in the ‘structural transformation of the public sphere’ was that the literary and political model of the bourgeois public sphere was undermined by economic developments. He contends that the laws of the market that governed the sphere of commodity exchange and of social labour pervaded the public sphere, replacing rational-critical debate with mass consumption and commodification of culture. This shift was fuelled

by the media which Habermas claims have transmogrified it into a pseudo-public sphere and depoliticised it through a preoccupation with consumption of culture.

The debate generated by Habermas gave rise to a normative conception of the contemporary public sphere as a neutral space within society, free from both state and corporate control, in which the media should make available information which is in the interest of the public, and facilitate a free, open and reasoned dialogue that guides direction of society (Curran, 2000). Hence building on Habermas' theoretical argument, a growing body of literature has contended that the primary way that the press can contribute to democratic processes is by facilitating public dialogue within social spaces.

Habermas has acknowledged some of the criticism targeted at his incredibly influential work and has in the process contributed to the conceptual evolution of the public sphere. In his subsequent work, in an attempt to contribute to the discourse of democracy, he firmly institutionalises the public sphere by placing the government, civil service, judiciary, parliament, political parties and elections at the centre (Habermas, 1996; Curran, 2000). Because of this analytical shift, the notion of the public sphere as realm in which private individuals come together as a single public was displaced for the idea that it is "a social phenomenon" and "cannot be conceived as an institution and certainly not as an organisation" (Habermas, 1996: 360). Habermas' meticulous expression is that "the public sphere can best be described as a network for communicating information and points of view (i.e., opinions expressing affirmative or negative attitudes); the streams of communication are, in the process, filtered and synthesised in such a way that they coalesce into bundles of topically specified public opinions" (Habermas, 1996: 360). In effect, this conception of a more differentiated, pluralistic and organised public sphere relies on the intervention and critical independence of the press to mediate the critical-rational debate (Curran, 2000).

### **The Public Sphere and the Press in Zambia**

It is argued that the public sphere has always been an appendage of democratic theory and that the development of the western liberal democracy coincided historically with the emergence of the mass media as the dominant institutions of the public sphere (Dahlgren, 1991). In his exploration of the development of Western newspapers in the early seventeenth century, Habermas notes that inspired by political developments of the time, "the press was for the first time established as a genuinely critical organ of a public engaged in critical political debate"

(Habermas 1989: 60). According to Karl Bücher, the development of newspapers gradually transformed from mere institutions for the publication of news into bearers and leaders of public opinion-weapons of party politics. Later “a new element emerged between the gathering and the publication of news: the editorial staff. But for the newspaper publisher it meant that he changed from a vendor of recent news to a dealer in public opinion” (Habermas, 1974: 53). Habermas notes that through their ongoing commentary and criticism, newspapers assumed an important role and enabled the people to shape the conduct of government by articulating their views. Thereafter the degree of the public sphere’s development was measured by the state of the confrontation between government and press, raising the latter to the status of the principal institutions of the public sphere, thereby confirming the press as ‘the fourth estate’ (Curran, 1991; Habermas, 1989).

In his discussion regarding the distinctions between liberal and radical approaches to the public sphere, Curran (1991) alludes that a basic requirement for a democratic media system should be to represent all significant interests in society. He contends that the media should extend its role from the traditional liberal approach of merely pitting citizens against their government to facilitating intricate systems of representation by exposing intra-organisational process to public scrutiny and the play of public opinion, in the sense of the radical approach. “A central role of the media should be defined as assisting the equitable, negotiation or arbitration of competing interests through democratic processes” (Curran, 1991: 30).

In view of this, the public sphere is a context realm of critical-rational debate which makes media a battleground between contending forces including private citizens, corporate interests, civil society organisations and governments. Curran further argues that these individuals and organised interests seek to influence the allocation of resources and regulate social relations in a capitalist society. Apparently, this approach to the public sphere resonates with Mosco’s (1996) conceptualisation of the political economy in relation to how communication resources are produced and distributed. The application of the political economic analysis in this case assumes that the ownership of the means of production determine structural conflicts and create the conditions in which the interests of society are realised. But Habermas’ initial work on the transformation fails to adequately capture the potential conflicts within the public sphere. Fraser (1990) declares the assumption of perfect neutrality and equality as flawed and misplaced. She argues that “unequally empowered social groups tend to develop unequally valued cultural styles” which ultimately results in “the development of powerful informal

pressures that marginalise the contributions of the subordinated groups in the public sphere” (Fraser, 1990: 64).

In fact, it is highly probable that pressures are augmented, rather than mitigated, by the peculiar political economy of the bourgeois public sphere. In such a public sphere, the press that constitute the material provision for the circulation of views are commercially run and operated for financial gain. Consequently, suppressed segments of the public usually suffer unequal access to the material means of equal participation. The political economy enforces structurally what culture accomplishes informally. (Fraser, 1990: 64 - 65).

In her investigation into the role of the press in the public sphere, Fraser holds that it is not just an endeavour in understanding the health of participatory democracy, but an analysis of the integration of the press into a capitalist economic system. Similarly, Golding and Murdock (1996) stress that capitalists use their economic power in a commercial market system to ensure the information flow is favourable to their interest almost without resistance. In his later work on political communication, Habermas (2006: 418) acknowledges that the power structure of the public sphere has the potential to distort the dynamics of the press and interfere with the normative requirement that “relevant issues, required information, and appropriate contributions be mobilised”. This instrumentalist framework of analysis, as termed by Golding and Murdock, portrays private media as instruments of class domination.

These considerations cast serious doubts about the representativeness of the press. Thus Habermas’ (1989) main thesis of the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere argues that the infiltration of the commercialised press deteriorates the pure nature of rational-rational debate. On the contrary, it has also been argued that this was mostly premised on a society in which the state was sharply differentiated from the privatised market economy, with the state anchored public sphere that excluded ‘private interests (Fraser, 1990). Hence this study theorises a conception of competing public spheres involving state interest and private interests on either side, and facilitated by the state owned and privately-owned press respectively.

### **The Public Sphere and Media Ownership**

As already indicated, some scholars have criticised Habermas’ notion of a homogeneous and unitary public sphere aimed at achieving consensus. Some critics dispute as utopian the idea of a singular public sphere that doesn’t consider the differences among those who participate in it

(Grbeša, 2004; Sturken and Cartwright, 2001). It is argued that the deliberations among citizens or different social groups may not reach consensus, but may introduce diversity of opinions and views (Grbeša, 2004). Furthermore, Liberal theorists argue that the public sphere is more effective if actors recognise that there are different positions that are unlikely to be reconciled (Ferree, *et al.*, 2002). Such views lead to more arguments which suggest the “differently sized, overlapping, and interconnected public sphere” (Kean, 2000: 60), and “oppositional public sphere” (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994: 26). This narrative of multiple and oppositional public spheres points to a phenomenon of a polarised society of citizens with diverse and competing views.

However, the requirements of the press in such a society, according to Curran (1991) should be to represent all significant interests in society. He argues that the press should facilitate the participation of different interests in the public domain, enable them to contribute to public debate so as to have an input in the framing of public policy. However, this may not always be the case as representation in the press may be aligned with the “fragmented... mass of competing interest groups” (Fraser, 1990: 59) which usually work in tension with each other (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001).

It is argued that the segmentation of readers is not only influenced according to consumption capacities and demographics (Dahlgren, 1991), but also depends on editorial orientations of newspapers. This implies that media logic becomes targeted at different groups according to a complex process of commercial rationality that tends to follow media polarisation. This polarisation is presumably determined by political, economic and editorial positions of newspapers and tends to intensify towards and during election periods.

Studies on the Zambia media landscape have revealed that for many years in history to date, the press have been polarised along political affiliation, mostly determined by ownership patterns (Banda 2004; Chirwa, 1996; Kasoma, 1986). Thus, in an attempt to locate the conceptualisation of the public sphere as an analytical framework for the print media in Zambia, the study uses ownership patterns as a point of departure. This entails going beyond Habermas’ and other public sphere scholars’ analyses and examining how newspaper ownership constructs and segments different categories of public spheres in Zambia. In fact, the two newspapers, *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* which are the focus of this study have

been the key players in this tug of war as they appear to have been caught up in “ideological crossfire” (Curran, 1991: 37).

Part of the interest of this study is whether, through their editorial policies and respective readerships, the two newspapers have divided the Zambian society and created ‘competing’, and ‘oppositional’ public spheres or not. Participation thereof occurs through citizen’s involvement in their different capacities as news sources, readers and journalists and many more. By partaking of the morning paper, it is argued that citizens step into the public sphere in modern society (Gillwald, 1993).

It has been established that *The Post*, as a private newspaper has over the years been committed to its watchdog role of providing checks and balances to the government of the day. On the other hand, the *Zambia Daily Mail*, a public newspaper, is assumed to operate in the interest of the public, but to the contrary. Scholars (Chirwa, 1997; Makungu, 2004) have argued that it has mostly been used as a tool of state propaganda. What is even more confusing in the Zambian context is the blurred difference between state and public media. It appears the terms are used interchangeably, and the notion of state media/public is equated with nation building and national unity owing to the political and economic circumstances of the country’s history (Banda, 2007; Chirambo, 2011). Within this complex set up, the *Zambia Daily Mail* has a history of being the oldest existing newspapers owned by the post-colonial Zambia government and has since been funded by the state or the public. As such, it has been observed to be mostly performing the nationalist functions of the state in relation to the public service journalism model (Banda, 2007).

Banda (2007) further argues that this essentialist insistence on ‘nation building’ has in many African countries worked against freedom of expression, diversity and difference. He suggests that this approach to a uniformity of media functions has also generally resulted in intolerance on the part of authorities. This is in line with Stuart Hall’s (1980) remarks of this approach as supportive of the dominant economic and political institutions and process, and of existing structures of capitalist relations. Against this set up, the press is viewed as ideological apparatus of the state and therefore become agencies of class control and are subject to ideological hegemony (Curran, 1991). Owing to the arguments relating to the commercial media’s contribution to the decline of the public sphere, the same argument above can be used for *The Post*, that, to sustain itself as an anti-government privately owned newspaper, it may align itself

with elitist private interests and opposition party voices. Garnham (1991) argues that commercialisation politicises public information and erode the democratic function of the press. However, it is still safe to say that *The Post* seems to have, in many past situations, been representing an opposition coalition of subordinate interests with common ground seeking alternative ways of challenging the social order.

Therefore, by dismissing the homogeneity or monolithic and exclusive existence of either types of the public spheres, the conception of oppositional or competing public spheres is motivated. Some scholars such as Dahlgren (1995) argue that the existence of oppositional public spheres offers critical alternatives and balanced representation which is good for democracy. It is argued that a society in which the public spheres anchored, on one side by the state press, and the private press on the other, provide a healthy and balanced representation of ideas. This interpretation implies that the competing (alternative) public sphere is supervising and criticising the functions of the state sphere using Jeremy Bentham's notion of "publicity distrustful surveillance", in the sense that the press scrutinises government activities and exposes them to citizens (Haas, 2004: 181). In fact, most liberal scholars such as Ogbondah (1997) contend that a free press is an indispensable institution of democratic society. With specific reference to Africa, Ogbondah indicates that the press "should be free in order to perform its watchdog function, making government transparent, answerable and accountable for its actions or lack of them. The press should be free to provide the necessary checks on the branches of government, which no other democratic institution can, and thus be able to investigate and report the misconduct, corruption, illicit spoils, embezzlement, bribery, inefficiency and lack of accountability that have characterised post-independence African governments" (1997: 291).

On the other hand, Picard (2008) suggests that the press must not only be free from government interference. He further argues that private interests must also be checked, investigated and exposed as they are also predisposed undemocratic vices. Curran (1991) very precisely states that what the state can do even private interests can. Organised private interests through advertising can also impact the freedom of the press. Thus, the state has also placed necessary mechanisms to oversee the activities of the sphere of the private media and organised private interests. The result of this dialectical and antagonistically constituted relationship is a balanced, representative and accountable public sphere. Such a society is in the pure spirit of Habermas' conceptualisation of the public sphere, and allows for the formation of a "general

will as the form of a debate in which competing particular interests are given equal consideration” (Calhoun, 1992: 54). Since Curran (1991) dismisses as naïve the view that the press can be reformed to perform a neutral role in society, the resultant public sphere, constituting two main different spaces (Dahlgren, 2005), represent the different voices which may not necessarily reach consensus, but may agree to disagree, thereby creating unity in diversity.

This argument is well fitting with Curran’s (1991) framework of the free market liberal and the collectivist-statist approaches of organising the media in society. Curran stresses that one central deficiency of the market approach is that it produces an unrepresentative media system and restricts market entry to powerful capitalist interests. In Zambia, the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers would fit into the collectivist and market approaches, respectively. Drawing from the European experience, Curran further identifies four alternative models of combining market and collectivist approaches in a synthesis that incorporates the strengths of both;

- Centrally controlled market economy: Its underlying rationale is that the terms of and rules by which competition is conducted should be centrally determined according to the public interest. Free-market competition is tempered in a number of ways.
- Mandated market economy: Both airtime and the use of publicly owned production facilities, with technical staff, are allocated to different groups on the basis of the size of their membership defined by the sale of their programme guides.
- Regulated market economy: the market should be reformed so that it functions in practice in the way it is supposed to in theory. It lowers barriers to market entry by providing cheap loans to under-resourced groups enabling them to launch new papers if they come up with a viable project.
- Public, civic and market sectors: entails having a major, publicly owned sector committed to public-service goals, including the provision of mixed quality programmes and politically balanced reporting.

However, the main proposition of this study articulates the ‘public, civic and market sectors’ as the best approach for the Zambian media system. It takes the form of a regulated mixed economy which entails having a major publicly owned sector committed to public service goals, and a regulated market sector. The different forms of ownership and control are expected to widen the ideological range and cultural diversity of the system by formulating appropriate policies and agencies for helping establish and finance new media institutions (Curran, 1991).

Contrary to Curran’s argument, emphasis should be made, however, that the goal of this thesis is not to suggest a public sphere where the press is purely autonomous to both the state and the market. At the very least, the press should represent the full range of political and economic interests, and provide the fora through which the respective spheres should engage and influence public opinion.

Also, what needs to be factored into the equation is how the power structures of the respective spheres may influence the deliberations and formulation of public opinion. The constitutive elements of these power structures may be characterised by the credibility, economic strength and readership of the newspapers. The assumption is that the more powerful newspaper creates a stronger sphere which is subsequently influential in forming public opinion. However, the continued pursuit for economic power and commercialisation of the press allows the dominance of advertising to undermine editorial content, thereby turning readers into consumers (Gillwald, 1993; Habermas, 1989). It seems paradoxical that the predisposition to economic power/ stability widens the barriers to access and participation. Yet many public sphere scholars agree that the degree to which the press takes centre stage of the public sphere by providing broad representation to the citizenry and remains accessible to all, serves as a key barometer of democracy within a polity (Gillwald, 1993). Advertising is the centre of this power. Private newspapers especially need advertising to be sustainable and make themselves accessible to all. Rooted in Habermas thesis of the transformation of the public sphere is the impression that advertising and a democratic society are a contradiction, by arguing that advertising led to the decline of the bourgeois public sphere. Critical theorists charge that advertising obscures the real issues of society and erodes the critical abilities of citizens to think and act as politically and socially conscious individuals (Sandikci, 2004). However, considering that advertising seems to also be the main propelling power for the sustainability of the press, then it is very prudent to rethink the role of advertising as something more than a hegemonic tool of the capitalist ideology. Hence this chapter’s proposition for advertising to

undertake the role that reconciles private and public interests, whilst at the same time sustaining an economically health sphere for critical rational discourse. For the press, striking the balance between private and public interests tends to be problematic. According to Sparks (1991), the struggle relates to how a newspaper provides content to different segments of its readers. For Sparks, content determines the profile and size of readers which subsequently determines the type of advertiser a newspaper attracts.

Thus far, the appropriation of the concept of the public sphere resonates with the general indications of previous research on the press in Zambia, especially since the beginning of the Third Republic. However, assumptions and questions about the current state of the press are still equivocal. Is the practice of the press as it is described in theory? To what extent is the assumption that the public sphere can be supplanted by economic and political power in which private interests make deals with each other and the state true for Zambia?

The main challenge for Zambia, however, partly lies in the large numbers of people who, for different reasons including poverty, do not have access to the media, (Banda, 2004). This consequently creates a gap which implies that other citizens are not equal in their ability to participate in the public sphere. In this case, developing a formal media policy on media development to capture and ensure the participation of underprivileged citizens may be the way to go.

The role attributed to the press in the public sphere has implications in relation to its freedom and the power politics between the competing spheres. A well-functioning public sphere thus presupposes freedoms of speech and assembly, a free press, and the right to freely participate in political debate and decision-making. Drawing from Curran's gloomy acknowledgment that it is naïve to expect that the press can be reformed to perform a neutral role in society, it may be too optimistic to expect a free and neutral press, especially in Zambia. More significantly, this chapter argues for a healthy balance between the two competing spheres inspired by a private press on one side and the state press on the other to create a pluralist and democratic environment.

## **Conclusions**

In summary, this chapter stresses that political economic conditions are central to the sustainability of a free press. Therefore, the political economy approach provides an

appropriate framework to understand the relations between media institutions, and political and economic systems and how these shape the media system. In the case of Zambia, the chapter offers a Third World approach to discussing the political economy and newspaper sustainability. It emphasises that advertising and other political-economic factors affect editorial autonomy and relates them to ownership patterns and the impact they would have on sustaining a free press. Zambianising the political economy as an analytical framework provides the opportunity to examine historical developments; ownership patterns and concentration and their impact on the development of the free press. It allows for an in-depth investigation into the management and sustainability strategies of two differently owned newspapers – the *Zambia Daily Mail* (state) and *The Post* (private). The political economy provides an opportunity to establish if the two newspapers have upheld their editorial integrity through political and economic changes in the Third Republic.

It must be stated, however, that while this thesis adapts the political economy approach to local realities, the Zambian media system is in transition. This implies that much as the current state shows incongruence with Western political and economic trends, the situation may change. For this reason, the next chapter analyses the Zambian media system from a transitional perspective.

## CHAPTER 5: THE ZAMBIAN MEDIA IN TRANSITION: PRESS FREEDOM IN THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXTS

### **Introduction**

As has already been discussed, the history of the print media in Zambia dates back to the early 1900s. Chapter Two examined the different records of contemporary newspapers, including the *Zambia Daily Mail*, as regards their respective performances in the shadow of evolving political and economic factors in the different republics. This chapter however, focuses on the press in the Third Republic. Again, previous chapters have discussed the political economic environment in the early 1990s and how that impacted the press. What has been interesting in assessing the literature reviewed in this study has been the amount of influence the state and capital have had on both state-controlled and privately-owned newspapers. But there were degrees of influence. The revelation in the literature on the development of the *Zambia Daily Mail* points to the dominance of the state in its operations, whereas the scanty literature on *The Post* indicates state control resistance, opposition and independence.

This chapter explores the ways in which ownership and commercialisation has influenced the sustainability of a free press in Zambia. It narrows the discourse to the liberalisation and capitalisation of newspapers and their implications on editorial autonomy. To determine this, the chapter discusses the ownership and management structures, capital structures and editorial and professional challenges and how they impact on press freedom. The place of advertising in management structures of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* is critically examined against editorial considerations. In so doing, a searching evaluation of the business models for managing the newspapers is undertaken. The study tests the viability of a free press with and/or without other business strategies. It presents and discusses empirical evidence on the influence of advertising and other revenue streams on editorial autonomy in Zambia. In addition, the chapter investigates the influence of liberalisation and commercial strategies of the two newspapers.

This chapter reaffirms the argument made in the previous chapter that despite the generally perceived worldwide trends in political economy of communication, the state in Zambia continues to be key in shaping the media industry in the country.

## **Method**

It is assumed that by maintaining ownership of the major mass media, the state largely determines the cost of editorial inputs, regulating the media in a manner that impacts on their economic sustainability. This chapter invokes a range of historical literature to illustrate how political change and specifically, market and liberalisation, have impacted on professionalism and the ability of journalists to practice independently.

Essentially, the chapter employs a *transitological* approach, based on a *literature review*, and uses *in-depth interviews*. Historical records including the state presidents' speeches at the opening of parliament, Hansard (verbatim reporting of debates in parliament), media articles and organisational documents were also reviewed in developing a trend and rhetoric that could explain how the press and journalists have responded to political transformation and the influence of market forces in the Third Republic. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both current and former editors of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post Newspaper*; representatives of the Zambia Union of Journalists (ZUJ) and the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) using three open-ended questionnaires. Follow-up interviews were also conducted using Facebook or Skype in order to consolidate and integrate the findings with theoretical concepts. The respondents were chosen based on leadership positions and institutional memory.

## **Objectives of the chapter**

- To explore the impact of liberalisation and commercialisation on the sustainability of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Post Newspapers*
- To examine how political transition has affected the sustainability of a free press.
- To explore the influence of ownership and commercialisation on the working conditions of journalists in the state media.
- To examine independence of newspapers and the changing relations between ownership, capital and the state during the Third Republic.
- To explore the role of ownership and commercial strategies of newspapers in addressing press freedom in private and state-owned newspapers.

Press freedom has been understood to be one of the prominent principles in Zambia's democratic transitioning through three distinct phases of political and economic development: The First, Second and Third Republics. The democratisation process through these phases has

been affected by different policies with different implications for press freedom, development and sustainability.

Even against the common assumptions that privately owned newspapers are freer than the government owned, Chapter Three has established that newspapers in the First and Second Republics were editorially aligned with the interests of proprietors. However, this situation was not unique to Zambia, but common in most African countries. The trend remains the same in the Third Republic, but it remains to be established how ownership patterns in the face of the changing liberalised environment may have influenced the sustainability of a free press. This chapter, therefore, examines the strategic relations between political and economic elites and other political economic issues that influence the sustainability of a free press.

The underlying objective of this chapter is to situate the concept of press freedom with the African setting. It reflects on O'Neil's (1998) caution to approach the discourse on press freedom with great care and avoid assuming that Western models and assumptions can be grafted into the African context. This implies that the understanding and meaning of press freedom in Africa, and the Zambian context in particular, may be different.

### **Conceptualising the Politics of Media Transition**

The problem of political and media transition is of considerable theoretical and practical significance for states undergoing change. The discussion in Chapter Five interrogates the political economy communication framework used by Western scholars, and argues that it does not address the realities of the Zambian media and communication landscape. It advances the notion that third world countries such as Zambia should break away from the Western conceptualisation of the political economy of communication. Perhaps it should be stressed that the Zambian media system is in transition. The concept of transition is obviously not straight forward, and needs to be framed within set contexts to be relevant in a discussion of the political economy of communication. Specifically, this study applies this concept to how the political transition in Zambia has influenced the transition in the media system towards achieving and sustaining press freedom.

Conceptually, the transition paradigm is linked to politics as an approach used for studying shifts from dictatorial to democratic regimes and has since been dubbed as *transitology* (Sparks, 2008; Levitsky and Way, 2010). What is basically referred to as transition is the

interval between one political regime and another (O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986). Different scholars have attempted to establish the driving force behind *transition to democracy*. The O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986) model contends that the primary reason for the initiation of a transition is the schism between the opposition elites and the authoritarian power-holders. Przeworski (1992) stresses that sometimes transitions respond to internal factors, thereby resulting in splits within the regime and defections to the opposition. Accordingly, transitions take a process of negotiation between the two groups. Mainwaring (1989) adds that the early stages are shaped by complex interactions involving an intermediate category determined by the relative powers of the negotiating parties. However, Wnuk-Lipinski and Fuchs (2006) explicitly attribute the driving force behind to the search for liberty. Logically, the opposition elite desire to break free from the authoritarian regime to form a more liberal political environment.

However, transitions from authoritarian rule can be highly uncertain phenomena that can have a number of outcomes: democracy, renewed authoritarianism, or some combination of both (Levitsky and Way, 2010: 4). Implicitly, the transition process may take a meandering route (as evidenced by some countries) through which other countries reach democratic outcomes and others stagnate.

Many scholars working in this tradition generally agree with Easton's (1965) model which prescribes that the transition process needs to undergo the liberalisation to transition to consolidation/persistence to democracy. Yet some seem to have different views on the question of modalities related to the legacies and prospects of democratic consolidation. Huntington (1991) believes that transitions take place in circumstances which are different from one country to another. He, therefore, argues that historical structures and political, economic and social legacies of particular states, among others, determine the outcome of a transition and consequently affect democratic consolidation. "Less violent transition provides a better basis for consolidating democracy than do conflict and violence," (Huntington, 1991: 276).

On the contrary, Adam Przeworski (1992: 105), one of the important political science theorists, does not find a strong historical connection between modality of transition and democratic consolidation in the emerging regime. He categorises transition into three phases by suggesting that a transition to democracy is complete when: firstly, there is a real possibility of partisan alternation in office; secondly, reversible policy changes can result from alternation in office;

and thirdly, effective civilian control has been established over the military. Huntington, Przeworski, Mainwaring and other scholars' conceptual elaborations of the 'transition to democracy', 'transition from authoritarian rule' or 'democratic consolidation' and related trends in global politics are mostly located in South America and European contexts. Scholars have observed variations in the modalities of transition from country to country. The discriminate plotting of cases leaves transitology in African countries such as Zambia with very thin empirical detail. It therefore is doubtful that the conceptualisation of transition thus far can be applied to the understanding of Zambian politics.

In Zambia, political and economic transformation has occurred before<sup>10</sup> and after the famous 1991 experience and has been characterised by changes in economic reforms and political leadership. In relation to the Zambian context, this study therefore specifically conceives transition as not only the process of regime change from communist/ authoritarian rule to democratic politics, but change from one president to another. The fundamental assumption is that different types of political process are marked by changes in ruling parties; political leadership such as the presidency; and other political and economic reforms are integrated into the discussion. Integrating the political and economic process, which most works on transition do not strongly relate with, is key to understanding the circumstance that determine the transition process. Munck (1994) clearly admits that debate on the role of economic factors in transitology has not crystalised. Serious analysis is hindered "because the linkage between economic and political aspects of transitions has been formulated in quite different manners" (Munck, 1994: 365). Whether short or long term, it can be assumed that economic factors at play are likely to influence democratic transition. Using the political economy approach, processes of democratic transition are integrated into the analysis (Roland, 2002). With a deeper focus on the early 1990s, the chapter uses the political economy approach to trace the impact of economic crises on the terms of the transition and nature of new political process. The economic conditions on the bargaining power and interests of incumbents and oppositions are also explored. The study therefore works on the general assumption that as a component principle of democracy and a driving force to transition as embedded in the notion of liberty, press freedom would be achieved with the realisation of a democratic society.

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<sup>10</sup> Mostly during the independence period in the 1960s as well as during the change from First to Second Republic in the early 1970s.

### **The Political Economy of the Media in Transition: The run-up-to 1991**

The economic history of Zambia has shown that the country had “a fairly prosperous colonial economy with a well-established private sector in an open, market oriented economy, dominated mainly by expatriate business interests, multinational corporations and commercial farmers” (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997: 5). However, at the heart of the economy has always been the copper industry, which was under the control of two large mining groups: the Anglo-American Corporation and Roan Selection Trust. State participation in the economy at the time was limited to very few activities, such as the provision of railways, electricity, water and other social services (Fundanga and Mwaba, 1997).

After independence in 1964, the state’s involvement in the economy started increasing and it was backed by the Mulungushi Declaration<sup>11</sup> in 1968 which marked a change towards a more restrictive policy environment with a heavy role for the state in national development. Ultimately, the government directly took control over many parts of the manufacturing sector, agricultural marketing and the mining sector. The takeover spread to almost all sectors of the economy, to the degree that it became referred to as ‘state capitalism’ (Turok, 1980). As such, a mixed economy was established in the country in which ownership of enterprises was shared, with the state running 472 companies while 85 were privately owned. Zambia Industrial and Mining Corporation (ZIMCO) accounted for 11 enterprises whereas four (4) were owned by other agencies (Craig, 1999). In relation to the Marxian conception of power, it appears that the legitimacy of the Zambian state was formally tied to its ability to control the means of economic production. In addition, scholars argue that many African state structures enforce their hegemony and legitimacy by reproducing relations of dependence organised on the basis of ownership and control of public enterprises (Evans, 1995; Nellis, 1986). In this manner, the state in Zambia could respond to the political and economic pressures to direct the allocation of resources and opportunities. Ultimately, this implied that political objectives were also pursued through state enterprise.

The poor performance of parastatals in the late 1970s stimulated discussions about the possibilities of selling some of them to private individuals. In an attempt to improve their performance, the 1977 Special Parliamentary Select Committee was set up and it explicitly

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<sup>11</sup> Mulungushi Reforms of April 1968: the government declared its intention to acquire equity holdings (usually 51% or more) in a number of key foreign-owned firms, to be controlled by a parastatal conglomerate named the Industrial Development Corporation (INDECO).

recommended that poorly performing parastatals be offered to private enterprise (National Assembly of Zambia, 1977: 8). Among the recommendations was for the state to open enterprises in industries of a strategic nature where private investors could not venture to open due to initial high costs of production in relation to profit. This was followed by the appointment of a private sector management committee, and later, in 1988, the National Assembly passed legislation which allowed the president to turn over any state enterprise to self-management as a step towards changing the ownership structure of state enterprises.

However, the economic situation became worse in the late 1980s and mounting pressure from local and international communities forced the UNIP government to abolish one-party politics and adopt multipartism in 1987. Government inability to effectively handle the economy resulted in a loss in legitimacy and calls for the development of an opposition party (Taylor, 2007: 59). Student bodies such as the University of Zambia Students' Union (UNZASU) were a perennial annoyance of the government, refusing to allow UNIP activities on campus and demonstrating against the government's economic and foreign policies (Bratton, 1992). Civil society, whose core was the labour movement under the Zambia Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU), was the most affected by the failing economy. As such ZCTU was frustrated with the reluctance of the government to engage in collective bargaining on labour issues or take adequate steps to reverse the country's economic decline (Bratton, 1992). The timing for the preceding event is in tangent with Przeworski's argument that deterioration in living conditions resulting from the economic crisis, and need to improve economic performance constitute the driving force for transitions.

During this period, economic complexity fluctuated and the government sought assistance from international financial institutions (IFIs). As such, it adopted Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), but this move further increased economic complexity and reduced government legitimacy (Taylor, 2007) as austerity measures and conditions from SAPs led to fiscal inflation and the removal of food subsidies. This negatively impacted on the Zambian citizens resulting in food riots in the country's urban areas.

The frustrations led to ZCTU campaigning for the restoration of multiparty politics (Bratton, 1992). Pressure eventually succeeded with President Kaunda announcing his intentions to hold a national referendum on democratic pluralism. This move was welcomed by the formation of a National Interim Committee for Multiparty Democracy formed in July 1990. The committee

which drew together the various organised interests in civil society was chaired by former finance minister Arthur Wina; his deputies were Frederick Chiluba (in charge of organisation and operations) and former foreign minister Vernon Mwaanga (responsible for publicity). Many other “opponents to a one-party state, including trade unionists, businessmen, church leaders, students and former politicians” constituted the membership of what became known as the Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) (MMD Manifesto, 1991).

Henceforth, the main concern of the newly formed opposition force was to make demands for greater governmental accountability. The parties were preoccupied with bargaining over constitutional and electoral rules leading to the elections which were set for October 31, 1991. The MMD “promised to completely revamp the state controlled economy and won an overwhelming victory” (Bräutigam, Rakner, and Taylor 2002: 529). It is the steps taken to revamp the economy and how they influence the media system which interest this study.

As a result of these activities, the transition process reached a critical juncture. This period also marked the birth of *The Post* Newspapers, founded by a group of individuals from different backgrounds including politicians, journalists, businessmen and civil society officials. It is believed that *The Post* greatly contributed to the transition to democracy. Generally, the contribution of the press to the transition cannot be over emphasised. The church owned *National Mirror* kept on challenging the government over public order laws (Chirwa, 1997). The opposition appeared to be receiving the support of even the government run *Times of Zambia*, whereas the *Daily Express* regularly covered them to the extent of even offering objective criticisms to UNIP (Chirwa, 1997). Indeed, the emergence of an independent press was one of the healthiest signs that plural politics had taken root again in Zambian society. Therefore, to a greater extent, the legal and political hegemony of a single ruling party was, at least for the moment, replaced by a plurality of competing political ideas and institutions (Bratton, 1992).

Of major interest to this study is the sustainability of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. The two newspapers have had different trajectories which predispose them to variant influences of the political economic environment in the Third Republic. As has already been indicated, founded as *African Mail* in the 1950s and renamed to *Zambian Mail* later in 1965, the paper has experienced different political regimes including the period which has generally been referred to as the transition from communism to liberal democracy. This is the

period in which *The Post* was born, stimulating questions related to the paper's influence on the transition. Thus, this chapter implores the transitology framework to account for current developments and complexities in the political economy of the press in the Third Republic. In an interview, Herbert Macha, former Director for the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia Chapter, points out that it was obvious that the plurality of competing political ideas and the MMD government promises of democracy, economic liberalisation and press freedom motivated many Zambians into the newspaper environment, during which close to 100 publications were registered (Macha, personal communication, 11 December, 2013). These early years of transition can be summarised not too inaccurately as an attempt to create newspapers like the *New York Times*. However, Henry Kabwe, former MISA Zambia President, observes that owing to economic reasons and survival purposes, what emerged were private newspapers that were highly partisan in their orientation and the state-owned press continued to be closely aligned with the state rather than the public (Kabwe, personal communication, 4 November, 2014).

### **1991 and Beyond: Negotiated Privatisation and Press Freedom**

From 1991 when the MMD came into power, they came on the platform that they were going to reform the media and also to free the government owned media. That way it was envisioned that they were going to provide competition, and when there is competition, they were going to raise the standard of journalism in the country, that has not happened. Successive governments have followed that trend (Chifuwe, personal communication, 10 December, 2013).

Zambia has been experiencing political and economic transformation through different regimes of the First, Second and now Third Republic. Popular democratic ideology suggests that the 1991 general elections were a symbol to genuine regime change. It became the first English-speaking country in Africa to complete such a transition peacefully, mostly owing to President Kaunda's genuine, although reluctant, acceptance of the demands made by the opposition (Bratton, 1992). As such, 1991 was the hallmark of the real transition from communism toward liberal democracy. The 1991 MMD Manifesto pledged to govern on democratic principles and to “pursue private-sector-led, rational, market-oriented policies in production, trade and investment within the context of managed liberalisation and sensitive social policy” (MMD Manifesto, 1991).

However, as shown earlier, the UNIP government had already adopted these liberal principles upon realising that the economy was in a free-falling course. Hence, even if the MMD government was central to the design and implementation of the privatisation programme after 1991, it was initially conceived and introduced onto the Zambian agenda by President Kaunda, as stated in the 1989 Economic and Policy Framework that partial privatisation would "... facilitate a phase out of non-viable parastatal operations, and encourage joint ventures with private sector" (Government of Zambia, 1989: n/d). Therefore, privatisation was not completely novel to Zambian politics when the MMD adopted it as part of the 1991 Manifesto in its economic liberalisation promises. The MMD government made the area of economic reform appear to be the highlight of the country's Third Republic, and privatisation the cornerstone of the strategy. Nevertheless, after some considerable ground work with a number of steering and technical committees, in July 1992, the MMD government amended the Privatisation Act; a legal framework which provided for the establishment of the Zambian Privatisation Agency (ZPA) with the mandate to oversee the transfer of parastatals to private enterprise. However, Rakner (2003) observes that the privatisation process did not gain momentum until after 1995. Attempts to implement liberalisation policies led to removing restrictions of foreign exchange, imports, exports and price controls. Several other laws were passed to consolidate the liberalisation process. However, none of these directly impacted on the newspaper business. Eddie Mupeso, former director general of ZNBC and editor-in-chief of the *National Mirror*, recalls that the cost of newsprint, ink and other printing equipment remained high. He attributed this to the lack of local newsprint manufacturing and high duty on printing resources (Mupeso, personal communication, 13 December, 2013).

It is argued that what was prevailing was a result of the UNIP political and economic policies whose effects spiralled into the Third Republic. However, Rakner (2003) recounts that despite the foundations that were laid for shifting from a state oriented to a market based economy, the MMD government's commitment to economic reform waned during succeeding years. Generally, the MMD government inherited a range of non-performing, loss making parastatals most of which were listed on the list of companies to be privatised. The major companies included copper mines such as Zambia Consolidated Copper Mine (ZCCM) in the mining sector; Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO), Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO), Zambia State Insurance Company (ZISC) and the Post and Telecommunications Corporation. At the time, the state had monopoly in these services. In the media industry, the state monopolised the broadcasting sector with Zambia National

Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) Television channel and three radio channels; ZNBC Radio one, two and four. The government also ran the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* newspapers whereas *The Weekly Post* was the only privately-owned newspaper on the market. Out of the media institutions in the framework of state ownership, the only company to be included on the list of enterprises to be privatised was ZNBC. Apparently, the manifesto did not explicitly state that state media enterprises would be privatised. What the manifesto promised was that state-owned media would “serve as vehicles to promote national unity, reconstruction, development and international cooperation” (MMD Manifesto, 1991). The debate on the privatisation of the media was stimulated by political rhetoric by different government officials at different occasions. It was the pronouncements by different government officials that created impressions and raised the hopes of the public that all state owned media would be privatised.

For example, in August 1992, the then MMD Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Dipak Patel, resounded government’s readiness to liberalise the information sector and declared that ending the state monopoly in broadcasting was a matter of priority by removing laws which banned the private sector from owning radio and television stations<sup>12</sup>. In October of the same year, President Frederick Chiluba reinforced the rhetoric on privatisation promises by restating government’s intention to sell the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail*<sup>13</sup>. Later in the same month, Dipak Patel again indicated that the process of privatising state owned media had begun<sup>14</sup>.

The MMD government still had nothing to show for all its promises when the following year, in 1993, Vice-President Levy Mwanawasa caused a sensation by announcing that it would not sell any of the state-owned media institutions<sup>15</sup>. Mwanawasa appeared to have been a privatisation skeptic as he was also opposed to the sale of Zambia National Commercial Bank and ZCCM. Two explanations can be drawn from the contradictions on government’s stand and Mwanawasa’s statements on privatisation. Firstly, as is mostly the case for many countries,

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<sup>12</sup> Times Reporter, Media Up for Sale – Minister, October 3, 1992, *Times of Zambia*.

<sup>13</sup> Staff Reporter, Government to Sell state owned media, November 1992, *Profit Magazine*: Statement by President Chiluba during the a press awards presentation ceremony at the Savoy Hotel in Ndola on 25 October 1992.

<sup>14</sup> Times Reporter, Media Up for Sale – Minister, 3 October 1992, *Times of Zambia*: Speech delivered at a journalism seminar themed: Democracy and the Media.

there could have been uncertainties about the gains from privatisation (Roland, 2002). Secondly, Mwanawasa could have been merely indicating the truth which other politicians were unable to state. He feared that if government surrendered its newspapers to private interests, they would collapse due to lack of proper management. Mwanawasa's stance is perhaps justified by the fact that out of the 46 newly registered newspapers between 1990 and 1993, less than 10 were printed and less than five (5) were still surviving by the end of the year (1993). It appears the economic environment was not strong enough to support the newspaper business. Nevertheless, this sent mixed signals about the fate of the media, as far as privatisation was concerned. If it was the government's deliberate strategy to buy time using hot air promises, it appeared to have been working because by 1994, no legislation had been passed for privatisation of media institutions.

During the state of the nation address in 1994, President Chiluba repeated government's commitment to liberalise the media. In the usual optimistic tone, the president assured the media fraternity and nation that plans were underway to privatise state owned media (National Assembly of Zambia, 1994). In a vote of thanks to the president's address, opposition Member of Parliament, Patrick Mvunga observed that the process of privatising the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* was too slow, thereby defeating the purpose of attaining a free press (National Assembly of Zambia, 1994). Later in August, the same year, Kelly Walubita, who was minister of information, said the government was still committed to delink itself from the media in order to create an environment of a free press. Similar sentiments were repeated three months later by Minister of Finance, Ronald Penza, who indicated that the government had plans to relinquish government shares in the newspapers (Chirwa, 1997).

Apart from Mwanawasa, another direct adversary to the privatisation of the media was Vernon Mwaanga. In February 1995, during debates in parliament, Mwaanga argued that private media were behaving irresponsibly and that government should not sell the media because they were important for propagating national issues. Two months later, in May, Eric Silwamba, who was deputy minister of information said that government had finally decided to sell the two papers, after recapitalising them<sup>16</sup>. Many other statements on the subject were made by different politicians till the end of the first five-year term of the MMD government.

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<sup>16</sup> Times Reporter, State to Privatis Papers – Minister, 1 May 1995, *Times of Zambia*.

Henry Kabwe, who was editor at the *Monitor* during this period observed that towards the run-up to the 1996 elections, believed that most of the government rhetoric in support of privatisation was part of the campaign strategy (Kabwe, personal communication, 4 November 2014). In its 1996 Manifesto, the MMD pledged to continue the privatisation programme to ensure its completion by the end of 1998. For the mass media, again the Manifesto did not explicitly state that it intended to sell state owned media, but promised to facilitate more privately-owned media (MMD Manifesto, 1996).

Before and after the 1996 general election period, international monitoring agencies and other civil society organisations reported serious irregularities in the electoral process (FODEP, 2003). The alleged irregularities included harassment of the press, NGOs, and interest groups and poor management of the voter registration process, disfranchising many eligible voters from participating in the elections. The overwhelming evidence of widespread vote rigging and other forms of electoral fraud in the 1996 elections led to the elections results being challenged in the Courts (FODEP, 2003). As a result, there were substantial cuts in donor support and the economy showed signs of decline.

However, in order to redeem its democratic credibility, one of the first important moves was to discard the drafted media bill that required all media institutions to be registered with the state.

By the beginning of the second term, neither the *Zambia Daily Mail* nor the *Times of Zambia* was listed for privatisation in the Zambia Privatisation Agency report. In fact, ZNBC was dropped from the list (Zambia Development Agency, 2010). The situation raised suspicion concerning government's intentions with the newspapers. It also showed that the whole privatisation programme was designed to overcome political economic constraints to transition (Biais and Perotti, 1998; Roland, 2002). The government put many state owned companies which were thought to reap positive benefits from privatisation top on the list. In this divestiture sequencing plan, the first tranche consisted small companies with no major complications and which could be sold easily (Kaunga, n/d). The rationale was that these companies would yield high rewards and justify the programme. In line with the MMD manifesto, Roland (2002) believes that liberalising the small private sector is often a popular early measure that provides a supply response in emerging markets. Drawing on the normative political economy of reforms, clearly, the MMD government's selective approach portrayed its monopoly of powers

to design and sequence the privatisation programme. The government carefully set the agenda according to which firms should be sold first and which ones would be last. The sequencing logic requires that less risky firms are privatised first. It was envisioned that such firms would keep redundancies at a reasonable level and new investment would eventually lead to employment creation and higher wages. The rationale was to portray a successful version of the programme and consequently create political support and goodwill for further privatisation and other reforms (Roland, 2002). On the other hand, low on the list were firms, which if privatised would induce high unemployment levels with little investment by new owners and a negative impact on the economy. Thus, big companies such as ZNBC, Zambia Housing Development Fund Limited, Zambia Airways Limited and some mining companies were in the last tranche. A few other big companies including ZCCM, Indeni Petroleum Refinery, Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation, Posts and Telecommunications Corporation and Zambia Railways were on the list, but their privatisation plan was yet to be determined. Indeed, big companies such as Zambian Breweries and Chilanga Cement were in the second tranche for reasons that they were less complicated and their success would greatly boost the programme. The companies in the last tranche were not just big; they were strategic companies offering social services deeply embedded in public interest, and this complicated the government's decision to privatise them.

By the end of the privatisation programme in 1998, many strategic companies, including the three media institutions, were still state owned. The fact that to date ZNBC has not been privatised, even if it was on the list, demonstrates the MMD government's political expediency and monopoly of power in the design. Uncertainty was too high. In such cases, questions usually included whether, according to Mwanawasa's argument, the media would survive in private hands; would the companies continue fulfilling their responsibilities of providing social services; and whether the media would align with opposition parties.

Furthermore, the Patriotic Front government unrelentingly sustained the rhetoric as the Vice President Guy Scott in 2011 told Parliament that government would soon offload 45 percent shares in the state-owned media institutions to the public to further strengthen the independence that the media is enjoying (Kuyela, 2011). To date, none of these media institutions have been privatised.

Generally African states have maintained ownership and control utility companies such as those that provide public necessity like water, electricity, natural gas, and telephone and communication because they believe it is the responsibility of the government to safeguard and provide such services to its citizens (Bayliss and Hall, 2000). Likewise, the Regional Director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa, Zoe Titus believes that it is the mandate of the state to manage the broadcast and telecommunication. She argues public media in a developing, transitional state have a special role to play in delivering developmental outcomes “...because there is money invested in them, and they are powerful; because communication and information is very powerful. Therefore, such resources as ZNBC should not be privatised,” (Titus, personal communication, 3 November 2014).

Despite the recurrent pronouncements by different officials regarding the government’s plan to privatise, Banda (2006) observes that commercialisation happened to be the preferred option for state media institutions. The 2013 - 2015 *Zambia Daily Mail* strategic plan states that the company planned to restructure and recapitalise. The state promised to inject capital for revitalising normal operations and *Zambia Daily Mail* would raise funds through advertising, printing and other revenue streams.

### **Media Reforms and Press Freedom in Zambia: An Illusion?**

While MMD had tried to liberalise the media in Zambia by freeing the airwaves and allowing private players, the economic and legal environment remains restrictive. From 1991 through the different governments, the operating environment shows no signs of improvement with regular reports of media freedom violations, mostly targeted at private media<sup>17</sup>.

By prevaricating, President Chiluba’s government provided the illusion of a free press. Efforts to change media landscape were initiated by the MMD government under the late President Chiluba in the early 1990s. Liberalisation of the media (especially broadcasting industry) became a top priority, stimulated by market reforms. Since liberalisation entails an attempt to achieve pluralism of views and ideas, the MMD enacted the ZNBC (Licensing) Regulations Act of 1987, which facilitated the proliferation of private media houses.

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<sup>17</sup> The Post has been the most victimised in a number of well documented lawsuits against the state. Further, there have been attempts by the Zambia government to shut down ‘undesired’ websites.

In spite of this effort, a lack of political will at the time, the MMD government failed to put in place laws that would stimulate independence of state owned media, facilitate the establishment of independent regulatory body and allow enactment of for access of information. Makungu (2004) notes that it was during the Mwanawasa ‘new deal’ administration<sup>18</sup> from 2001 to 2008 that a number of progressive legislations including the ZNBC Act of 2002<sup>19</sup> and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) of 2002 were enacted<sup>20</sup>. Similarly, the Committee on Information and Broadcasting, upon assessing the state of press freedom in Zambia in 2006 recommended that, government urgently implement the IBA Act and ZNBC Act in full; and that the government should reconsider its position on privatising state run press institutions. However, the Freedom of Information Bill was put on hold in order to assess national security implications (Chirambo, 2011).

Another progressive development was the establishment of the Media Council of Zambia (MECOZ)<sup>21</sup> in 2002. This was however over taken by the Zambia Media Council established in 2012. A positive aspect of the new pieces of legislation at that time was that they would facilitate the putting in place of governing boards that would be independent of government interference. The two laws had provisions providing for the establishment of an ad hoc committee which would recommend individuals that would sit on the IBA and ZNBC boards. Previously such appointments were done solely by the Minister of Information.

Unfortunately, this position was reversed in 2010 following some legal battles between the government and media fraternity on interpretation of the said provision.<sup>22</sup> The current position is that the power of deciding who sits on the ZNBC and IBA boards still lies in the minister and subject to ratification by parliament. Therefore, the extent to which media operate independently was now subject to the prevailing political will.

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<sup>18</sup> In 2001 President Chiluba’s term in office ended and he was succeeded by Levy Mwanawasa as MMD president who emerged victorious in the 2001 general elections to form the new government.

<sup>19</sup> (Makungu, 2004:65) Government amended the ZNBC Act to remove the regulatory functions from the minister and transferred to the IBA, instead of repealing, as proposed by the media community in the Broadcasting Act. Government in respect, refused to transform ZNBC from a state-controlled broadcaster, to a public service, that was independent and professionally run a positive move, at least for a start.

<sup>20</sup> Makungu (2004:65) It provides for the creation of an independent body to oversee the issuing of licenses to people intending to enter into broadcasting, as well as regulating broadcasting in Zambia. It is also supposed to provide legal guidelines for the issuance of licenses.

<sup>21</sup> A voluntary self-regulatory body for journalists where the public could forward their complaints and grievances against the media.

<sup>22</sup> Section 4 was amended by the ZNBC Amendment Act No. 16 of 2010 and the words “on recommendation of the appointments committee” were deleted.

The above amendments and failure by the government to remove provisions hindering press freedom in various statutes has affected levels of media freedom in Zambia. This was further exacerbated by the fact that the boards for ZNBC and IBA were only put in place in 2014 under the Patriotic Front Government, notwithstanding the legal framework put in place in 2002.

Further, public broadcasters like the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation continue to face challenges in operating independently notwithstanding that the law required that they provide balance and fair coverage as a public broadcaster<sup>23</sup>. According to Mweene-Chanda (2011: 15), during the pre-election era for example, media like the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) abandoned their status as public media and instead danced to the tune of the powers that be. This led to the relationship between the media and opposition parties like the Patriotic Front (PF), to deteriorate to an extent that journalists from ZNBC were once barred from covering the opposition in favour of private media (Mweene-Chanda, 2011).

As regards the Freedom of Information Bill, the evasive rhetoric continued in the Micheal Sata administration which, like the Chiluba reign, formed government on a platform of superficial promises to promote a free press. For example, in February 2013 the government established the Task Force as per their promises in the previous year that was meant to review the draft Freedom of Information Law (FOI). The said Freedom of Information Bill was expected to be tabled at the next sitting of parliament. The Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Kennedy Sakeni further announced that government was working hard to ensure that all pieces of legislation pertaining to media reforms were concluded by June in the same year, which never happened (Phiri, 2013). Early in 2014, the chairperson of the parliamentary committee on Information and Broadcasting Services, Kabinga Mpande proclaimed that his committee would take necessary steps to ensure that government tabled the Access to Information (ATI) Bill before parliament by April 2014:

I can assure you that the Committee on Information and Broadcasting Services is determined to have the ATI bill enacted by early next month. Not only is the

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<sup>23</sup> LAZ President Musa Mwenya in 2012 threatened that the association would consider pursuing legal options including public interest proceedings if ZNBC did not stop what he termed unbalanced news coverage in support government in power. Further in 2014 an opposition party the United Party for National Development sought an injunction in the courts of law to compel ZNBC to provide balanced coverage.

committee determined to push for the enactment of ATI, but other media laws that will enable the media to operate freely. We are pushing for the private media to operate freely and independently from political interests and ownership. We also wish for the public media to be free from government propaganda so that they can be true public broadcasters<sup>24</sup>.

Year in, year out, the government has continued to talk the talk, but failed to walk the walk. To this effect, MISA Zambia Chapter chairperson Nalumino Nalumino expressed worry that the access to information bill was becoming a promissory note that may never be enacted (Phiri, 2013). In fact, as already shown through the past years, media transition and reforms have taken a zigzag course. The Freedom House press freedom index illustrates the trail of how press freedom ratings for Zambia have been oscillating between free, partly free and not free.

In general, it can therefore be argued that in developing and transition countries such as Zambia, media reforms have been taking place within diverse political economic contexts which government control of information is fashionable. For example, the Zambian 1996 Media Policy document clearly indicates government's thinking and intention to manipulate the flow of information. The policy states that the role of the media is specific to "the provision of information to the public on all government programmes and achievements" (Zambia, 1996: 15). Thus, Phiri (2010) argues that the state sees itself as the primary source of information, confining the media to channels, thereby relegating the public to a degenerative role of mere receivers. Arguments relating to the need for control of communication infrastructure and information reaching citizens in many African states are diverse and varied. They mostly draw from the development paradigm and the need for the media to partner with governments in achieving national goals. Thus, Titus indicates that the government in Zambia would like to control people by controlling the flow of information:

The way to control people is by controlling the information that they get, by so doing, you control what they talk about... It is about controlling and steering things in a certain direction. If you control the flow of information, you set the agenda.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.misa.org/misa-chapters/malawi/item/2730-zambia-parliamentary-committee-to-push-for-tabling-of-ati-bill-by-april-2014>. Accessed on 11 March 2015.

That is why the ruling government will not easily relinquish (Titus, personal communication, 3 November 2014).

The three major media institutions remain state owned. However, the government promised to turn them into properly managed public organisations by restructuring and introducing mechanisms of appointing boards of directors, such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority. Henceforth, government rhetoric ensued into unfulfilled promises to introduce or re-table the Freedom of Information Bill in parliament at an “appropriate time” (National Assembly of Zambia, 2006). It appears the state determines the appropriateness of this time. In the meantime, repression persists, indicating that media freedom in Zambia is still not what it should be. Thus, some scholars argue that many African state structures enforce their hegemony and legitimacy by reproducing relations of dependence organised on the basis of ownership and control of public enterprises (Meillassoux, 1981; Wolpe, 1972). In this manner, the state in Zambia has been manipulating the political and economic environment by the way it allocates resources and opportunities and influences public opinion by using legal and economic mechanism to control the press. Ultimately, this implies that political objectives were also pursued through state enterprise.

### **The newspaper business in Zambia: Industry Conditions**

The newspaper market is in a very precarious state. Newspapers are started without sufficient capitalisation; without printing equipment or money for printing; a fairly adequate complement of staff. Most papers start in the hope that they will be able to generate sufficient advertising to support their newspaper. But as it turns out, our markets are very limited to generate enough advertising (Sakala, personal communication, 9 December 2013).

The performance of the Zambian media markets have greatly been influenced by their scale and history. The newspaper scene has now about four dailies including the state-owned *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia* and privately owned *The Post* and the *Daily Nation*. However, it must be noted that despite the four publications being the dominant ones on the market, there are still other smaller bi-weekly, weekly and monthly publications such as the *Monitor & Digest*, *Guardian Weekly*, *New Nation*, *New Vision*, *Mining Mirror* and *National Mirror*. Most

of these publications do not seem to have a specific market that they aim at, but the general public at large.

### **Poor Distribution Networks**

Generally, these newspapers are not only advertising-financed, but also rely on cover price<sup>25</sup>. Yet again, contrary to the western countries' subscription distribution style, sales in Zambia tend to be street based, with very low office and home deliveries. Street vendors rove along traffic heavy spots to attract readers. Thus, Ingrid Kunda, the General Manager for Marketing and Advertising at *The Post* complains that the outcome of such distribution strategies is usually weak cash flows (Personal communication, 10 December 2013).

Again, unlike well organised Western markets in which mass distribution is a common feature, Zambia has no single company to actively distribute newspapers. In the 1980s and 1990s, there existed a company called Newspapers Distributors Limited, but did not survive the economic recession (Kanene, personal communication, 5 November 2014). Later in the 1990s Akine Distributors Limited graced the market. Banda (2004) writes that Akine was set up to serve as a distribution conduit or network largely for the South-African based National News Distributors range of magazines including *Drum*, *Fair Lady*, *Woman's Value*, among others. A few Zambian newspapers and magazines also benefitted from Akine's distribution services, and accordingly the period experienced an increase in sales (Banda, 2004). This indicates the significant effect of a good newspaper distribution system on the sales. It is especially important for new entrants without a strong capital base to establish their own networks (Kanene, personal communication, 5 November 2014). Like small newspapers, big newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* and *The Post* which have their own distribution vehicles use passenger buses to reach far flung districts. In places like Shang'ombo, in the Western Province of the country, people buy 'last week's' newspapers due to late delivery (Kanene, personal communication, 5 November 2014). Currently, there is no option of engaging another company to distribute newspapers.

Nonetheless, almost all the dailies have a national distribution reach, with the largest in the capital, Lusaka. The Africa Media Ventures and OSISA 2008 Needs Assessment Report on

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<sup>25</sup> Cover price changes regularly. In the last ten years, *The Post* has changed three times: from K3 in 2003 to K4 in December 2014 and K5 in January, and K10 in October 2015. The *Daily Mail* has changed from K3 in 2000 to K5 in 2015.

newspaper market feasibility indicates that the challenges that face the various publications in terms of market share are mostly to do with institutional capacity and under capitalisation (Africa Media Ventures, 2008). Overall, the newspaper industry, including printers, reporters, advertising salespeople and other personnel, roughly employs about 1000 people. The staff establishments in each newspaper vary according to size of organisation. For example, *Zambia Daily Mail* and *Times of Zambia* have more staff, whereas *The Post* has a relatively larger establishment than the *Daily Nation*.

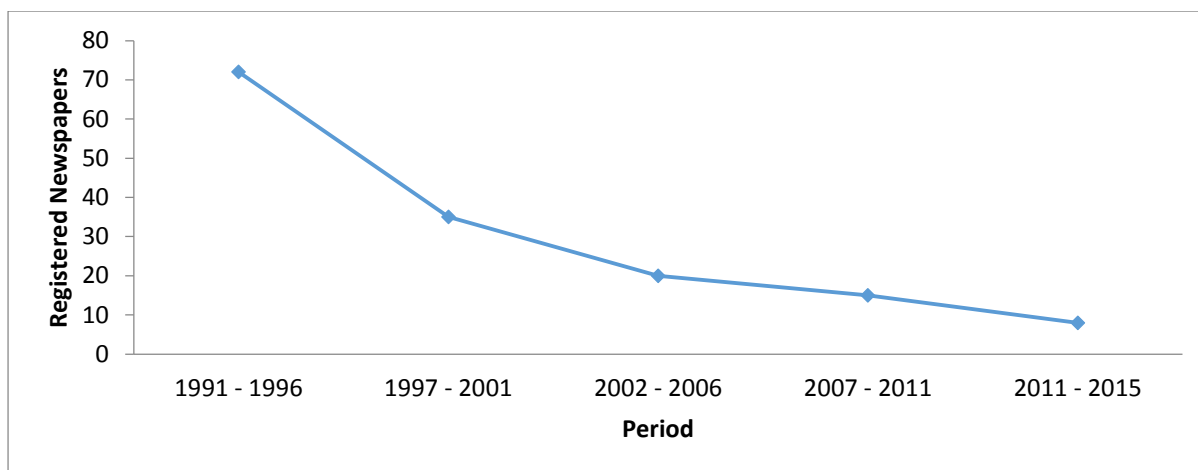
### **Unstable Economy**

Chapter two suggests a strong correlation between the newspaper industry and the national economy. From the appearance of the first newspaper, the existence, density and success of newspapers was determined by the country's economic performance. This owes to the fact that newspaper advertising expenditures depend more strongly on economic development. In a country like Zambia where newspapers are an important advertising medium, studies (Shaver and Shaver, 2005) indicate that gross domestic product (GDP) determines advertising spending. What is yet to be strongly established, however, is the proportion of GDP spent on advertising.

This study therefore demonstrates that from the beginning of the Third Republic, trends in economic fluctuations have affected the survival and sustainability of newspapers. For example, optimism of economic prosperity because of liberalisation inspired the establishment of about 72 newspapers between 1991 and 1996. The country showed cosmetic signs of improvement in its political and economic environment resulting in an increasing manufacturing industry<sup>26</sup> thereby creating a demand for advertising. However, due to many factors, including unstable economy and lack of sustainable capital by owners, very few survived the MMD's first term.

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<sup>26</sup> Zambia (1999), *Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility Policy Framework Paper, 1999-2001*. <http://www.imf.org/external/np/pfp/1999/zambia/>. Accessed on 15 February 2015.



**Figure 2: Trends in newspaper registration in Zambia: Compiled by author**

Oliver Kanene, a veteran Journalist attributes the struggles to run a newspaper to the country’s weak economic base and the negative effects of privatisation which reduced the newspaper market. The effects of privatisation can be understood to have been twofold: First, privatisation led to inefficiencies and sometimes closure of some companies. The country lost its industrial base. This lack of corporate wealth and absence of new enterprises according to Banda (2004) crippled the parastatal sector and affected advertising revenue for the press. “The advertising revenue that would ordinarily come from state companies dwindled with privatisation. The private sector was taking such a long time developing that there was little advertising revenue accruing from them,” (Banda, 2004: 49).

Secondly, privatisation forced many companies to declare redundancies, thereby laying-off thousands of Zambians which led to job losses which in turn led to a deterioration of people’s living conditions and reduced purchasing power. “People had to make hard decisions such as whether to buy a copy of a newspaper or a loaf of bread from their meagre earnings” (Kanene, personal communication, 5 November 2014). As a result, newspapers market conditions were negatively affected and sales reduced drastically.

### **High Cost of Production**

Most of the newspaper production material such as ink and newsprint are imported from other countries such as South Africa. In the 1990s, the press in Zambia only had one printing press – the government printers. In fact, the first National Information and Media Policy which was published in 1996 identified the high cost of newsprint and equipment as major hindrances to the growth of newspapers and a deterrent to new investment in the sector. Value Added Tax

(VAT) on newsprint, printing ink, chemicals, films, plates and other requisites attracts a 17.5 percent VAT rate. As Richard Sakala points out in an interview, because the media is a very equipment intensive business which requires a lot of capital, incentives should be made available to lower the cost of producing media products since they serve a democratic role in society (Personal communication, 9 December 2013). In fact, the government has waived duty on most imported public service goods, but not newsprint. It is therefore not surprising that the failure rate for newspapers is very high because most of them are suffocated by the high cost of imported newsprint and machinery. It is against such a gloomy environment that Godfrey Malama advocates a moratorium on taxes to enable new entrants to be sustainable businesses before they can start paying duty (Personal communication, 16 December 2013).

This is shown in the figure above which demonstrates that since then, the number of newspapers registered and competing on the market has dwindled. The media policy document attributes this to the economics of scale which led to newspapers pricing themselves beyond the reach of most Zambians. In fact, since the last increase to K3 in 2003, the cover price for *The Post* has increased twice: K4 in December, 2014 to K5 in January, 2015. Kunda discloses that the production cost has doubled since 2003. However, only those as financially strong as *The Post* and indeed state-owned newspapers survived. This evident drift toward monopoly has raised questions and provoked concerns over the presence of independent editorial voices. Economically, it invokes important questions about what capital structures can mandate a monopoly and how these big newspaper firms behave adjust to structural and market conditions to sustain themselves. A common trend, however, has been the rise of newspaper activity during election years, indicating not only a need for information, but the tendency by politicians to want to influence public opinion by funding newspapers to communicate their messages<sup>27</sup>.

In the early 2000s the government had set up a Media Trust Fund to help build the financial capacity of struggling newspapers. Unfortunately, due to management problems the Fund closed before it could achieve any realistic goals. The range of problems presented by the existing market conditions is perhaps, partly, a result of dysfunctional markets in media services in the country. For instance, the lack of circulations bureaus to verify and provide

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<sup>27</sup> Some newspapers as *The Rainbow* newspaper usually appear during election periods and fade off afterwards.

advertising markets with reliable data about readership trends; lack of market research; lack of a coordinated printing procurement network and; lack of a newspaper distribution network.

Chapter four has explored the effects of liberalisation and commercialisation on the sustainability of the press in Zambia. However, these economic factors may have affected state and private newspapers differently. The *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* may share a number of characteristics, but have deeply rooted historical differences and obvious parallels in their political and economic developments, particularly in the fact that they are state and privately owned, respectively. Thus the next section takes a dynamic approach which firstly focuses on a specific newspaper institution and aspects connected to its business activities; then proceed to the industry level which explores the a newspaper's interaction with other media organisations; and finally focus on the market level and investigate the operations of the entire Zambia media systems and its inter-industry relations.

## **The influence of liberalisation on newspaper capital in Zambia**

### **The Zambia Daily Mail**

For decades, the newspaper business in Zambia has been dominated by the state. The *Zambia Daily Mail*, published by Zambia Daily Mail Limited (ZDML) is one of the two state owned dailies. Initially founded in the 1950s as the *African Mail*, the forerunner to the *Central African Mail*, the names later changed to *Zambia Mail* after independence in 1964, and was acquired by the government in 1965. The newspaper became a daily publication in 1970 and the name changed to *Zambia Daily Mail* (commonly referred to as the *Daily Mail*). It has since undergone different political transitions and numerous organisational management changes.

### **Management and Capitalisation**

Due to its ownership structure, the *Zambia Daily Mail* has always been known to be closer to the state. Kasoma (1986) reveals that it received more government support than its counterpart, the *Times of Zambia* which developed more as a UNIP organ of propaganda.

As the study launches a discussion of management and capitalisation of newspapers, it is important to first outline the management structure and business portfolio of the ZDML. According to the 2013 – 2015 Strategic Plan, the Board is the overall decision-making body that formulates policy and acts on behalf of the shareholder, i.e. government. The Board comprises eight members appointed from different disciplines or professions plus the

Managing Director. In 2013, the board of directors amended the position of Managing Editor to Managing Director. This meant the newspapers were not only going to focus on the editorial side of business, but would be managed on general business principles. This also implied that henceforth, the company would not limit the qualifications of persons to be appointed as Managing Director to only those with editorial credentials.

The strategic plan also outlines a management structure with six main divisions. However, the three of these namely: Finance, Human Resource and Commercial are primarily significant to the organisation's sustainability.



**Figure 3: Organisation structure of ZDML. Source: 2013 -2015 Strategic Plan**

Furthermore, focus is given to the commercial division which is headed by the Commercial Director (reporting to the Managing Director) and comprised of Marketing and Advertising Department and the Circulation Department. The Editorial Division is headed by the Deputy Managing Director and comprising the *Sunday Mail*, sub editors and different editorial desks including news, political, business, features, and sports.

The Board has three sub-committees, namely, the Finance and Administration, Audit and Risk, Commercial and Business Development and Editorial Committee. These are headed by different Chairpersons who are members of the Board. Again, of major interest to this chapter among these is the Commercial and Business Development and Editorial Committee. At the

time of the study, the Zambia Daily Mail Limited staff establishment had 226 workers distributed around the country in its various business portfolios. Its main offices are located in the Zambian capital Lusaka, but has bureaux in different districts of the country. The *Daily Mail's* range of business includes:

- Newspaper publishing and distribution
- Advertising
- Printing of commercial stationery, calendars, and industrial labels
- Courier services

With the 2013 UN Human Development index report showing six percent annual economic growth rate registered since 2011. In Zambia, it is to be expected that the *Daily Mail* and the newspaper industry as whole would be operating favourably and growing in relation to the economy. Yet contrary to the economic report, ZDML's Strategic Plan (2013-2015) reveals that the newspaper has been experiencing financial sustainability problems as a result of government interference and the harsh realities in the newspaper market. In its SWOT analysis, the company identifies lack of credibility as one of its major challenges due to unwillingness by government to allow the newspapers to operate professionally and carry out media law reforms.

Government would mostly justify its interference through its proprietary authority as the source of any financial bailout during the newspaper's struggles. Over the years, the company has been financially-stumbling in debt, at every point owing banks or suppliers huge amounts. For example, it is documented that it owes Finance Bank Zambia a substantial sum of money borrowed for purchase of state-of-the-art printing equipment<sup>28</sup>. In 2004, it owed one of its previous South African suppliers of newsprint, Van De Ghinste Exports Ltd a sum of US\$327,000, whilst also owing its locally based newsprint supplier a total of US\$29,000. It currently owes another South African supplier of newsprint a sum of US\$40,000. Among other creditors are the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) to which it owes about K35 million in

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<sup>28</sup> Mulenga Evans (2014). Mahtani Holding Title Deeds to State Newspapers, August 25, 2014, *Zambia Reports*. Finance Bank Chairman Rajan Mahtani allegedly holds the title deeds to both the Times of Zambia and the Zambia Daily Mail, as collateral on loans from Finance Bank. The *Zambia Daily Mail* took out a loan with Finance Bank to purchase the computer used for the plate printing machine, and the Times of Zambia to pay salaries of its workers.

unremitted Pay-As-You-Earn (PAYE) and Value Added Tax (VAT); National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) – K15 million in unremitted workers’ pension contributions; the Zambia Telecommunications Company (ZAMTEL) – K20 million in unsettled telephone bills; Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) – K 32 million in unsettled electricity bills. Management attributes much of the company’s financial problems to this historical debt. The other major financial liability, according to management’s view, is the unnecessarily bloated staff establishment which allegedly utilises about 70 percent of the company’s revenue in wages (Chipampe, Personal communication, 9 December 2013). Zambia Union of Journalists (ZUJ) general secretary Angela Chishimba validates the gravity of this problem by declaring that state-owned media are in “intensive care” adding that, “if Government does not move quickly to save them, they will close down” (Mwila, 2015). It appears that this amount of debt would cripple any newspaper, but as Banda (2004: 1) puts it, “the state takes care of its own”, and indeed for both ideo-nationalistic and partisan interests, the government regularly subsidises the operations of the newspaper.

The interdependence between the government and the *Daily Mail* results in a complex state-media relationship based upon capital structures and management factors. On one hand, the newspaper needs to maintain investment, economic growth based on sound corporate governance, yet on the other hand even if the government claims to agree with the company’s business ethic, it continues to interfere by influencing the appointment and most times directly appointing directors and other staff, and rent seeking with the board of directors. Significantly, since 1991, the *Daily Mail* has had ten managing editors, most of them dismissed or retired and replaced during their tenure, some according to Chipampe (2013) were a result of political interference.

However, in 1998, the government declared that ZDML would run as an independent public entity with commercial objectives which will sustain its operations<sup>29</sup>. To this effect, the government decided to recapitalise the company by injecting about US\$ 40,000 to revive its normal operations. As a public company, the newspaper has an annual allocation from the national budget. However, the company financial report shows inconsistencies in the disbursement of funds. Management disclosed that as general elections approached,

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<sup>29</sup> 1998 Ministerial Statement by the Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS).

government would mostly try to bail out the newspaper<sup>30</sup>. As such, the objective for funding the paper is to intensify political coverage of the ruling party. Isaac Chipampe, former Managing Director, points out that historical debt has always been a thorn in the newspaper's financial muscle. Other than diverting the funds to campaigns, Mr Chipampe disclosed that the newspaper's books of account are burdened by the backlog of pensioners, bank loans and tax credits. "What we got from government ended up in the bottomless pit of the debt the company has been carrying along (Chipampe, Personal communication, 9 December 2013). However, the puzzle remains whether the government causes the *Daily Mail* more problems than it actually saves it by periodical financial injections.

Various business strategies can be undertaken, depending on the challenges a media organisation is facing. Thus, comprehensive market research is required. Generally, this requires scanning the market, identifying a competitive advantage and developing a corporate strategy. This would determine how a media institution scientifically understands the dynamics governing the market and use them to its advantage. However, it appears the *Daily Mail* has never undertaken any form of market research to establish its corporate image and market share. On the other hand, in addition to the management challenges discussed in the previous section, the 2013-2015 strategic plan identified the following weaknesses:

- Weak financial base – undercapitalised and loss making
- Lack of nationwide coverage of news
- Rented accommodation in regional offices
- Poor distribution of newspaper
- Poor state of buildings and operational equipment (e.g. vehicles)
- Lack of reliable database on readership
- Low level of productivity

As a way of addressing these weaknesses, Board strategised to run the newspapers based on sound corporate practices in order to transform it into a financially strong and profit-making business. To achieve this, Oliver Kanene, who chairs the Board of sub-committee on *Commercial and Business Development and Editorial* notes that one of the first things the Board resolved was to be strong enough to withstand the negative pressure from government.

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<sup>30</sup> Alvin Chiinga (2015), *Jobs plan on*, January 8, 2015, Zambia Daily Mail. For example, towards the January, 20 2015, presidential by-elections, the Secretary to the Treasury Fredson Yamba announced that the government give the state owned media a total of K12.5 million for recapitalisation.

What is noteworthy is the appointment of Bryson Mumba, former Director of Finance to Managing Director. This confirms the strategy that Board's focus is on the money. However, questions could arise regarding whether this is a compromise to the editorial side of the newspaper. The company has also outlined areas of strategic focus, mostly comprising its commercial strategies as follows:

- Printing capacity: To acquire additional equipment by December 2013 in order to enhance the printing capacity
- Nationwide news coverage: To achieve nationwide news coverage by December 2014
- Nationwide circulation: To achieve nationwide circulation by December 2014
- Research and Development: To establish a Research and Business Development unit by December 2013
- Recapitalisation: To increase the share capital by at least KR297.5 million
- Organisational-Institutional Development: To develop key organisational policies by December 2013
- Corporate image: To enhance the corporate image of the ZDML by December 2013
- Diversification of product range: To diversify into other commercial activities by December 2013
- Financial Viability: To turn the ZDML into a financially viable entity by December 2014

The time frame for the strategic objectives was set for 2013 and 2014, however, it is unclear whether they have been met or not.

### **The Post Newspapers Limited**

Unlike the *Daily Mail* whose history dates back into the pre-independence period, *The Post* is a Third Republic found publication. It set out as an investigative newspaper in 1990 in the wake of the re-emergence of multiparty politics in Zambia. Matsauso Phiri, a media consultant conceived the idea of setting up a tabloid which would counteract perceived government political propaganda and fill the gap in information during the 1991 multiparty campaign. Upon consulting with two other journalists John Mukela and Michael Hall, the *Weekly Post* was born. The three then approached Fred M'membe, an accountant at KPMG the international auditing firm that was based in Lusaka to bring in his business knowledge. M'membe volunteered to

assist by drawing up the business plan, thereby becoming the fourth co-founder of the project. M'membe's role was to make the tabloid financially sound.

The four formed a management team with Michael Hall as Managing Editor, Fred Mmembe as Managing Director, Matsauso Phiri was the Special Projects Editor and acted as Deputy Manager. With a list of businessmen including Anderson Mazoka, Theo Bull, Simon Zucas, Enock Kavindele, Bodwin Nkumbula and Author Wina injecting investment funds into the company, *The Post* managed to raise its start-up capital to about US\$25,000 (Mwinga, 2011). Thereafter, Post Newspapers Limited was registered as a private company and on 26 July 1991, the *Weekly Post* commenced (Banda, 2004). It was in November 1993, when the tabloid was renamed *The Post* and began publishing twice-weekly on Tuesdays and Fridays. Later, on 23 October 1995, it became a daily.

### Management and Editorial Policy

In its current shareholding structure, Post Newspapers Limited has four individual and two institutional shareholders. Fred M'membe, who is the Chief Executive Officer, is the majority shareholder. It had a three-member board of directors. Other than the three directors, the General Manager Finance and the Managing Editor sit in the board meetings.



**Figure 4: Organisation structure of Post Newspapers Ltd. Constructed by author**

Banda (2004) describes *The Post's* management style from the proprietor's perspective. According to M'membe, *The Post* has a dualistic management approach comprising the corporate approach and the NGO-type approach. In resonance with its mission statement, the paper's management style is participative (Post Newspapers, 1991).<sup>31</sup> The corporate approach is strictly business focused and motivated by profit maximisation, whereas the NGO-type encourages staff participation in engaging with wide societal debates about press freedom, freedom of expression and human rights. Thus, within the structures of *The Post* management is the Press Freedom Committee currently headed by the Senior General Manager and Ombudsman, Sheik Chifuwe. The dual management strategy gave *The Post* a competitive edge against newspapers such as the *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia*. Engagement and participation with society was an incentive for creativity amongst the staff to produce marketable content.

*The Post* has, however, not been immune to the poor market conditions and the economic instability which have over the years rocked the sustainability of newspapers in the country. As a private newspaper aggressively performing the watchdog role, government and some companies in the private sector have refused to advertise in the paper because it was perceived to be anti-government. Traditionally, the newspaper survived on newspaper sales, and for a long time enjoyed the lions' share of the market, it (Post newspaper) being the most widely circulated publication (between 25,000 and 30,000) in the 1990s. Its cash flow suffered whenever sales went down, in the process affecting employee payroll schedules. In 2008, government moved in to try and compel the institution to pay its huge tax liabilities and remittances to the National Pension Scheme. Debts accumulated and currently owes some banks, including a sum of K26 million to the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) in tax liabilities. One of the debts Post Newspapers continues to live with is the highly publicised K14 billion it owes the Development Bank of Zambia (DBZ) that has had the paper seeking the courts' intervention to delay payment, while the interest rate has pushed the capital owed currently to stand at over K30 billion. Hence, besides strengthening its advertising tactics, the company also started employing different business strategies to sustain its commercial base.

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<sup>31</sup> Post Newspapers (1991), *Mission Statement*, February 1991.

### **Towards Commercial Sustainability: Strategic Responses**

Despite what seemed to be progressive strides in liberalising the media in Zambia, it is very evident that the financial struggles of newspapers, resulting from the prohibitive market conditions discussed earlier, continues to retard the development of the press. Nevertheless, various business strategies can be and have been undertaken depending on the challenges a newspaper organisation is facing. Strategic management literature instructs that first step of determining a company's strategic direction is to undertake a comprehensive scientific market research (Kotler, 2011). Generally, this requires scanning the market, identifying a competitive advantage and developing a corporate strategy. This would determine how a newspaper company scientifically understands the dynamics governing the market and use them to its advantage. However, there appears to be no record showing that neither *The Post* nor the *Daily Mail* have ever undertaken any form of market research to establish their respective corporate image and market share.

Nevertheless, to scrutinise the strategic behaviour of the two newspapers systematically, the study draws from strategic management principles to explore management structures and behaviour to understand the patterns and determinants of diversification strategies in the media industry.

### **Diversification Strategies and Portfolio Analysis**

The newspapers' responses to market conditions and liberalisation continue to profoundly transform the media industry by building strategic alliances and greenfield ventures in other industries, in the process creating national oligopolists conglomerates. It will be seen by the two newspapers' responses that diversification seems to be the most preferred strategic tool in the industry. In their work, *Diversification through Acquisition*, Salter and Weinhold (1979) suggest three related models for corporate diversification strategies:

- The Product/market-portfolio model: emphasises the attractiveness of the target market in terms of attributes such as market size, growth rate, and profitability.
- The Strategy Model: stresses the interrelationship between the core-business market and the target market.
- The Risk/return Model: derives mainly from financial theories and reflects the concern and interest of investors.

The type diversification strategy a company may adopt depends on its specificity within a particular industry (Chan-Olmsted and Chang 2003; Chatterjee and Wernerfelt, 1991). However, this study adopts a different strategy called the resource based view (RBV), which like the strategy model, emphasises relatedness. The RBV is employed in this case focused study in order to help “provide more insight into explaining the differential performance between individual media firms or various clusters of media firms” (Chan-Olmsted, 2006: 165). The RBV approach stresses the critical value of internal resources of a company and its capabilities to manage them (Wernerfelt, 1984). According to Hitt *et al.* (2001), RBV follows a process of identifying and assessing a company’s resources and capabilities; locating an attractive industry in which the company’s resources and capabilities can be exploited and; finally selecting a strategy that best exploits the company’s resources and capabilities in relation to opportunities in that industry. Proponents of the RBV approach emphasise relatedness and resources alignment as attributes of diversification strategies that influence performance (McGahan and Porter, 1997). As such, a company’s strategic choices are usually determined by an organisation’s mission statement and vision and what Chatterjee and Wernerfelt (1991) describe as the *specificity with a particular industry*. What must therefore be taken into consideration in this study is that newspaper organisations and their products are quite different from the typical focus of many diversification studies, which mostly examine manufacturing and service firms. Newspapers are “subject to the cultural preferences and existing communication infrastructure of each geographic market/country and are often subject to more regulatory control from the host market because of how pervasive their impact is on individual societies” (Chan-Olmsted, 2006: 173).

Thus, in relation to the main reasons for diversification, which according to Andrade *at el.* (2001), are reinforcing market power, responding to financial or managerial goals, and obtaining some efficiency gains, the newspapers made strategic choices.

### **Capital, Advertising and Circulation**

After undertaking systematic analyses using the SWOT and PASTEL models, ZDML allocated a K91, 500,000 recapitalisation investment funds as part of the strategy to turn the company into a financially viable entity.

However, a typical first reaction of newspapers, when faced with financial problems, has often been to increase circulation and advertising. Thus, in an attempt to respond to financial

challenges, the ZDML strategy was to begin with increasing news coverage and circulation to the entire national market. This, however, had been one of the major challenges the company had faced for a long period. Historically, readership and circulation problems started when the government assumed ownership of the paper, subsequently making it susceptible to negative public perception and potentially undermining its competitiveness. According to Chirambo (2011), this earned the newspaper an undesirable tag of ‘government gazette’, with a negative connotation of a channel for government propaganda. The *Daily Mail’s* management apparently concedes that thenceforth, the paper’s circulation figures were on a descending spiral (Chipampe, Personal communication, 9 December 2013). The figure below shows that circulation reduced, thus the 2013-2015 strategic response to create new distribution networks and expand its readership market is timely.

The newspaper hit one of its lowest circulation ever in 2007. In fact, the 2008 Times Printpak readership survey found that it had the lowest compared to the *Times* and *The Post*. This had an effect on advertisers’ perceptions of the newspaper seeing that its advertising revenue showed some decline (Tailoka *et al.*, 2008). Managements believed in this positive correlation between circulation and advertising.

Nonetheless, despite the fact that liberalisation has taken root in the country the state still greatly influences media activity in Zambia. The state structure consists of various government ministries, departments and parastatals which remain a bigger part of the advertising market. Thus, as part of this structure, the *Daily Mail* draws big amounts of advertising revenue from government. This is because, as already shown, the government exerts a substantial amount of control on the economy and therefore remains the major advertiser in the media industry.

On the other hand, the birth of *The Post* was in itself its first response to liberalisation. It has since its early days enjoyed high circulation, as it was perceived to be the solution (other than the *National Mirror*) to an information gap. The OSISA survey found that *The Post* has over a long period of time, since inception, enjoyed relatively higher circulation. Its watchdog approach to journalism made its content very appealing to the public, and had a positive consequence on circulation. In line with *The Post* mission to be “be fully aware of the competing demands on financial and other resources and the commercial consequences of our

actions, (Post Newspapers, 1991)<sup>32</sup> coupled with the realisation that the cover price was not enough to finance its operations, the paper had to create value and attract more advertising. Hence it attempted to strategise for a vigorous marketing and advertising concept which included its famous classified section known as *Sangwapo*. Not only has *Sangwapo* proven to be very lucrative, it is also believed to have increased the visibility of the newspaper and enhanced its awareness in communities. It generates between 10 and 15 percent of the advertising income. Currently, out of the total number of 120 staff at *The Post*, over 60 are in marketing and advertising, compared to less than 20 on the editorial side. This is a testament of the aggression in advertising.

With its anti-government stand in the 1990s and early 2000s, the paper published a number of investigative stories. This resulted in the government at various times using both legal and economical means to harass the paper with lawsuits and advertising sanctions. Be that as it may, generally in markets and periods of economic and technological uncertainty, media firms are faced with an increasing need to be less reliant on traditional advertising revenues and to develop additional revenue opportunities (Chan-Olmsted and Chang, 2003).

### **Distribution and Courier**

The *Daily Mail* reaches almost all the 72 districts of the country, whereas *The Post* only covers 50 districts. The two newspapers have a distribution system which consists of three hierarchical levels. The first level involves company vehicles transporting the papers from the production plant to the district bureaus. Second level, the papers are further distributed to vendors who take them onto the streets. It is common practice in Zambia for newsboys to engage in other revenue generating activities such as selling cellular phone airtime as well as other different newspaper titles. However, *The Post* has employed vendors who concentrate on selling only its product as the company believes this strategy maximises efficiency and results in more sales. The last level involves vehicles delivering copies to subscribers' homes or offices. The *Daily Mail* finds itself in many government offices, as it is deep-rooted tradition for government departments around the country to have a subscription with state owned newspapers. Subscriptions are very important, especially to increasing the *Daily Mail's* circulation figures. Street sales, however, account for over 60 percent of newspaper distribution for both publications.

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<sup>32</sup> Post Newspapers (1991), *Mission Statement*, February 1991.

The process of distribution has not been without challenges. Vehicles were expensive to manage; some areas were remote and therefore challenging for the newspapers to service. For example, both companies point out that it did not make business sense to deliver very few newspapers to remote and underdeveloped districts. As an act of restitution, public transport would be used to deliver to far flung areas. However, this too was faced with logistical challenges. Apparently, this mode of newspapers distribution is different from many western countries where different companies are specifically established to distribute newspapers.

Nonetheless, as a result, the two companies turned their challenges into business opportunities by establishing courier business units. The commercial logic was that *The Post* and *Daily Mail* courier divisions would not only distribute newspapers, but deliver individual and business goods using the same vehicles. “The whole process of distributing newspapers is very cumbersome: vehicles wear off and break down frequently, and in most cases the van would be half empty and return completely empty. So, it is better to carry goods for people and business. This way we can recover some money for motor vehicle maintenance” (Chipampe, Personal communication, 9 December 2013).

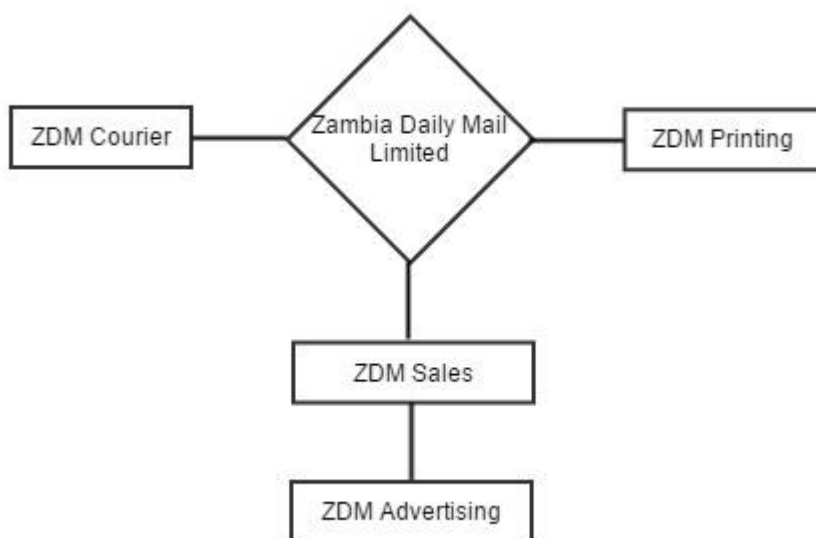
After 2013, the *Zambia Daily Mail* invested KR 2.4 million in delivery and courier vans as part of the capital for its courier business, which is currently in its introductory stage. The Post Courier on the other hand, was Post Newspapers’ major strategic business development focus for 2013, and is now a fully-fledged portfolio overseen by the company’s production department. Similar business logic as ZDML established The Post courier. With a huge capital investment, The Post Courier division has about 55 vehicles including haulage trucks, transporting copper and other trading goods to and from other Southern African countries. Since some production equipment such as newsprint is bought from South Africa, the trucks ferry these on the return journey. Thus, with about 20 big trucks (international) and 35 other vehicles, the company has a fleet which now competes with many other courier and transport companies in the transport and haulage business.

For both companies, the courier business appeared to be the solution to newspaper distribution problems. The approach makes business sense, more so because it supports the goals of newspapers by enabling the increase in newspapers circulation. Porter (1987) expounds that a strategic business unit is supposed to directly support the objectives in the strategic plan of the

company. He stresses that the justification is that such strategic investments must compliment original functions and facilitate the achievement of the goals of the core business. The idea is that the magnitude and complexity of the strategic investment should not overshadow the main newspaper business. Therefore, The Post courier’s degree of penetration into the international at such a large scale may raise questions regarding whether it’s a strategic business that helps build the core newspaper business. On the other hand, considering the challenges posed by the market conditions of a newspaper business in the country, such a source of cash flow is strategic.

### Commercial Printing Press

According to the *Zambia Daily Mail* strategic plan, commercial printing is projected to be a cash cow. Other than printing the *Daily Mail* publication, the company prints other titles. With the printing portfolio, the company boasts of the best printing press in the country. In 2014 the *Daily Mail* changed its design format from a broadsheet to a Berliner design in an attempt to improve its quality. The company, whose main client is primarily the government, hopes to expand its base and extend its services to printing books, magazines, fliers, brochures, newsletters and many other forms of print publications for individuals, NGOs and business organisations. This introduces the Zambia Daily Mail Ltd into a new venture, but relatively old industry comprised of competitors such as New Horizon Printing Press, Aquila Printers Ltd, Zambia Printing Company and Printech Ltd. *The Post’s* printing press, however, is just restricted to printing its publication.



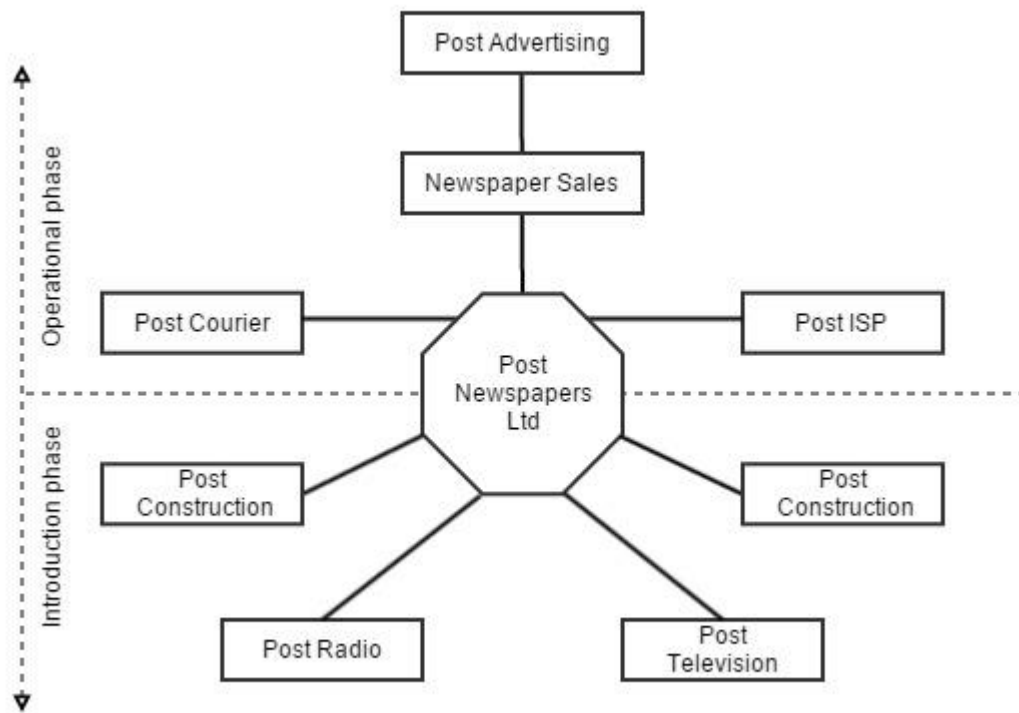
**Figure 5: ZDML business structure. Constructed by author**

The business practice of newspapers diversifying into the printing and publishing business such as ZDML is a global trend aimed at resources alignment to reduce costs of production. In fact, media industries are creating synergies between print and audio-visual production in order to control content and improve economic performance (Chan-Olmsted, 2006).

### **Internet Service Provision**

In 2008, The Post Newspapers Ltd launched the Internet Service Provision (ISP) business. In fact, in 1996, *The Post* happened to have been the first newspaper in Africa to go online. The purpose was to easily disseminate information and further widen its accessibility by the readers (African Media Barometer, 2009). The period after 2000 saw an increase in the use of the internet from 0.1 percent in 2000 to six percent in 2010 (Internet World Stats, 2011). With this growth rate in the ISP business, *The Post* identified and penetrated the niche. The company built a tower and established the ISP division house in the same building of the editorial offices.

The Post has further diversified into farming and construction businesses and has established Post Farms and Post Construction respectively. The company owns farm lands and cattle ranches, whereas Post Construction was established because of the need to build bureaus in districts. At the time of writing, *The Post*, whose previous application in 2004 had been rejected because “cross ownership” was not allowed, was again in the process of getting a license for a Radio and TV station. As discussed in the previous chapter, contrary to the government’s response, there is no law preventing media firms from converging in this manner. However, as in other countries, the government retains the privilege to issue such licenses. The Post management was, not unnaturally, concerned that one had to be in good standing with ruling political elite to be issued a license (Chifuwe, personal communication, 10 December 2013).



**Figure 6: Business structure of Post Newspaper Ltd. Constructed by author**

**Comparing the strategic behaviours of ZDML and Post Newspapers**

Scholars such as Chan-Olmsted and Chang (2009), Hollifield (2001) and McQuail (2010) suggest that the development of media diversification and conglomeration is part of the global political economic wave driven by liberalisation, deregulation, convergence and the decreasing digital divide. Irregular signs of these global trends have shown in Zambia. However, the basic needs for financial stability and survival caused the challenges in the media market seem to strongly drive newspapers to behave the way they do. Thus, the pursuit for market control and financial sustainability has led the ‘inevitable’ evolution of the two newspapers’ corporate strategies. It appears the newspapers are not only creating synergies with media platforms, but are breaking down barriers and penetrating non-media. To support their core editorial business, the newspapers saw it fit to build new capabilities and businesses that would enable renewal and enhance profits and growth in the market. To a great extent, it is safe to describe this strategic direction as product and market diversification. However, it appears the degrees to which the two newspapers diversified into non-media business vary.

Despite showing similar strategic tendencies, *The Post* and ZDML differed in aggressiveness. Between the two newspapers, *The Post* is the most diverse with more business units than the

*Daily Mail*. Newspapers, especially *The Post* are capitalising on the potential for growth by spreading their investments as widely as possible. In fact, the strategy of exploiting the international courier resources lowers the cost of access to newsprint and other production equipment, thereby giving the company a competitive advantage. A careful examination of the newspapers' extent of diversification and their revenue contributions in 2014 revealed that the Post Courier is the 'cash-cow' for Post Newspapers, accounting for 40 percent of the total revenue, whereas as 27 percent comes from advertising and sales. Post ISP and Post Online together bring in 15 percent. Post farm and Post construction are still in the introduction stages and therefore still attracting investments.

On the other hand, the newspaper, through advertising and sales generates 51 percent of the ZDML revenue. Printing and publishing accounts for nine percent while 40 percent from the courier business. Existing approaches to portfolio analysis stress the relatedness or interrelation between the core-business and other businesses. However, much as it is claimed that this strategy is expected to generate greater economic efficiency (Andrade *et al.* 2001; Chan-Olmsted and Chang, 2003), does diversification create and sustain a free press? Overall, considering its media sector presence and revenue contribution, the study reveals that ZDML is the most diversified company in the Zambian market when only media related businesses are considered.

Apparently, policy documents for both companies emphasise the significance of upholding the core business of publishing their respective newspapers. Diversification as the strategic decision made by both companies to invest in other strategic business units (SBU) brings complexities in the management systems of the companies. However, while ZDML decided to restructure and diversify by maintaining the same pool of staff, The Post Newspapers had to employ more personnel to manage new investments. With this strategic direction, to task to source for investment funds and recapitalise must have been top on the list of priorities.

Generally, scholars (Chan-Olmsted and Chang, 2003; Wellstone, 2000) have argued that such commercialisation strategies are a threat to democracy. This is in view of the critical role newspapers play in the production and transmission of news and information and the fact that "corporate structure, strategy, management, and behavior ultimately impact nature and supply of content," (Chan-Olmsted and Chang, 2003: 214).

There is clear relatedness between content and distribution in both newspapers. They both have media content and distribution business. The courier business, which is a feature in both newspapers does not only demonstrate resource alignment, but also complements by providing a distribution system for newspapers. The internet/ online holdings provide a natural outlet for their online content. For the ZDML, the printing and publishing unit again presents an example of resource alignment. This applies to the planned broadcasting outlets for *The Post*, including the fact that they will also complement its content distribution. Currently, *The Post* management is concerned about the large volumes of news collected by reporters on a daily basis most of which does not get published due to lack of space in the newspaper. Using the same resources, Post Radio and Post TV, including The Post Online would be ideal outlets. As such, “financial resources, physical resources, human resources, technological resources, reputation”, and organisational resources, as classified by Hofer and Schendel (1978) are strategically integrated and exploited to produce economies of scale by reducing production costs, thereby giving the company a sustainable competitive advantage. In a sense, this symbiotic relationship between content and these multiple distribution outlets increases the revenue potential for the company. Clearly, new entrants are bound to struggle to rise and compete at this level.

From the prevailing situation, a conjecture would project a growing trend on newspaper companies diversifying and competing in a series of unrelated markets. Some reasons for diversification are not as apparent as other. For example, that Post Farms was inspired by the available market for crop products in South Africa (Chifuwe, Personal communication, 10 December, 2013). In essence, the establishment of Post Farms and Post Construction as part of Post Newspapers business portfolio, shows how the company was least concerned with product and market relatedness. Neither are there indications in common objectives between the new business units and the core business. In as much as they may generate revenue which may be redirected to the financial sustenance of the newspaper, strategic management theory suggests that such strategies attract substantial risks and often cause management complexities which may eventually prove to be a hindrance to the objective of newspaper goals (Slater and Olson, 2001). It is also argued that diversifying in a related business is important for management resources, utilisation of core skills, know-how, and reducing uncertainties (Qian, 1997).

This diversification venture has not always been smooth, as at one time it spread its investment into the airline business where it owned shares in the now defunct Zambia Airways. The

struggle to rescue *Zambian Airways* in 2008 almost drove *Post Newspapers* under after putting itself up as a guarantor for *Zambian Airways'* debts. For example, in 2008 *Post Newspapers* contributed K1 billion of its money to try and help clear *Zambian Airways'* liabilities. This, however led to employees having to endure delayed payment of salaries as the entire financial system was negatively affected.

On the other hand, ZDML is much more conservative in the extent of its diversification. Perhaps it is because it already belongs to the range of government parastatals, including sister companies such as the *Times Printpak*, *ZNBC Television* and its *Radio Channels*. Thus, just like advertising, the parastatals provide a ready market for courier and printing and publishing services.

Chan-Olmsted and Chang (2003) created an analytical framework for understanding factors influencing global media conglomerates' diversification strategies. In this case, they suggest that diversification strategy is determined by firm characteristics, industry environment and general environment of a target country. For instance, contrary to developed societies, where alliances, joint ventures, mergers and acquisitions have been a staple strategy in media industries (Chan-Olmsted, 2006), the *Zambian* case shows that newspapers diversify by developing new products for new markets, including non-media industries.

### **The Position of Editorial in Newspaper Management**

Oliver Kanene, a media educator and current chairperson of the *Editorial and Business Development Committee* of ZDML Board intimates that the editorial should always be at the centre of management decisions since it is the very core business of a newspaper. He cautions that when venturing into other businesses, management must always be aware of how such decisions would affect the editorial position (Kanene, Personal communication, 5 November 2014).

Isaac Chipampe, former Managing Director of the *Daily Mail* and Sheik Chifuwe, the General Manager for *The Post* suggest that editorial content is the main driver for the success of a newspapers business. In line with the influence model discussed in Chapter four, they contend that good journalism increases circulation, which in turn attracts more advertisers.

However, like most of these senior journalists, Godfrey Malama, current Managing Editor of the *Times Printpak*, who also served as Editor-In-Chief from 1999 to 2006, also agrees that

editorial and commercial interest should move together. Just like *The Post's* Chifuwe further states that from its inception Post Newspapers Ltd has been run as a business, concerned about its commercial viability. The company has a management team with competent journalists on one side and very business minded executives on the other. In the same vein, Kanene relates to his role as chairperson of the Editorial and Business Development Committee of ZDML Board, as he rationalises that commercial decisions must be made in tandem with the editorial objectives. Notwithstanding, for the first time, the ZDML Board made a very strategic decision of elevating a chartered accountant to the helm of the organisation, motivated by the need for financial sustainability, but somehow relegating editorial functions. Furthermore, concern can be raised in relation to the place of editorial in both newspapers' management systems, considering the amount of attention from other business units.

### **Editorial Independence as a Strategic Resource**

The influence of ownership on editorial independence has lent these newspapers to much speculative analysis over the past years. Be it for private or state-owned media, separation between ownership and control have not been emphasised at all in discourses on press freedom in Zambia. The Post Newspapers has a long-standing editorial policy which management claims has not changed since 1991 and religiously abides by. ZDML, however, just launched its first ever editorial policy in 2013. It can only be assumed that since a newspaper as big as the *Daily Mail*, has since its existence from the 1960s never had rubrics, has always been receiving instructions from the shareholders. As Malama confirms: the *Daily Mail* has been more servile of the government than any other media (Personal communication, 16 December 2013). Even Chipampe, as the immediate past Managing Director, concedes that the *Daily Mail* has suffered from lack of editorial credibility, yet surprisingly, the substantive strategic plan's SWOT analysis, identifies 'improved editorial content' as one of the strengths. In addition, among its eight-point list of strategic objectives, editorial focus is missing. The company appears to put more focus and development and activities perceived to be 'direct' sources of revenue.

On the other hand, *The Post* staff members are resolute with the position that they never compromise with their editorial policy. Both Chibuwe and Mapuchi contend that the newspaper enjoys total editorial independence. However, Augustine Mukoka, a former editor who served *The Post* from 2002 to 2009 vehemently disagrees. Mukoka observes that editorial independence is determined by the Managing Director, who is the sole proprietor and is only

so to the extent that he allows, adding that the board of directors is usually reduced to a rubber-stamping panel (Personal communication, 17 December 2014)<sup>33</sup>. In this regard, editors do not freely perform their professional responsibilities, but are influenced by the agenda of the owners. Curran (2002: 224) resonates with this by saying that “the political culture of liberal democracies is very alert to the threat posed by governments to the freedom of public media, but is much less concerned about the threat posed by shareholders to the freedom of the private media. Government ministers are attacked if they seek to dictate the contents of public television, yet proprietors are not exposed to equivalent criticism if they seek to determine the editorial line of their media properties.” Kanene, however, applauds the strength and credibility of the current ZDML board to withstand the pressure from shareholders – which in a sense, potentially neutralises the identified threat from government interference.

Traditionally, *The Post* newspaper used to survive on the newspaper sales, as for a long time it had enjoyed the lions’ share of the market, being the most widely circulated publication. Its uncompromising stance on spearheading struggles such as against corruption and fearlessly standing up to those in authority earned it a strong reputation as a credible publication. Chipampe recalls that *The Post* in the 1990s operated on a very good model both professionally and commercially. It created a conducive environment for journalists to perform to the best of their abilities. He also recollects how some reporters who had moved from the *Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* to *The Post* “suddenly knew how to write” (Chipampe, Personal communication, 9 December 2013). In relation to this, (Banda, 2004: 53) asserts that “the viability of a newspaper has much to do with motivated staff as it has to do with business strategy”. In a sense, this was an advantage for *The Post* as it came as a reinforcement to the knowledge based resources at the newspaper’s disposal. On the other hand, it also demonstrates how a very controlled environment inhibits creativity.

Just as the MISA boss puts it: “good journalism is good business”<sup>34</sup>, many veteran journalists agree that good editorial content attracts readers, increases circulation, and consequently appeals to advertisers.

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<sup>33</sup> What is interesting to note is the adamant claim by the journalists about *The Post*’s uncompromising stand on editorial, whereas the journalist who have left the newspaper for various reasons state the complete opposite.

<sup>34</sup> MISA Regional Director, Zoe Titus, during her presentation at the Media Project conference on Media, Development, Press Freedom and Ethics held in Cresta Golfview Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia from 31 October to 2 November, 2014.

Therefore, while the market has been precarious, it is certain that *The Post* performed well and its editorial stand was its greatest asset. The role of editorial independence and credibility as a strategic resource has virtually been left unexplored in media research in Zambia. Hence, this study makes a proposition that, alongside the business units they are diversifying into, newspaper companies should maintain and continue investing their core editorial businesses. In sum, although organisational constraints and the pursuit for survival may, in most cases, preclude professional principles – good journalism is still good business.

### **State-corporate alliance: A ‘survival’ model of press freedom**

As much as it is incontrovertible that the *Daily Mail* and other state-owned media have continued to be an extension of the state, it is critical to consider that liberalisation has provided the environment for private players in the media industry. Because of the rough market conditions, the newspaper business has failed to flourish. These conditions have not changed much over the last five political regimes, as newspaper deaths have become the norm in Zambia.

Former MISA Director Herbert Macha, thinks that governments have not made any efforts towards helping stabilise the markets apart from fragile attempts at establishing the now defunct Media Trust Fund. Among the many newspapers, only *The Post* managed to withstand the economic pressure. Even the once popular *National Mirror* failed to survive after resurfacing temporarily in 2006. This, however, demonstrates the neo-liberal values of the political economy of the press. The operations of newspapers were centred on commercial influences. Ironically, instead of abetting the survival of competitive newspapers, liberalisation seems to have created a ‘survival of the fittest’ environment which also limits public participation and access to information. Furthermore, the public sphere was polarised, with government supported media on one side and *The Post* on the other.

Evidence of the state imposing its control over the *Daily Mail* is especially demonstrated by the repeated firings of Managing Directors who found it difficult to follow government instructions. This trend is common during election periods. The firing of Godfrey Malama and Evans Milimo in 2006 and 2011 immediately after respective elections exemplify the trend. The government’s expectation of the media was explicitly stated by then Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Mike Mulongoti who said that, “journalists from the public

media should not criticise the government and its leaders because they have jobs to protect” (Silwamba, 2007). This clearly indicates authoritarian tendencies in running media institutions.

During the run up to elections, the state media are usually under pressure to read the mood. To secure their jobs after elections, editors’ decisions usually swing in favour of the strong political party. Editors take the gamble: winners get promoted and losers are fired.

After Mwanawasa’s death in 2008, *The Post* got onto a slightly differently track. President Banda’s rule did not only influence the newspaper’s commercial strategies, it also presented different political challenges. Specifically, the newspaper and government clashed over the defunct *Zambian Airways Ltd*, a company in which *The Post* had 30 percent shares. When the airline ‘took a dip’, it borrowed from banks. However, that was not enough to save it and its fleet was grounded in January 2009. Thereafter, the government refused to bail out the airline and demanded that the company settles the debt owed to the National Airport Corporation Ltd. As one of the major shareholders, Post Newspapers Ltd.’s financial muscle was affected, especially because the newspaper was used as the guarantor for the loans. Thus, in trying to help clear *Zambian Airways* liabilities, Post Newspapers forked out K1 billion. This left a financial gap, which led to employees having to endure delayed payment of salaries. Newspaper production was affected and the company had to borrow newsprint from ZDML. This worsened the already antagonistic relationship between the political elites and *The Post*.

Ideally, these financial challenges and eventual collapse of the airline could be viewed as a mere case of business failure, yet there appears to be a political angle. Following the death of Mwanawasa, the ruling MMD experienced succession wrangles. *The Post* backed former Minister of Finance, Ng’andu Magande, for the presidential candidacy over Banda. In his reaction, Banda accused Magande of having promised to write off the airline’s debt, thus earning himself the editorial support of *The Post*<sup>35</sup> (Times Reporter, 2009). *Zambian Airways* has since appealed to the courts to defer payment, a move which has pushed the debt to stand at over K30 billion.

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<sup>35</sup> Times Reporter (2009), *Pay Back \$30 Million Debt, Airways Told*, 27 February 2009, Times of Zambia: Rupiah Banda: “I have a document to prove that Magande was going to allow them (*Zambian Airways*) to get away with this money. The Post has attacked me from the time that you chose me as presidential candidate up to the time I became the president”.

Throughout his term, the acrimony between President Banda and *The Post* persisted. The height of this came in 2011 when the newspaper made the sensational editorial decision to support his long-standing opponent, Micheal Sata, whose political party, the Patriotic Front, was favoured to defeat the ruling MMD. When later in 2011, the PF formed a government, *The Post* supported it. This was a major turnaround in the history of the newspaper. Many journalists who wrote favourable stories for Sata during the run up to the 2011 elections were rewarded with government jobs at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services and in Foreign Service. Managing Editor, Amos Malupenga was appointed Permanent Secretary and George Chellah was appointed State House Press Aid for President Sata, among many others. Mukoka describes the relationship between *The Post* and President Sata as a drawback to press freedom. *The Post* remains in debt, but it appears its struggle for survival is making the newspaper myopic to its editorial objectives. In support of Rupiah Banda's above observation, in September 2013, Geoffrey Mwamba, who was then Minister of Defence, suggested that it was a well-known fact that M'membe was supporting and hero-worshipping President Sata because of the loan burden he had (Daily Nation, 2013). From Rupiah Banda, *The Post* feud seemed to have taken on Geoffrey Mwamba, who also happened to be a businessman owning a range of companies in GBM Milling and Arizona Transport, a company which competes with Post Courier. Furthermore, an article published in Zambia Reports also suggests *The Post's* alliance with the government is a strategy for M'membe to cash in on government and parastatals transportation contracts given to him with the blessings of his ally, President Sata (Adamu, 2013).

Therefore, the media system in Zambia records mixed trends, with state run newspapers showing authoritarian tendencies whereas private newspapers purely driven by market forces. However, in both types, the depth of clientelism is pervasive and has also compromised their credibility. In the case of *The Post*, for example, it's popular reputation as a fearless and reliable publication has been undermined, and its competitiveness subverting. It is not surprising that in 2013 and 2014 it recorded low circulation figures. Veteran Journalist, Henry Kabwe observes that reading *The Post* during Sata's reign felt the same as reading a government newspaper. This change of editorial stance and loss of credibility subsequently earned the

newspaper the nickname ‘*The Past*,’ negative public perception which implies that the publication has seen better days<sup>36</sup> (Kabwe, Personal communication, 4 November 2014).

In this case we have the *Government Gazette* (Daily Mail) and *The Past* (The Post), the major dailies in the country including the *Times of Zambia*, all on the government’s corner. Mukoka observes that in order to secure its financial position, *The Post* may continue to play circumstantial politics and its editorial shifts will be determined by alliances with business and political elites (Mukoka, Personal communication, 17 December 2014).

It can be argued, based on the continued attempts to control state media, compounded by market forces, that press freedom is influenced by owners and the need for survival, more than journalism professional ethics. Financial interests are stronger, and the notion of press freedom is weaker. This casts doubts on the famous interpretation of a free press that: “only by anchoring the media to a free market is it possible to ensure the media’s complete independence from government. Once the media becomes subject to public regulation, it will lose its bite as a watchdog and may even be transformed into a snarling Rottweiler in the service of the state,” (Curran, 1996: 84). The *Zambian* case presents a shift from ‘watchdog to government’s lapdog’. However, some believe that the dog is likely to start biting its owner when not fed sufficiently.

The impact of liberalisation on the press can be gleaned from a noticeable decline or near collapse of professional journalism in the quest for financial sustainability. In editorial terms, liberalisation has strengthened the sustainability of the press in *Zambia*, but limited its quality. This situation is even worsened by authoritarian tendencies which have been observed in the management of state owned media. This free-market system, by contrast, has become an elitist project that is often associated with support for or acquiescence to authoritarian political rule. Unlike in Western states where newspapers can survive financially without over-dependence on state resources, prospects of sustaining a free press in *Zambia* lie in improving market conditions.

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<sup>36</sup> ‘The Past’ nickname is also widely used on social media discussions to refer to the newspaper’s diminishing credibility.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE ECLIPSE OF JOURNALISM IN ZAMBIA'S SMALL MEDIA MARKET: A SMALL COUNTRY APPROACH

This study's major theoretical proposition asserts that research in the political economy of communication should constitute the national framework surrounding media systems to avoid prejudices and unwarranted sweeping generalisations such as the one by McQuail, (2010), as discussed in chapter five. For this reason, this chapter takes a small country approach and pays close attention to the Zambia media market, whilst emphasising the structural differences with media markets in developed countries. The thesis has thus far extricated the strategic linkages between the newspaper and market and political economic forces that influence it, and to some degree, the editorial complexities in the management systems. Through its interminable rhetorical promises to privatise state media, the government in Zambia created a constant illusion of the dawn of a free press. However, the liberalisation of the market did not improve the newspaper business conditions. As such, in order to survive the harsh business environment, newspaper companies into diversification and political alliances. The cases of the *Daily Mail* and *The Post*, demonstrate that this was by no means easy to accomplish as it bears a great amount of influence on the core editorial business to the extent of compromising professional integrity and editorial independence. Thus, by adopting non-routine practices, newspapers have started practicing what has herein been described as survivalism rather than primarily focusing on journalism.

This chapter advances this argument of editorial compromise by examining the structural peculiarities of the small media system. It gives salience to the perspective that particular economic realities in small African states with small media and advertising markets such as Zambia have implications for their media landscape, regulation and the sustenance of a free press. Essentially, the precise mechanisms and processes whereby advertising and economic power over the media or control of their economics are translated into controls over the products are examined. The workings of these controls were empirically demonstrated and derived the views of editors and the balance between the ideology implicit in the advertising space in newspapers and the interests of those in control. This involves examining the design and layout to extract the salience and prominence of advertising elements against editorial spaces in newspapers. This approach is based on the presumption that the ideological aspects of newshole against other layout elements such as advertisement has received too little attention

among media and communication scholars, and none at all in Zambian research. In this case, through newshole analysis, the placement of advertisements and news stories is considered ideologically significant and has implications on corporate influence and the concept of a free press. Therefore, the ideological underpinnings of newspaper content are examined to relate the meaning of press freedom to economic and political influences.

All this is therefore framed within the small country approach which presumes that “small states have small media markets” (Puppis, 2009: 10). Therefore, considering that these media markets depend on advertising, media markets are even smaller in countries with poor economic and industrial profiles. Given such background, the small media system in Zambia possess some structural peculiarities that have implications for the country’s media landscape which subsequently affects media regulations.

Among other goals, the chapter also critically analyses the effects of advertising markets and the newspaper interactions with multinational advertisers. Of major interest is whether this commercial significance brought in by advertising has managed well enough to mask the filters that determined what is newsworthy. The aims of the chapter therefore are the following:

- To examine the impact of advertising on commercial aspects of the newspapers;
- To investigate how the Zambian media market affects newspaper diversity and freedom;
- To establish the impact of corporations’ influence on newspapers production and sustainability.

These related objectives result inevitably, not in a unified set of interests, but in an examination of different aspects of the media including advertising, circulation, editorial independence and freedom. Ultimately, the most fundamental issue which underlies these aspects of the study is the process of sustaining a free press with a critical consideration of the political economic influences.

## **Methods**

This chapter invokes a wide range of literature on media economic and political economy to show how capital and market liberalisation influence newspapers’ editorial content and the

sustainability of a free press in general. It continues to use unstructured interviews as shown in the previous chapter. In addition, two different data collection instruments were used: one for capturing advertising trends and newshole in newspapers, and the other was administered to the top five ad spenders to record their budget allocations to the advertising media. The study covers the period from 1991 to 2015. As such this period was divided into five epochs: 1991-1996, (2) 1997-2001, (3) 2002-2006, (4) 2007-2011, (5) 2012-2015. The time periods reflect eras of political and economic change. They correspond with the country's political calendar for the president's term of office. One year was chosen from each cluster; three months from each year; one week from each month; and one day from each week. Coding of front and back pages was completed. For each issue of each newspaper in the sample, the pages were coded for percentage volume of space devoted to news and advertising, number of stories, photographs and illustrations, column rules, use of colour, news index, and graphic information

The other part of the discussion involves the interpretation of market surveys and organisational and independent reports on advertising trends in Zambia. These are employed to analyse the newspapers' interactions with advertisers, especially multinationals by examining different sources of data including financial statements/audit reports, official communications and the substance of interviews with journalists.

### **An excursion into Ideological aspects of Advertising and Editorial Content**

Advertising in Zambia is a fast growing and viable industry occupying a very significant place in business, particularly the media. Newspapers financially depend on advertising to survive and many corporate organisations spend thousands of kwachas annually on advertisements. Newshole analysis provides an insightful window onto advertising influence on newspaper content. An examination of the evolution of newspaper design vis-à-vis advertisements and news content demonstrates not only technological development, but also development of a modern political economy of a growing media system. The expected result is newspapers cluttered with advertisements, thereby shrinking the news hole.

In any epoch, the conventions that inform advertising trends are a result of social, economic, and political interests and historical and technological developments. As a result, they have an ideological basis peculiar to the structure of these impinging forces. For example, the political climate in the early 1990s had an impact on newspaper appearance and the type of advertising. The limited amount of space coupled with antiquated technologies and the abundant political

news contributed to a crowded and copy heavy appearance and little space allotted to art. The common appearance of advertisements for small business dealers in household products and apparels resulted from the non-existent manufacturing industry and multinational corporations had not graced the market.

Newspapers were printed in black and white, so were the advertisements in Zambia. It was not until the 2000s that newspapers begun printing in colour, and 2006 when colour advertisements appeared. They were mostly copy heavy with very little and small illustrations. During this period, the major advertisers were state owned enterprises (SOEs), small private companies and different types of traders. The pro-business economic policies encouraged private investments in all major industries. This was the ‘newspaper boom’ period, during which according to Kanene (2014), every journalist thought they could start a newspaper and benefit from what was correspondingly perceived as an economic boom. But this was not to be the case as Chipampe (2013) observed that most companies did not have great appreciation for the value of advertising. As such, both newspapers’ front pages were too editorial heavy. As it turned out, the growth ratio between the brisk media industry to the slow economy was not parallel. This stunted the economic growth and subsequently translated into a weak- newspaper industry, resulting in many casualties and deaths.

At the turn of the twentieth century, the subsequent increasing industrialisation produced a consumer culture and a corresponding increase in advertisements and pagination in newspapers. The *Daily Mail* increased its number of pages from the range of eight to ten in the 1990s to the range of 15 to 20 in 2000, and presently this varies from 20 to 30 pages per edition; while the volume of *The Post* increased from 8 to 10; 10 to 16 and 20 to 30 respectively. The private sector together with the parastatal sector created a competitive environment perceived as necessary for further growth (Rakner, 2003). As years went by, advertising activities in newspapers seemed to be growing. There were observable trends of particular corporations dominating the front pages of the two newspapers over the years. They included the telecommunication companies, that is, ZAMTEL, MTZ Zambia and Airtel Zambia, and Barclays Bank and Handyman’s Paradise. These companies advertise across the board, but the common practice has been to enter into advertising long term contracts between a newspaper and advertiser. It was found that from the 1990s, MTN Zambia (then Telecom Zambia) dominated the front pages of *The Post* newspaper, mostly taking up the lower strip.

Advertisers began compelling newspapers to run larger, more visually striking advertisements. They were working their way around newspapers' editorial restrictions with typographic innovations. Decorative typestyles and typographic tricks such as reiteration were not uncommon. Handyman's Paradise was one such crafty advertiser, as will be shown later in the chapter. However, technological innovations still left so much to be desired, and as the Association of Practitioners in Advertising (APA) had bemoaned, this was a major hindrance to the development of robust advertising industry in Zambia. For example, where photographs were used they left an archaic impression on the layout and design of the newspapers (Nkonge, 2004).

It was not surprising that after 2006, newspapers, especially the *Daily Mail* undertook to improve the quality of printing while *The Post* upgraded the technology on its printing press in order to improve its images. Other than enhancing the general outlook of the paper, the *Daily Mail* was motivated to improving the appearances of advertisements in order to attract more advertisers. For example, Kenneth Sinkamba (2014) the commercial director stresses that apart from circulation figures, advertisers are interested in the quality of their advertisements: "they [advertisers] must be able to say, ah, I put that chicken and it looks like a chicken for sure. When the reader looks at it, they should say, wow, let me go and get this Zambeef chicken".

From 2006 onward, the new pictorial style of advertising, in large space and with large type and illustration, overwhelmed the news and editorial material in the newspapers. Newshole continued to gradually decrease against advertisements. As shown in Table 2, the front pages of the two papers were heavily cluttered by advertisements. Thus, in his observation, Kabwe notes that the rise of market driven ideology has turned the press in Zambia into a vehicle for the distribution of goods, the carrier of the consumer ideology. The situation in a way provokes the question whether these publications should still be called 'newspapers' or 'adpapers'.

The continuous improvement in technology in recent years has since increased the amount and sophistication of illustration in newspapers. It has been observed that full colour illustrations have become a permanent feature on the front pages, and the rest of the pages are combined with illustrations to create layouts of advertisements and news. Advertisers who need additional space and exposure produce supplements which are inserted in and distributed with newspapers.

## Ads and News Space on the Front Page

It is noteworthy that the two newspapers have different design structures: *The Post* is a six - column tabloid, whereas the *Daily Mail* had since establishment been a nine-paged broadsheet, and only changed in 2014 to a *berliner*. For both newspapers, the common appearance of the front pages is horizontal division created by advertisements on the lower and bottom parts, in what is referred to as the lower and upper stripes (the upper stripe is positioned just below the nameplate), leaving the mid-section for editorial display. The solus vertically sits on top of the lower stripe on the right side of the page, while the ears stand on the top corners of either side of the page. This leaves too little space for editorial display.

**The Post** The paper that digs deeper

No. 5986 - Thursday February 7, 2013 [www.postzambia.com](http://www.postzambia.com) KR3 (K3,000)

**RUPIAH REFUSES TO ATTEND AGC PROBE**

**...because it's a scheme that circumvents the Constitution**  
Story page 6

First lady Dr Christine Kasumba and Swedish health and social affairs State secretary Karin Johansson (r) listens to Rovle Medical representative Violetta Grape (l) during the Sweden-Zambia Health Cooperation Conference and Expo at Hotel InterContinental in Lusaka yesterday - Picture by Thomas Nsumu

**Meali-meal shortage hits Solwezi, Kasama** **L/stone PF to pray, fast for peace**  
Story page 8 Story page 4

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**YOUR POST ZAMBIA'S LEADING NEWSPAPER**

Figure 7: A sample of *The Post* newspaper's front page dominated by advertisements

Dependence on advertising grew with time, so that it now accounts for the highest sources of revenue in the Zambian media. This situation may change with the continuous improvisation

into non-routine revenue streams, but for many years newspapers have almost entirely depended on advertising. For example, from 2012 more that 60 percent of both the *Daily Mail* and *The Post*'s revenues have come from advertising.

The high dependence on advertising revenue correlates with the dominance of advertisement elements in the newspapers, especially on their front pages. Both the *Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspaper place advertising on their front pages. This is demonstrated by the sustained increase of the space covered by advertisements in square centimetres from 1991 to 2013 (see table 1 below).

Years	Zambia Daily Mail		The Post	
	Percentage of News (%)	Percentage of Ads (%)	Percentage of News (%)	Percentage of Ads (%)
1991 - 1995	60	40	65	35
1996 - 2000	40	60	48	62
2002 - 2006	35	65	30	70
2006 - 2011	35	65	35	65
2011 - 2015	32	68	30	70

**Table 2: Area and Percentage of Ad and News Space. Compiled by author**

The findings show that both newspapers carry a generous amount of space, often more than 70 percent of advertisements on their front pages. A story headline with its lead paragraph, occasionally accompanied by a picture is usually the only form of editorial. Advertisements are spread throughout the inside pages ranging in size from quarter, half to full-page.

However, there are specific pages which are reserved for news stories and some journalists such as *Daily Mail* news editor Pauline Banda (2013) usually blames the advertising department for overstepping its boundaries when these are cluttered with advertisements. In fact, in the United States it is generally considered unprofessional to place advertisements on the front page. The *Zambia Daily Mail* Commercial Director, however, justifies this situation by stating that advertisements are the pillar for newspapers' survival. The practice has been contested by scholars who advocate improving front-page design by eliminating or decreasing

the space devoted to advertisements, but newspapers continue to sell large amounts of front-page space to their advertisers (Lo *et al*, 2000). Clearly, such arguments cannot be sustained for Zambian newspapers which declare that advertising comes first, and advertisers take the best pages. The statement below succinctly captures the point:

Advertising is the bread and butter of newspaper organisations. Most of these newspapers would not be in business without revenue generated through advertising. It follows therefore that without access to advertising revenue; even the most popular newspaper or broadcast station will fold or go out of the market (Sinkamba, Personal communication, 2013).

On average advertising has been observed to be more dominant in the *Daily Mail* than in *The Post*. The *Post* recorded the highest proportion of news articles and photographs, with 47 percent of the newspaper content falling within this category. The *Daily Mail* on the other hand had 43 percent of its space devoted to newshole. The shrunken newshole resulting from dominance of advertisements in newspapers resonates with McManus' (1995) supposition that commercialised media will optimise or exploit opportunities to generate revenues from advertising, even at the expense of editorial content.

### **The Advertising Market and Corporate Influence on Newspapers**

“Media freedom also leads to positive benefits for the everyday needs of social organisation. For instance the credibility of any news and information supplied is largely dependent on confidence that it is not unduly or secretly influenced by partisan or vested interests, of government, advertiser, proprietor, source etc.” (McQuail, 1996: 72).

Inspired by a reflection on McQuail's statement above, this discussion employs the syllogism that a small market has limited advertising resources to sustain newspaper diversity; few corporations control these resources; therefore, these corporations wield a great amount of influence over newspapers' independence to operate freely. It must be stressed that in any discussion of how media perform, the question of market size is crucial (Balčytienė, 2009). In a free market economy such as Zambia's, “the level of resources available for the provision of media is constrained by [...] the size and wealth of the economy” (Balčytienė, 2009: 39). Since

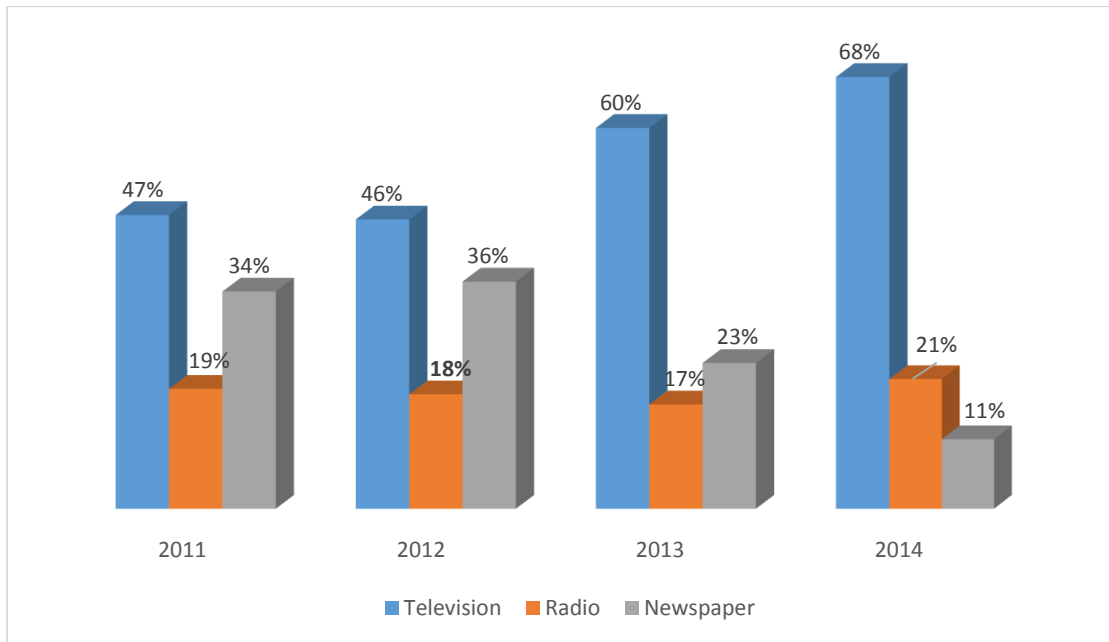
the wealth of the media is derived from advertising, this chapter study now attempts to establish and examine the historical trends in newspaper advertising in Zambia. This is in order to firstly, identify high spending corporations in newspaper advertising and their propensity to support growth; secondly to establish the size of the advertising market and; thirdly to understand how corporations exert advertising pressure on newspapers.

### **Ad spend by Corporations in Newspapers**

Similar to what has been discussed in chapter six, exposure and circulation have great influence on advertisers' media preference. Since the beginning of the 2000s, symptoms of the 'newspaper plague' started surfacing in Zambia. One of them being the gradually declining circulation figures. In the last decade, the expansion of other media such as television, radio and online media has exacerbated the problem.

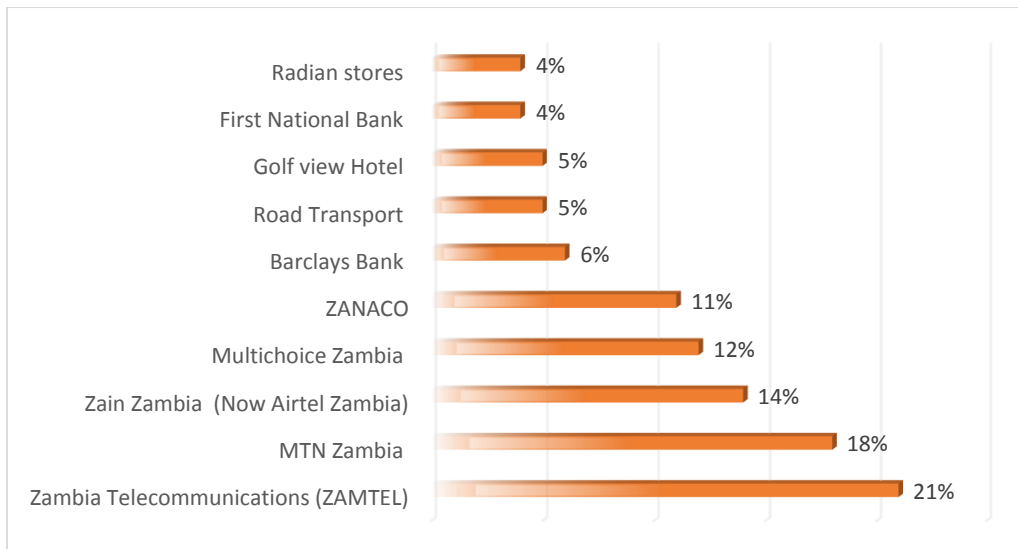
As has already been stated in the previous chapter, there is no independent bureau of circulation in the country, thus it is not possible to ascertain the accuracy of circulation figures, but those provided by the newspapers themselves present a depressing picture when sales of the past are compared with the present. Between 2000 and 2010, the *Daily Mail's* circulation fell by 10 percent. The current figure of 15,000 is a rise which results from the corrective moves in the marketing department. It would not be an exaggeration to state that back in the 1970s the daily circulation of the *Daily Mail* averaged 50,000 (Kasoma, 1986). Similarly, it would not be an overstatement that in the 1990s, *The Post* was regarded as the Holy Grail – the 'gospel truth' and key source of political information. Circulation figures hit the highs of 40,000. But between 2000 and 2010 the figures dropped by 15 percent, and currently lie at 20,000. In this digital era, moreover, deregulation of the airwaves has renewed the growth in broadcasting television channels and radio stations coupled with the perceived influence of the online media.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the relative share of total media advertising revenues for newspapers is gradually declining compared to other media such as television, radio and probably online media. This was the second symptom. The Synovate (2009; 2014) studies reviewed advertising trends in Zambia during the 2007 – 2009 and 2011 – 2014 periods and ranked the advertisers in newspapers. According to the Synovate (2014) review of media and advertising trends in Zambia, the lion's share of media advertising has over time tended to be reserved for television. Newspapers took the second spot, but as shown in the graph below, in 2014 they lost their second position to radio, signifying diminishing returns.

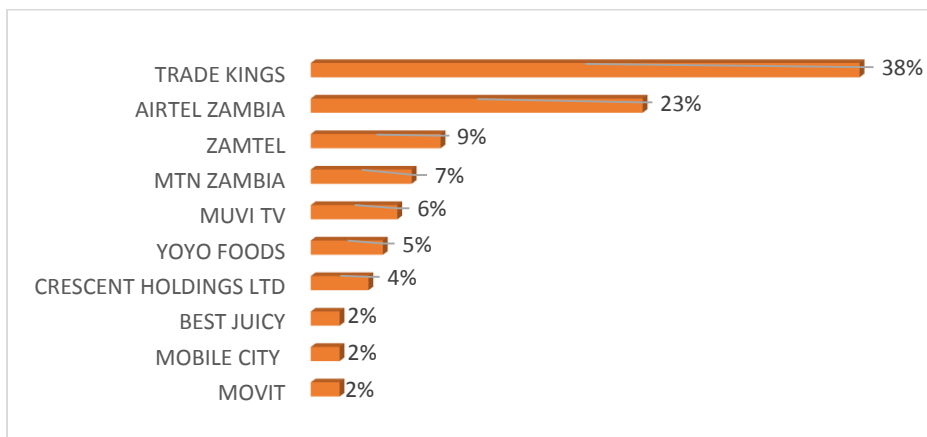


**Figure 8: Comparisons in media ad spend in the last four years (Synovate, 2014).**

Regarding the highest corporate spenders, the Synovate (2009) study established that the first two were state owned enterprises - Zambia Telecommunications Company (ZAMTEL) with a 21 percent share of ad spend and the Zambia National Commercial Bank (ZANACO) with 11 percent. Government departments, such as the Road Transport and Safety Agency stood at five percent. Multinational companies were the most competitive spenders: MTN Zambia (18%), Zain Zambia (14%), and Multichoice (12%). Financial institutions, Barclays Bank (6%), First National Bank (4%), were less significant (See figure 10 below). Thus, the telecommunication industry represented by ZAMTEL and MTN were the largest spenders during the period (Synovate, 2009: 11). In the 2014 Synovate study, Trade Kings ranked first, followed by Airtel Zambia, ZAMTEL and MTN Zambia, reaffirming the dominance of the telecommunication industry in advertising spending.

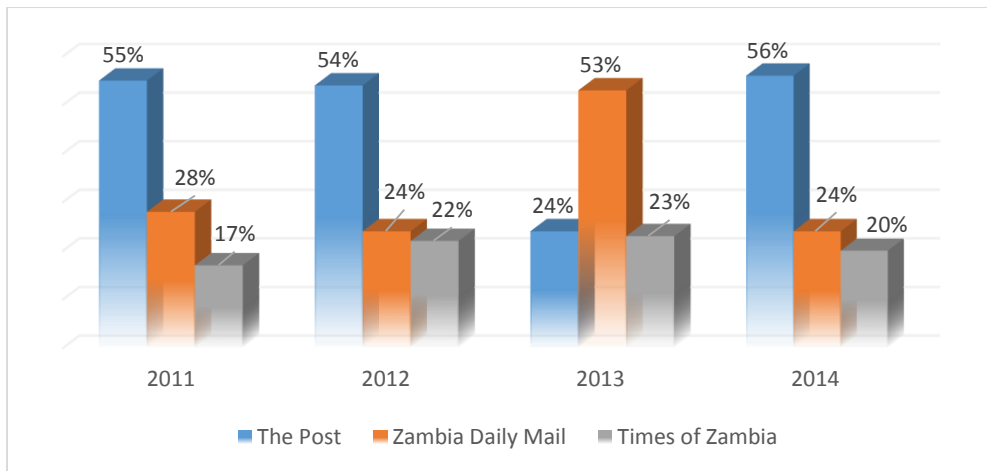


**Figure 9: Top 10 Advertisers in 2009. (Synovate, 2009)**



**Figure 10: Top 10 Advertisers in 2014. (Synovate, 2014)**

Disaggregating the data further amongst the four daily newspapers, that is, *The Post*, the *Times*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Nation*, a clear understanding of the newspaper which has been most preferred historically emerges. According to the Synovate (2009) study on print advertising spending trends, *The Post* led the market over three years under study – 57 percent in 2007; 50 percent in 2008; and 56 percent in 2009, whereas the *Daily Mail* trailed with 25 percent in 2007; 33 percent in 2008 and 24 percent in 2009. The *Times of Zambia* was the lowest with an average of 14.7 percent. Similar trends were reflected in the Synovate (2014) study as shown in the graph below. The relatively new *Daily Nation* earned a marginal K36,531 of advertising spend in 2014, representing zero in percentile values. It is noteworthy that these dailies are essentially serving the same market (Tailoka, 2008).



**Figure 11: Newspapers preferred by advertisers between 2011 and 2014 (Synovate, 2014)**

A further breakdown of expenditure by the top four newspapers advertisers' projects significant patterns and reasons for preferences. ZAMTEL, the highest spender in 2009 was displaced by Trade Kings and Airtel Zambia to drop to third place in 2014. But Trade Kings' and Airtel Zambia's rise was not due to their respective increase in advertising budgets; it was ZAMTEL that drastically cut its budget from K177, 688,371 (in 2009) to K20, 200,000 (in 2014). In fact, findings show that all top spenders reduced their budgets in 2014. Worse still, the newspaper allocation has also been decreasing from 31 percent (in 2013) to 24 and 16 percent in 2014 and 2015 respectively. As the highest spender in 2014, Trade Kings' advertising trends portray an even more dismal picture for newspapers: zero allocation towards newspapers advertising in the last five years. The company uses the ratings argument for media selection. The marketing manager explains:

Trade kings is not very strong on press advertising in media like *Daily Mail*, *Times of Zambia*, *Daily Nation* or *The Post*. The only time we have advertised in the paper is to either congratulate or offer a message of condolences. We are more interested in greater numbers than the 10,000 or 15,000 which are reached by these papers (Songwe, 2015).

Thus, going by circulation and readership trends, business logic supports the companies' preference for *The Post*. However, it is interesting that as a state-owned company, ZAMTEL preferred to advertise more with the *Daily Mail* and the *Times*, directing nothing to *The Post*<sup>37</sup>.

<sup>37</sup> Results show that in 2015, ZAMTEL's advertising allocation to *The Post* was only 1 percent.

It was suggested in the interview with Chipampe (2013) that state owned enterprises were expected to support state owned newspapers by directing more advertising resources to the *Daily Mail*, but *The Post* General Manager for Marketing and Sales was very direct in stating that ZAMTEL avoided advertising in *The Post* because of political reasons (Kunda, Personal communication, 2013). This assertion was confirmed when Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services, Chishimba Kambwili warned *The Post* and declared that state advertising and buying of the paper would be withdrawn if it continued attacking government (Adamu, 2015).

Nevertheless, the African Media Barometer of 2011 and 2013 results indicate that *The Post* remains the market leader in advertising media (African Media Barometer Zambia, 2011; 2013). A different study by Africa Media Ventures (AMV) and Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) study of 2008 on market feasibility of the business newspaper in Zambia and Malawi confirms *The Post's* dominance, but also emphasised that most corporations in Zambia perceived the *Daily Mail* as the best media for advertising. The corporates referred to the size of the publication (broadsheet) as the reason for their preference (Africa Media Ventures/OSISA, 2008). However, besides the business justification for the size of the newspaper and circulation figures, the *Daily Nation* proprietor suggests that some corporations are hesitant to advertise in anti-government private newspaper, for fear of being perceived to be working against the government.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy, from Table 3 that the *Daily Mail* experienced a dramatic rise and fall in 2013 and 2014. "Advertising in our paper has grown, we are even beating *The Post* in terms of advertising. We have a lot of adverts," Chipampe bragged. The former *Daily Mail* managing director, however, believes that with his company's new state-of-the-art printer, the quality of pictures and advertisements had improved and the newspaper was quickly becoming the preferred choice for advertisers (Chipampe, personal communication, 2013). The other explanation for the *Daily Mail's* rise against *The Post* could be drawn from the latter's shifts in political alliances and perceived loss of credibility. It is generally believed that independent (private) newspapers are more popular and highly circulated (Baker, 2001). Therefore, *The Post's* loss of popularity reduced advertisers' confidence in the paper.

### **Small Advertising Market and Editorial Vulnerability**

At this point it is important to focus more substantially on the chapter's assumption of the smallness of the state and its weak economic profile being reflected in the small size of its media and advertising market. As an underdeveloped African state with a per capital income of USD 821.56, a GDP of USD 22.38 billion and a human population of 15.02 million (Central Statistics Office, 2014), by Puppis' (2009) standards, Zambia is considered to be a small state. This concept stresses that small states have structural peculiarities of small media markets characterised by harsh industry conditions. The distinguished features include shortage of production resources with respect to capital and production materials, small audience and advertising markets (Puppis, 2009).

The previous chapter has discussed the harsh industry conditions resulting partly from the scarcity of resources. The challenges of the small audience and advertising markets can be demonstrated by the trends in advertising spending. As Kanene observes, the country's poor economic profile in relation to the lack of a strong manufacturing industry and lack of sharp commercial competition translates into a sluggish media market. This, he argues, creates a culture of dependence on importation of production inputs from countries with bigger media markets (Kanene, personal communication, 2014).

In addition, Chipampe (Personal communication, 2013) takes a comparative approach to locate the source of the newspaper problem in Zambia. "The biggest problem in this country is that the market is quite small due to the fact that we have a very small industry. Compared to South Africa, their industry is so large, and that helps a newspaper because they have so many advertisers and because of that the newspapers are rich, even their employees are well paid. But here in Zambia, one can even use their fingers to count the companies we [newspapers] depend on for advertising: i.e., ZAMTEL, AIRTEL and MTN, that's all."

The above assertions on market size can also be reflected in corporate advertising resources. The studies (Synovate, 2014; Africa Media Barometer Zambia, 2013) from which this chapter draws in many aspects, project similar findings. According to the media barometer of 2013, advertising spend in Zambia is estimated at approximately K9 million (US\$ 1,608,120), mostly composed of mobile telecommunications operators and the banks as some of the biggest advertisers. What is very important to note here is the fact that the total resources available for media provision in the entire Zambian market are even fewer than those available for a minority

in a larger market. To elucidate this point, the chapter compares with South African market/media, which herein has been classified as an honorary western market. For example, the K9 million ad spend on the Zambia market is remarkably small and compares very unfavourably with the South African market which is estimated at R35.4 billion. The South African media market is very diverse with hundreds of media institutions, and 468 print media publications including 25 weekly newspapers and 22 dailies owned by four big players: Independent, the Times Media Group, Media24 and Caxton (OMD, 2014). This is against a handful of print publications and only four dailies in Zambia. Despite these big numbers of newspapers in South Africa, a point was made in the African Media Barometer (Zambia, 2013: 45) report that advertising “is a hell of a lot of money and it is growing still, and faster than the rate of inflation”. Moreover, from the R35.4 billion estimate, the print media alone accounts for R10 billion (28.7%), a figure which is still 10 times more than what is earned by entire Zambian media market.

In essence, while the South African market is enjoying abundant advertising resources, the Zambia situation presents a gloomy stagnancy in market growth. As shown above, low corporate expenditure on advertising has been one of the main contributing factors. The Zambia Media Barometer (2013) also identifies delayed or non-payment by government ministries for advertisements as one of the reasons for the lethargic media market. This has a parallel effect of the newspaper growth rate and sustainability. It is therefore not surprising that the last 10 years have witnessed a number of fledgling and faltering newspapers, with only one new title – the *Daily Nation*, surviving the economic woes. In this case, it is clear that a small market cannot sustain many newspapers at one given time and as aptly argued by Puppis (2009), while competition contributes to diversity, more intense competition reduces diversity. The situation is even more challenging for new entrants. For example, Eddie Mupeso, who was editor of the *National Mirror*, recalls the challenges faced by the newspaper when the proprietors tried to re-establish it in 1994:

It was not easy to say the least. One of the reasons was that by then, there were a lot of newspapers on the market and that meant that the little revenue which was available for advertising space had to be shared by many newspapers. The other factor was that now there was on the scene, the post newspaper, which was a very popular newspaper and all the advertisers were looking at the mass circulation of

*The Post*. Therefore, to get business for a small newspaper that was just being re-established was very difficult, (Mupeso, personal communication, 2013).

Thus, the problem of newspaper sustainability in a small and competitive market is paradoxical. Hence, in this case, striving for diversity appears to contradict the logic of the market. On the other hand, diversity in the limited sources of revenue results in fledgling newspapers which compromise the values of journalism in pursuit of survival, and in the process creating a weak professional culture. This volatile economic situation and weak and changing media structures create a small market characterised by a heavy drought in media resources, that is, advertising and infrastructural, and subsequently continues to scare off large media multinationals. Thus, as observed in chapter five, big global media conglomerates such as the Walt Disney Company, Time Warner and Viacom have indeed shunned the country because the market cannot support them. Nevertheless, satellite channels such as MultiChoice DStv and GTV have found their way into the country. And in order to protect themselves from the weak financial market and the unstable Zambian Kwacha, the companies' subscription fees were pegged in United States dollars, that is until the Zambian government implemented new fiscal policies which prohibit businesses from transacting in foreign currency. It wasn't long before GTV succumbed to hostile business environment as the company was liquidated in 2009 citing financial and global economic crisis as the reasons for the closure<sup>38</sup>.

On the other hand, DStv remains operational. Despite perennial customer complaints over high subscription rates, the company has shown great resilience. Its greatest test came in March, 2015, when it increased its subscription rates by 20 percent. This triggered a coordinated campaign of complaints on social media by customers who petitioned and threatened to discontinue subscriptions if the company did not reduce the rates. The campaign caught government's attention, compelling Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services Chshimba Kambwili's announcement to the press that he would summon MultiChoice Zambia management to persuade the company to reduce the rates. Despite this pressure from the subscribers and the government, in a statement published on its website, MultiChoice maintained its position to increase the rates:

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<sup>38</sup> Zambia Daily Mail, February 1, 2009: The termination of services followed a decision by the London-based parent company, Gateway Broadcast Services, to go into voluntary liquidation due to the global financial crisis.

Effective April 2015, our bouquets will be priced as follows: Premium ZMK 631.00 Compact Plus ZMK 413.00 Compact ZMK 248.00 Family ZMK 158.00 Access ZMK 83.00 PVR Access Fee ZMK 79.00. The MultiChoice cost structure has, like any other business, various input costs, which include salaries, technical infrastructure costs, satellite lease costs, facility costs, marketing costs and channel costs. In determining the price increase MultiChoice takes into account many factors including the impact on the subscriber, current inflation, and efficiencies effected within the company that may offset the necessity for a price increase. Unfortunately, it is necessary to implement a price increase on an annual basis due to rising costs to the business (DStv Zambia, 2015).

Furthermore, in response to the government's intervention, it was reported that "Dstv tells Zambians to go to hell" indicating that the company would "rather close Zambia's business and do business in other countries because their economy is stable for business" (Independent Observer, 2015). In relation to this, the subscribers' major point of contention was that they were paying higher fees than South African subscribers. To this, MultiChoice management responded that Zambia cannot pay the same price as South Africa because the latter is in a different market. In a statement published in the media, the company said the price of pay television in a particular market is determined by issues of taxation, regulation law enforcement levels and piracy, explained the managing director. Most notably, he attributed the price increase in the DStv subscription to the depreciation of the Kwacha against the United States dollar, and satellite and channel costs (Nyati and Mwape, 2015).

Even if the foregoing MultiChoice DStv situation does not directly relate to newspapers *per se*, it nevertheless intensely demonstrates the perils in the Zambian media market. In fact, it can be argued that the presence of these satellite channels on the market is what partly limits advertising resources for newspapers. This is indicative of how the diversity of media, including the assertion that online media is killing newspapers (Papathanassopoulos, 2001) is significant to the study of political economy of communication. The SADC Communications Environment report indicates that the 15 competitive online media have been partaking in the limited traditional media's potential advertising resources (SADC, 2013). A substantial seven percent of advertising revenue benefitted by online media clearly shows the competitive strength and signs that the influence of digital technology is indeed becoming pervasive in the country. On this point, McQuail (2010) was not wrong to project the power of communication

technologies, and it is right to argue that the bombardment of the average citizen by a continuous flow of information from the electronic and online media takes them away from the printed page. Another veteran journalist, Edem Djokote (2013) however, believes that newspapers need to be more creative and reinvent themselves to be able to compete against electronic and online media. Djokote attributes the loss of newspapers' comparative advantage to the lack of critical investigative and issue based journalism. Now it is evident that, in addition to converting readers, electronic and online media are taking away from newspapers' share for advertising revenue. In sum, numerous questions are raised today about the survival of newspapers in Zambia because they face a market crisis as they struggle to attract advertisers and readers alike.

### **Influence on Editorial Autonomy**

Given that media markets are driven by advertising resources, the implications of the influence of corporate advertisers are reinforced in smaller markets, and editors face even more taunting challenges guarding against infringements on their editorial integrity. Editors and newspaper proprietors' responses do not only suggest the significance of advertising to sustaining the media business, but the pressure advertisers exert on content. *Zambia Daily Mail* news editor said:

Because advertising is our bread and butter, it has an edge over editorial; because that's where the money, the salaries come from (Banda, 2013).

*The Post* senior general manager conceded dependence on advertising, but at the same time upheld the paper's editorial integrity:

For revenue, we are dealing with large corporations and big companies, so we have a lot of reliance on advertising from them for the survival of the newspaper. Sometimes, they [corporations] raise concerns, but we always draw a distinction. We tell them that we draw a line here; we understand your concerns, but we cannot compromise on the editorial content (Chifuwe, 2013).

*Times of Zambia* managing editor observed:

Advertising is the financial base of the newspapers. Clearly the positive aspect of advertising is that it gives us the income we need to sustain our operations. Without advertising, any newspaper is as good as dead. The negatives: Advertising can be used as a weapon to twist the editorial policy of a newspaper. Some advertisers like their influence to run through the newspaper. They get offended when they see something critical about their institution. If they have been supporting you with advertising, they will not take kindly to seeing the newspaper write something critical about their organisation, hence compromising the editorial freedom of a newspaper (Malama, 2013).

The *Daily Nation* proprietor noted:

Advertising support is very limited and it's the only way you can get real support to sustain a newspaper. But it comes with its own challenges. For example, the network providers [telecommunication companies], they provide such shoddy services but you find that when they are giving you advertising, it is difficult to criticise them (Sakala, 2013).

These comments prove and show how deep-rooted advertiser influence is. For a number of newspapers in fact, advertising support makes the difference between life and death. This therefore suggests that advertiser pressure on newspapers is much greater in smaller markets than is suggested in most textbooks authored by Western scholars. Since, as earlier mentioned, advertising accounts for much of the newspaper revenue, the percentage profit gleaned from such a relatively tiny advertising market demonstrates the corresponding diminutive size of the newspaper industry. As such, this higher dependence on advertising results in a higher dependence on corporate entities and in a higher vulnerability to external influence on editorial autonomy, and ultimately, the vulnerability of the industry to financial influence. This is in perspective of the idea that the quality of media production depends on the availability of resources to support the process. "Accordingly, larger and wealthier markets (with greater resources available for the provision of media) can afford a greater quality and diversity of output than smaller market" (Balčytienė, 2009: 39). As a result, newspapers in the Zambian market have experienced a lot of pressure for corporations commanding differential resources for newspapers coverage influencing power relations (Zambia Media Barometer, 2013). This has been through the way they influenced content of stories carried by the papers. For example,

in 2006, Airtel Zambia (then Celtel Zambia) following a publication of customer complaints in the media issued an instructive memorandum to all media houses in the country to desist from covering negative stories about the company. The letter read in part:

In an effort to avoid potential conflicts, it is required that Celtel Zambia be alerted in advance of any and all editorial content that encompasses sexual, political, social issues or any editorial content that could be construed as provocative or offensive (Hamusokwe, 2009: 116).

Furthermore, *The Post* general manager for marketing points out that in 2010 the paper was threatened with the withdrawal of advertising by companies such as Airtel Zambia, SPAR Supermarket following the coverage of stories of consumer complaints about the companies' poor services.

In addition, the pressure that newspapers face against corporations was noted by the former ZDM managing director. He concedes that newspapers usually deliberately dress up advertising as editorial content for corporations in order to please them and get more advertisements. The *Daily Mail* front page in 2007 was invaded by Handyman's Paradise Ltd, which convinced the paper to be running daily story-like messages carrying a banners headline under the paper's nameplate, giving the impression of an editorial front page "fake stories for people rushing to buy products in our shop". The same typographic specifications were used to set both the news and Handyman Paradise advertisements. By using this gimmick, advertisers hope that readers would believe the stories and take action. This is drawn from the notion that psychologically, meaning making is a hermeneutic process of psychological closure accomplished when readers make sense of the juxtaposition whereby readers transfer the meanings of signs, elements or text in newspapers in relation to pre-existing values (Craig, 1990).

The temptation for irresistible offers for money led the paper to be compromised by what the former *Daily Mail* boss referred to as 'crazy advertising tricks'.

A lot of content that is fit to be advertised but is coated looking like a story but sometimes that is deliberate so that you can get adverts from that company so you try to be nice to them and they give you advertising, you write stories about

them so they give you advertising. They really squeeze us sometimes (Chipampe, Personal communication, 2013).

Zambeef PLC is another corporation that graced the media spotlight with what became popularly known as the ‘Zambeef saga’ in 2013. In one of its investigative stories, *The Post* reported that Zambeef PLC, a meat producing company was using aromatic aldehydes (chemicals used for embalming dead bodies) as a preservative for its products (Changala and Sinyangwe, 2013). The story raised public health concerns in Zambia and other countries such as Ghana and Nigeria where the company has spread its operations. As one of the big advertisers in the *Daily Mail*, the company decided to use the paper to defuse the crisis, refute the allegations and clean its reputation as a good corporate citizen. Whatever the rights or wrongs of this particular case, this relationship between newspapers and corporations raises the issue of the potential for corporations to influence newspaper content. This might be done in two ways: on one hand, newspapers voluntarily self-censor their content to avoid offending or to please corporations in return for advertising, and on the other hand, newspapers do so by caving in to pressure from corporations’ threats to withdraw advertising.

In the Zambeef saga, management described the allegation as a “totally malicious externalisation of the unfounded campaign to blackmail and scandalise the company over non-existent tainted meat products”. It claimed that there was a campaign to blackmail the company so that it could lose its entire market portfolio in the region and other parts of the African continent (*Daily Nation*, 18 July, 2013). What is interesting about the Zambeef saga is how the two newspapers (*Daily Mail* and *The Post*) were antagonistically positioned into defender and attacker.

While the *Daily Mail* may have been benefiting from the Zambeef monies towards advertising, supplements and advertorials, it was however alleged that *The Post* may have been working closely with some of its business and political associates, who were perhaps Zambeef’s competitors to weaken Zambeef’s market position (Ngwende, 2013). As already shown in the previous chapter, *The Post*’s diversification strategy extends to Post Farms, thereby setting themselves up as potential competitors to Zambeef.

Scholars (Steinem 1990; Singer 1991; and Bagdikian 2000) have argued that corporations apply economic pressure to influence news content. What is evident that corporate influence is

more prominent on the *Daily Mail* than on *The Post*. This points to the fact that the latter is comparably more diversified with a guarantee of alternative revenue streams. The *Daily Mail* on the other hand exhibits higher levels of dependency on advertising revenues, therefore motivated to provide greater coverage for its advertisers. This strongly suggests newspapers are a playground for ‘propaganda-gymnastics’, as some corporate organisations can ‘fertilize the turf’ with resources just enough for newspapers to survive the harsh economic condition to continue printing, but in the process paralysing the fabric and essence of a free press – editorial independence. If this is the case, does it mean the Zambian market has failed to create an environment for sustaining a free press?

### **Market Failure and the Public Sphere – is interventionism the solution?**

Much as sustaining newspapers in the small Zambian media market is a critical question of this study, realising and supporting diversity and sustaining a free press is even more important. That diversity is not easy to acquire has become clear, especially in the face of the prevailing political economic environment within which newspapers operate. Moreover, as has already been stressed, it is only in large Western markets where competition contributes to diversity. In Zambia, an inverse relationship has been established between competition and diversity. Therefore, striving for diversity of newspapers and intensely competing for advertising revenues contradicts the logic of the market. The result is a small industry with very few newspapers.

In this small Zambian market, what has been clearly established thus far is that the media system is not only influenced by politics, but equally influenced by business considerations of both newspapers organisations themselves and other corporate institutions they interact with. As such, newspapers operate under the pressures of responding to both state and business influences. Hence, this section explores two regulatory approaches to sustaining a free press: the market approach and the interventionist approach. The market approach is based on the classical economic market theory that endorses economic regulation without government (Cuilenburg, 1999). It is located within the framework of the liberal model which in brief asserts “the necessity of the freedom of the press to ensure independence from the state and the consequent ability to perform the political task, for the good of the public, of exposing and criticising abuses and errors in state affairs” (Corner, 2010: 140).

It should be restated here that in the early 1990s, Zambia adopted the free market and liberal ideology to promote media development. Hence, attempts by the government to introduce statutory media regulation later in 2009 were considered to be a step backward and politically unacceptable. Media organisations including *The Post* opposed the government in favour of a voluntary self-regulatory mechanism along the lines of a South African model. The government, however, emphasised the need for a regulation mechanism with registration for journalists, who must fulfil certain training requirements and be accredited through a council. This way, the government argued that the media would perform more responsibly (Press Freedom Committee, 2011). Hitherto, discussions around media regulation in Zambia have continued. Indeed, because of their self-righteous edict, most newspapers and journalists commonly believe that they do not need to be forced to join any form of institution to be regulated. This is in accordance with the liberal market model in which the common media tradition in the country has been to roar out their criticisms on signs of influence from the state. But as Baker (2001) points out, press freedom entails being free from political and economic constraints alike. Besides, in small markets such as Zambia's, economic constrictions have been seen to be equally pervasive.

Emphasis should be made that these ideological issues shape journalism discourses, and the market approach gives salience to corporatism. It is indisputable that commercial interests are overwhelmingly taking over, and lines between commercial and editorial interests are becoming even more blurred. Even if *The Post* maintains that it has stood by its editorial policy, one of the newspaper's former editors voiced that "while the paper [The Post] claims that they are not influenced by their financial securities, in practice the reality is different. *The Post* has made a lot of decisions to suit their business interests and financial security than safeguarding the editorial policy" (Mukoka, personal communication, 2015). Generally, the media climate in Zambia seems to be ruled by survival mechanisms for financial security. As such, big newspapers such as *The Post* have spread their investments. This growing common understanding was echoed by *The Post* management that the newspaper market is very small, hence "the need to look at other areas that can bring in money for the organisation" (Chifuwe, personal communication, 2013). Furthermore, agreements which compromise both editorial policies and public interest have been struck with corporate organisations. Subsequently, the need to survive financially overrides the need to uphold professional principles of public accountability.

Developing an appropriate media regulation framework becomes problematic in such a market and professional environment. Moreover, how appropriate would it be to ‘import’ a South African regulation framework and directly translate it into the Zambian context? It must be carefully considered that practices of media regulation from a developed economically superior South African society may be too foreign for the Zambian contexts, and as such may not meet the Zambian expectations. The impact of South Africa as a regional media power is undisputable (Teer-Tomaselli *et al.*, 2006). Zambia’s dependence on production materials such as newsprints and other equipment, including media content defines the relationship between the two countries. It is one-way traffic. In fact, even if South Africa is a middle group economy, relating the two markets reveals great economic downsides for Zambia because of overdependence on importation. The Zambia market does not allow for a complete self-supply of media production materials, resulting not only in higher production costs but also a smaller domestic sales market. What remains to be seen in terms of media regulation is how appropriate it would be to govern an import market with ‘imported deregulation’ (from South Africa) that were made for an export market. It would be expected that the country’s media system would be built around its own liberalisation and deregulation to encourage responses from indigenous political and economic interests.

Certainly, the liberal market offers benefits for both creating a conducive environment for professional journalism and sustaining a free press, but they are not immediately productive for the infantile Zambia market. Not only has the market led philosophy failed to uphold the professional ethics, it also does not work fairly in supporting diversity. As Curran (1991) argues, it restricts market entry to powerful capitalist interests. As such, commercialisation undermines public good and advertisements are a form of propaganda for capitalism. It lays the interests of the public at the sacrificial altar at the expense of financial sustainability. Ultimately, the Zambian media market is inadequate to support the development of newspapers, let alone sustain a free press. Accordingly, it is highly questionable whether different viewpoints can be represented in such a small market.

For this reason, this study turns to establish whether interventionism is/can be a useful approach to examining media freedom and regulation in Zambia. The interventionist approach involves the government support to media development through an active media policy, thereby correcting the failures of the market (Puppis, 2009; Balčytienė, 2009). In fact, in line with Mwanawasa’s skepticism (*see Chapter 5*), during his presidency that if privatised, state owned

media institutions would be mismanaged and even run down, Siegert (2006) argues that the media in small countries face more difficulties in surviving and at the same time fulfilling their cultural and social obligations than the media in bigger countries, justifying the significance all kinds of political regulation and interventions for the former. Therefore, going by what is undertaken in the Zambia media, it can be argued that there is need to consider the possibility of forms of subsidies to offset the consequences of the market imbalances.

As has been exhaustively discussed, the third republic was introduced with liberalisation promises that the government would walk away from media control; media would finance and regulate itself and; that there would be no more government subsidies. In addition, the 1996 media policy declared to support infrastructure which would form the basis for a range of incentives to encourage private sector participation and investment in the media and support industries. This, it claimed, would ensure that the media operate in an environment which respects and supports press freedom as a backbone of democratic governance (Zambia, 1996). In reality none of this was achieved. The state continued to look for every opportunity to get involved in the business of the media. Since the government retained ownership of the media, it continued to provide subventions, though irregularly (Chipampe, 2013). Furthermore, through the state's endorsement for the solicitation for media support resources from external co-operating partners (Zambia, 1996), and with financial assistance from the Norwegian government, the Media Trust Fund was established in 1998 to support both public and private media. However, it was observed that the funds allocated were far too little to make any meaningful impact. Besides, issues of eligibility and criteria marred the funding process, as the government saw it as an opportunity for media regulation (Saluseki, 2004). In 2010, the government established the Media Support Fund to help the state-owned institutions alleviate capacity issues. It is not clear whether private media can tap into the fund, but Kabwe (2015) is doubtful that this was to be the case, the beneficiaries would be those with political connections and are in good standing with the government.

Although they are favoured by relatively lax registration and regulatory demands, as already discussed, newspapers operate under severe conditions (including high duty on newsprint), which could be slashed off if the government was genuine over its commitment to provide incentives for media development. Meanwhile, licensing of private broadcasting is subject to very prohibitive conditions featuring exorbitant application and license fees. Media policy is silent on regulation pertaining to competition and media concentration. In addition, government

has over the years employed political mechanisms of restricting cross ownership. This makes it difficult for a newspaper company to own a television or radio station and vice versa. At the time of writing, in terms of media concentration and cross ownership, only Post Newspapers Ltd had been given a nod to open a radio station and a television station, but no license has been issued. This creates potential risks of change of goalposts by the state. In fact, over the years, there has been a long list of applications for radio and television broadcasting, including cross ownership, which sit completely ignored and unattended to at the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting offices (Kabwe, 2015). It is very clear that despite impressive proclamations by these successive governments about the value of media autonomy in a democratic society, there is little evidence of a genuine commitment to support the media. Thus, Phiri (2010) labels Zambia as a ‘media-phobic state’ and eloquently sums up the governments’ reasoning for skirting around media policy issues in the following paragraph:

Zambian governments love and support democracy if and only when they are in power and in full control. In general, an autonomous media represents a diffusion and dilution of this power. Suddenly, the government finds itself sharing the power of information gathering and dissemination with private and usually competing actors. A free media is inquisitive; it investigates and poses intrusive questions. A free media also prints and broadcasts dissenting voices. All this makes Zambian governments jittery because they would no longer be in control of what will be said or revealed. They find it hard to go to bed peacefully not knowing what tomorrow’s headlines will announce. It becomes preferable to hold on to restrictive legal regimes and police the media using shifting policy positions (Phiri, 2010: 146).

Hence, in relation to Baker’s (2001) observation, it is inevitable that interventions will be censorious, controlled by those in power merely to maintain their cultural, economic, or political hegemony, or they will be ineffectual for whatever legitimate goals exist. To those with political power, the current state of the press in Zambia seems to be exactly how they would like – vulnerable, weak and helpless. The government makes promises, offers subsidies and the press obliges – toothless watchdog. This is how the measures which were taken at the beginning of the Third Republic in order to spur the reinforcement of a free press remain to this day. This is contrary to Western states such as the United Kingdom and France which subsidise even private newspapers. Moreover, unlike in Zambia, state subventions in these countries is independent of editorial stand or political orientation of newspapers (Jouët, 2010;

Corner, 2010). This explains the high ranks earned by such states on different press freedom indices.

### **Survivalism in Newspapers?**

After a snap exploration of the regulatory approaches, the study shows that the prospect of relying on state intervention is a troublesome one, considering that the Zambian government is a partner that proves to be far from always consistent. Indeed, interventionism has a double character both *negative*, a means of controlling the press, and *positive*, a means of sustaining the press. But seeing that the market has also proven to be unreliable as it has not offered much in terms of helping circumvent statutory regulation, the positive character of interventionism becomes very significant in as much as it keeps the state media alive. Even if the market also remains important for whatever it can offer, evidence in this study shows that the press should neither be subject to state control nor left entirely to the unregulated forces of the market.

The result of the country's partial and negotiated liberalisation is a hybrid media system with two malfunctioning regulatory approaches and a dysfunctional media system. What has emerged in newspaper organisation and practice is a play-off between the market sphere, represented by *The Post*, and the state sphere, represented by the *Daily Mail*. These two spheres provide a valuable prism through which to perceive the nature and arguments of the public sphere in the characteristically polarised Zambian media environment. However, in thinking about evaluating the performance of both frames and their relationship to the political system, the precepts of a liberal model are often employed. In the same breath, emphasis should be made about the continuing power of the Zambian state to strategically manage information in the furtherance of elite interests. However, this study has also demonstrated that the corporate sector has become powerful and the threat it poses to press freedom have considerably grown. In this context, the framework of the free liberal market has also adopted a dual character portraying the identified positive and negative consequences on the press. Therefore, the preceding antinomies in a media system showing failure of both the market and state is a framework which can be applied to a media system whose terms of media development are cardinal, but also liberal in character.

As many newspapers struggle to sustain themselves, the failure of both the market and the state has left them in limbo. Journalism faces a serious dilemma to sustain a free press. Many newspapers have decided to surrender. For those that soldier on, what appears to be trending is

not journalism but, survivalism. Similar to the early 1900s, understanding of the survivalism concept of adapting to political, economic and social crisis situations, in this study the principle applies to how newspapers and journalists alike have adapted and adopted as response to the instability and difficult business conditions. Discussion on newspaper survivalism essentially focuses on the challenges and survival mechanisms newspapers and journalists employ in a crisis media market, whose outcomes may in most cases be dangerous for professional journalism.

Most prominent on the list of challenges is the poor working conditions for journalists. Unlike in most Western based large and wealthy media corporations which ensure better working conditions for journalists, the situation is different in small media markets. Newspapers in Zambia have limited resources and it is not uncommon for journalists not to be paid their salaries for months (Mupeso, 2013). For instance, because the greater “concern is to survive in the market”, at “*The Post*, remuneration is not structured, and journalists are paid based on the “value” that they can add to the organisation. This is a competitive market, and if an organisation has to survive, we need people that add value” (Zambia, 2013: 61). This business logic is a direct trade-off between the proprietor’s interests and the journalist, leaving the latter far from experiencing satisfaction from the job. This situation is worse in state owned newspapers. Mupeso (2013) observed that there is not much that journalists can do because quitting the job may lead to destitution as there are not many employers in the industry. It is not surprising that most reporters consider journalism a stepping stone to better jobs in public relations in other companies.

Notwithstanding, the working conditions in newspapers create a professional environment which is susceptible to unorthodox and unethical practices. Both Banda (2013) and Mukoka (2015) agree that lack of job satisfaction and motivation among Zambian journalists is the root of unprofessional practices. The concern is that the inadequate financial rewards lead some journalists to use unorthodox means of making ends meet. Some even go to the extent of secretly engaging with corporate companies and writing stories for them in exchange for money, Banda disclosed. Mukoka relates this to another a similar trend where journalists represent political parties in the newsroom, but also points out that it is very common for newspapers to openly support particular parties for present or future economic interests. Naturally, this compromises editorial and ethical standards of the profession. Therefore, it is not surprising that the media barometer report casts a gloomy picture on the quality of

journalism. “Reporting consistently does not meet the required standard, to the point that sub-standard journalism has become the norm. An increase in cadre journalism has been observed, wherein stories are one-sided, reflect partisan politics, and are not balanced to ensure all relevant viewpoints,” (Zambia, 2013).

Similar to the governments shifting positions on media reform in the country, newspaper ideological locus has clearly followed the swing of the political economic pendulum. Professional standards and press freedom have gained ground when economic reform surged ahead, but lost momentum when it retreated. It has been particularly established that newspapers have been forging alliances with political and economic elites which have influenced the type of reporting. For example, a newspaper would decide to support or oppose government not because of its expected journalistic role in society, but because of the strategic benefits it gains from such practices. These alliances ultimately determine newspapers’ positions at a particular point in time resulting in irregular ideological oscillations. In as much as these ideological shifts secure financial sustainability for newspapers, they also intensify the tension between the conflicting roles journalists are expected to play, that is, between serving the political elite or the market. Essentially, the seemingly temporary legitimisation of such unprofessional practices and the accumulation of survival effects demonstrate that newspapers are ready to extend the ideological boundaries in an ad hoc manner to be the mouthpiece of the political and economic elites. Hence it is clear that the losses to sustaining a free press outweigh the gains, because in the process, newspapers lose their autonomy on media content, on the perceived role of media, on journalistic values, and even on managerial norms.

## **Conclusion**

The Zambian media system is in transition in the sense that it is in a state of flux, with media institutions continuously improvising to compensate for failures in the market and the state. The crucial question, however, is whether non-routine journalistic practices, or indeed marketisation will eventually lead to a free press. Attested by the case of Zambia, industrialisation, economic growth and marketisation are important enabling conditions for the development of a more liberal press. Without them, newspapers will continue to have little opportunities of economic independence – a precondition for a free and independent press. However, with political interference, industrialisation, economic development and marketisation will not necessarily lead to a free press. Similarly, with the influence of few corporates dominating the small media market, these features will not lead to a free press.

This is borne out by the country whose pace on media reforms coincides with poor economic profile. However, if the brief period of freedom the press enjoyed during the period of democratic optimism and positive prospects of economic development in early 1990s are anything to go by, liberalisation is the foundation of a free press.

## CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS:

### THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE SMALL ZAMBIAN MEDIA MARKET

This study set out to explore the concept of advertising and the sustainability of a free press in Zambia. It has thus far identified the nature and form of the media system; the factors affecting the independence and freedom of the press; the type, the extent, resources required for the sustainability of a free press and the role and impact of policy interventions for creating an enabling environment for a free press. The study had also sought to establish whether the Western conceptualisation of the major trends in the political economy communication can influence African media systems, particularly in a small and less developed country like Zambia.

It is widely acknowledged that major transformations are pushing media systems around the world towards what is termed the liberal system of market-driven de-regulated, convergence and commercialism. Arguments have also been made that global trends in communication technologies have compressed time and space within the media market to the extent of blurring market fragments. Similar claims can be made that, like any other, the Zambian media market is not immune to these trends and is in transition to integrate with the global trends. However, irrespective of some signs of evidence of this transformation, Zambia remains a small country with a small media market. However, the influence of the global trends in the political economy of communication on the Zambian media system has not yet been subjected to adequate academic examination. In fact, this observation can be extended to most third world African countries. As a result, this has led to such countries being subjected to sweeping generalisations made about Western societies. A general reason for this neglect is that scholars in these countries have not taken an interest to interrogate, understand and contextualise the discourse of political economy of communication to their respective societies. Therefore, this has left studies in political economy of communication on the margins of the media and communication studies curricular in Zambia.

In this regard, the study undertook to examine the influence of the global trends in the political economy of communication on the Zambian media market, using a case of the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers. Taking a predominantly historical approach, it focuses on the Third Republic. Of major importance within the investigation was to understand how political economic transformations born of democratisation shaped the structure, editorial integrity and

commercial viability of both the private and the state media systems. Such knowledge is essential for understating the performance of newspapers and prospects of a free press. The general theoretical literature on this subject and specifically in the Zambian context is inconclusive on several vital questions within the political economy of communication discourse. Ultimately, the thesis advocates evidence-based approaches for conceptualising the political economy of communication and among others, sought to answer the following questions:

- How does advertising influence the sustainability of a free press in Zambia in the Third Republic in order to contribute to the debate on the role of its influence on media content?
- How have advertising and political transformation influenced the development of press freedom in Zambia?
- How do media management strategies affect the sustainability of newspapers in Zambia?
- How does the advertising market influence newspaper content and editorial autonomy?

### **Summary of Findings**

In different forms, the answers to the major questions of this study have been integrated in the preceding chapters. The study explores the political economy in the colonial era up to independence in 1964, constantly linking the trends to the development and sustainability of newspapers. This review of historical literature overwhelmingly establishes advertising's influence on the sustainability of newspapers. The study has established how from colonial through the different republics of the postcolonial period, advertising and newspapers have existed like 'conjoined twins', each dependant on the other. That is, on the one hand, newspapers existing as a platform for advertising while on the other, advertising functioning as the main source of revenue for newspapers. Most importantly, they both have been shaped by the same political and economic factors.

However, in the thesis it has also been established that in as much as advertising is key to the survival of newspapers, it can also negatively affect the editorial independence of the press. Hence the epithet that advertising is a 'double edged sword'. Furthermore, the study has also established that newspaper ownership determines, firstly its financial sustainability and,

secondly, its editorial stance. During the colonial period, newspapers were predominantly owned by the British colonial interests, and were therefore used primarily for propaganda purposes. At the same time, this era showed a steady growth in newspapers supported by the booming mining industry, which was the mainstay of Zambia's economy. This development or pattern carried over into post-colonial Zambia to the time when newspapers started changing ownership and the government started implementing political and economic policy reforms. In fact, the government bought the major newspapers, creating a state-owned media, at least in part. These changes in media ownership were effected to reflect the transformation of power structures, and were certainly not unique to Zambia. The media was viewed as pivotal for shifting ideological perspectives to align with the creation of a post-colonial country that represented the needs and concerns of black Zambians. But despite of these shifts, the core function of the press did not change: the government maintaining most of the colonial tendencies and structures including the legal and constitutional framework, oversight frameworks and leadership practices.

However, the pernicious practice of state censorship, media management and control intensified during the one-party state Second Republic, an era which promoted and augmented President Kenneth Kaunda's philosophy of humanism. Accordingly, the press was expected to pander to the whims of the government and, as championed by Kaunda's 1977 *Watershed Speech*, to play a role of unity and national development. To this extent, the media were an integral part of the state propaganda machinery, stifling the prospects away from a watchdog-style free to a press which had to conform to the government's objectives. To ascertain this, the government maintained control of the entire media system. This explains the languid development of private press in the Second Republic.

At the beginning of the 1990s, it was widely expected that with the democratisation of the country, the Third Republic would emerge with brighter prospects for the press. These hopes were based on the common operating assumption that in a democratic society, the media are a natural province of the market (McChesney, 2004). This was complemented by the media's shift from being agents of national development, as the UNIP government would have desired, to being purveyors of democracy. From this construct, the liberal economic policies championed by the MMD government in the early 1990s, meant that the media would be open to market regulation. The general understanding is that when the government regulates the media system, it represents an outside intervening force (McChesney, 2004). Without this

outside force, it was therefore envisaged that media practice in Zambia's new democratic dispensation would approximate the versions of the *New York Times* and the *British Broadcasting Corporation*. However, most of this is constructed around Western and developed societies whose democracies have matured. While there has been a substantial degree of marketisation leading to newspapers in Zambia depending largely on advertising and other business portfolios for their revenues, they have also become extremely partisan and polarised. But also owing to the fact that the advertising market for this underdeveloped country has proven to be very small, it is clear that the pro-corporate approach has failed to sustain the press. In light of this, the study has established that market regulation has resulted in an unstable media system needing alternative interventions. This leaves the business of publishing newspapers in Zambia in a precarious state, seeing many titles disappear nearly as soon as they appear on the newsstands. Perhaps Hachten's (1993: 9) assumption is correct, that "newspapers have done best in open, democratic societies with a literate citizenry with high average incomes and under free market economies". Zambia's struggle to approach such conditions means that, for the foreseeable future, the press in the country will continue struggling. Despite their continued survival, the *Daily Mail* and *The Post* have had their share of challenges.

Political and economic factors remain the core impediment to media freedom in Zambia. In as much as there has been political change, it is very far from clear that the country has become anything resembling full democracy, and the media are not free. The Freedom House, an international organisation which assesses each country's degree of political freedoms and civil liberties in the world, continues to place Zambia in the 'Not Free' rubric. Media institutions and journalists continue to operate under different restrictions, formal and informal, which greatly cripple their ability to perform their watchdog role and inform the public. Further, there is clear evidence that while the legal position of state owned media might speak of public service, they are, in fact, government mouthpieces. Even in the claim of deregulation, the award of private media licenses is not a matter of competence but of political allegiance. As a result, the practice of journalism has been turned into a competitive marketplace where there are, arguably, little adherence to ethical norms, only commercial and political loyalties. Journalism in Zambia is no longer a noble mission responsible for serving society's information needs, but merely a means to earn money and forge a career, in a practice which this study refers to as survivalism. The main motivation for both media institutions and journalists is political and economic power.

The foregoing factors are clear examples of what can only be regarded as regression from the goals of a market economy and a democratic dispensation. As such, the inevitable conclusion must be that, whatever the situation in Western societies might be, Zambia exemplifies a case of a small country, with a small market, in which market and state regulatory approaches coexist for the survival of the press. Worth mentioning, however, is that these factors and the resulting regulation system that besiege the Zambian media system stand far from representing a successful undertaking as regards sustaining a free press. To augment this argument, the following sections lay bare and categorise the challenges or problems inhibiting the attainment of a diverse and commercially sustainable free press. These include management, political and economic, which result in low credibility, sales and advertisement ratings in general. In essence, these challenges serve to point out specific findings of this study.

### **Management and Governance Related Problems**

One of the major strategic management features that characterised newspapers in Zambia in their pursuit for commercial viability has been diversification. It has been discussed how diversification can strategically improve the newspapers' business potentials in a resource-poor media market. In cases of vertical integration along the media production and distribution channel, diversification considerably reduces the newspapers' vulnerability to fluctuations in the supply and cost of essential materials and services and enables them to regulate and rationalise production more precisely and to increase control over the market (Murdock and Golding, 1973). While acknowledging the strengths of such strategic management practices, it has been established that diversification is in most cases, undertaken at the expense of editorial independence and integrity. As such the newspapers have been perceived to lack credibility. The problem stems from the decrepit media and communication policy. Zambia has not made any serious attempt to develop a satisfactory media and communication policy to satisfactorily address the problems of the media in recent generations. Many issues remain unresolved. These include subsidising the press, development of community media and/or local language media and the general influence of the internet on media and communication infrastructure. This is worsened by the country's political culture and the commanding tendencies of the state towards media operations.

Therefore, with the rare exception of precedence set by courts of law, a lot of misguided policy decisions are made secretly by politicians, thereby resulting in a media system which serves the interests of the political and business elite, while neglecting the broad and significant

interests of the public. For example, in the 1990s, during the early years of democratisation, the debate around media regulation was largely political rhetoric. Although there is no mandatory connection between having a liberal economic environment and having a commercialised media system, the general assumption was that since the government adopted liberal economic policies, the media system would follow suit. In so doing, it was expected that the state would privatise its media institutions. Instead, the government chose not to, and opted to politicise the whole process of privatisation of media institutions. On the other hand, it would be expected that the period would consist of the media policy formulation process which according to McChesney (2004: 19) is a significant but tedious undertaking performed by “bespectacled policy wonks and government bureaucrats addressing obscure technical issues”. However, evidence from several African countries, including Zambia, seems to point to the fact that by default, the nature and position of African governments is that of maintaining perpetual control of the media. In this regard, the real struggle, according to McChesney (2004) is over whose interests the regulation will represent. And this is where media policy making, rather than being dull and tedious, flows with the excitement of politics at its most enthralling. By this logic, much of media policy making or regulation, to the extent it exists, is merely to promote and protect the political and business elites in a society that has largely become undemocratic. By extension, it becomes inexorable that a significantly antidemocratic media system emerges.

Furthermore, the problem of the lack of a clear media and communication policy spreads to media management principles. It has generally been intimated in this thesis that there has not been a strong sense of separation between ownership and control for both newspapers. Contrary to popular normative expectations that professional journalists would determine what ought to be published, in Zambia, the government and private owners control the process of newspaper productions. Boards of directors are directly handpicked by owners to rubber stamp decisions. This happens to the extent that editors and reporters that are deemed perfidious to the interests of the owners are usually fired and replaced with those that are loyal.

### **Market and Technological Related Problems**

Although the liberal market approach has become the worldwide approach for organising communication, and determining the nature of media systems, this study demonstrates that the Zambian market is too small to sustain the newspaper business. To begin with, the country’s media landscape is characterised by inactive newspapers, which besides being registered do

not afford to publish. The market is not as dynamic and lucrative as other markets in affluent societies. This owes to the small population of 15 million and the poor socio-political profile of the country. As Herman and McChesney (1997) noted, commercial media markets are attracted to people with the money to purchase their products and to people with enough money to purchase advertisers' products. "If global advertisers are interested in a sector of the population or region, global media firms will move in quickly to accommodate them," (Herman and McChesney, 1997: 64). But a country like Zambia has never come close to being incorporated into the global media market in an appreciable way. For now, it remains on the periphery.

Regarding press freedom, Kasoma (2000) posits that the existence of the government press in most African countries holds such a dominating position that it stunts the growth of a free press. He argues that the government press swallows up most of the advertising revenue, leaving the private press operating at a loss. Kasoma envisaged that in the absence of the government press, the private press would face fairer competition for advertising revenue in the industry. Accordingly, the number of readers would increase, thereby creating a viable newspaper enterprise with many privately-owned newspapers, he posits. Kasoma's argument is not consistent with this study's findings regarding the small Zambian media market which can only support a small number of newspapers at any point in time, that is, whether government or private. But this only goes as far as economic sustainability is concerned. Nonetheless, the absence of government press may, in fact, be a good indicator of a free press in the sense of professional and editorial autonomy.

The fact is that the media structures in Zambia largely remain unaltered since the Kaunda era. The state-owned multimedia complex which houses the *Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) TV* and the recently established *ZNBC TV 2; ZNBC Radio station 1, 2 and 4*; and the *Zambia News and Information Service (ZANIS)* are still wings of the state. The *Zambia Daily Mail* and the *Times of Zambia* are among other state-owned institutions superintended by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services (MIBS). Besides the aforementioned, the media industry consists of two privately owned daily newspapers and a few privately-owned television and radio station. This shows that there was no privatisation of state owned media, and deregulation was very partial and still politically influenced. There is no indication of concentration of ownership among these institutions. Neither are there strong signs of convergence. The argument has been made in chapter four regarding the lack of cross

ownership concentration among the print, broadcast, telecommunication, music production and film studios and other media platforms in Zambia to sanction a mature technological and organisational convergence. This extends to regulation of convergence and the claim involving “convergence between telecommunication and broadcasting” (McQuail, 2010: 97). Unlike most Western countries and South Africa where the broadcast and telecommunication industries are jointly regulated (Banda, 2006b), in Zambia, the broadcasting sector is overseen by the Independent Broadcasting Authority, whereas the Zambia Information Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA) regulates the telecommunications industry (SADC, 2013). This clearly demonstrates how the Zambian media system is lagging in the global market trends.

Technological developments have had a role to play in these market problems. At a macro level, Zambia faces serious technological challenges. This is evidenced by the country’s failure to switch from Analogue Terrestrial Television to Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) by International Telecommunications Union (ITU) deadline of June 17, 2015. In order to smoothly and effectively effect the change, broadcasters will have to change the mode of transmission from analogue to digital, while the TV receivers will have to be digital ready TV sets. Not only does the country’s broadcasting institutions, especially ZNBC lack the capacity to go digital, but the preparedness of the TV receivers (viewers or consumers) to equip themselves with digital ready TV sets or the current analogue sets with digital set top boxes. This demands heavy financial commitments on both broadcasters and the public. Even more problematic is the fact that the country lacks the industrial capacity and must import digital migration equipment. Yet technical, policy, and economic implications of the process have not been fully addressed. In general, the communication infrastructure that would facilitate for synergies and convergence among different media companies dealing with newspaper and print publishing, music records, film productions, broadcasting studios and other media and entertainment productions are yet to be advanced.

As has already been discussed, there have been huge disparities in the geographic rollout of new technologies in the country. These prompt concerns over an intra-country digital divide. Indeed, a large proportion of the urban population access and use technologies, but some demographic sections including rural populations remain excluded. This pattern is consistent with what Fuchs and Horak (2008) presented, stressing that the gap between the information elite, the participating majority, and the disconnected and excluded is larger in underdeveloped

and developing countries than in developed countries. In addition, Van Dijk (2006) argues that the effect of the digital divide in such a class-divided society like Zambia is that the politically and economically powerful elite tend to become more powerful which results in an increase of socio-economic inequalities. In such an unequally structured society, there is a tendency of centralisation of information, knowledge, and power. “Progressively, more and more people will even be completely excluded from particular fields of society. The result will be first-, second-, and third-class citizens, consumers, workers, students, and community members” (Van Dijk, 2006: 184). The current informational capitalism has the media and new technologies as determinants of symbolic production, allowing the already powerful gain more and more (material and immaterial) resources, hence based on a divided social structure, usage gaps would be likely to grow. Notwithstanding, the effects of these technologies are more pervasive in affluent societies than underdeveloped countries like Zambia.

### **Historical Factors and Political Regulation**

Although the *Daily Mail* and *The Post* have very different trajectories, the challenges they have been facing have not been very different from each other and the entire media system. Other than the widening media landscape, the media industry has not experienced many major reforms from the colonial era. Since time immemorial, the same type of constraints that have been working against the development and sustainability of a free press are still at play. As indicated earlier, after independence, the UNIP government maintained the colonial legal and constitutional framework and oversight frameworks. The only type of media reforms that took place were those meant to impose more restrictions on the media. This thesis in chapter five locates these transitional problems in what Baker (2000: 11) refers to as “structural continuities”. Therefore, what became of Zambia after 1991 is a close resemblance of Baker’s proposition that “new democracies are ‘hybrid’ regimes, a blend of the new democratic institutions with the authoritarian past” (Baker, 2000: 11).

The Third Republic can be broken down into different reigns by different leaders: Fredrick Chiluba (1991 - 2001), Levy Mwanawasa (2001 - 2008), Rupiah Banda (2008 - 2011), Michael Sata (2011 - 2014), and now Edgar Lungu. It has been stated elsewhere that the early years of democratisation promised great opportunities for the media, but all the Chiluba led government did was rhetoric. In many ways, the 1990s were the reverse image of the UNIP years.

Whereas the Kaunda government used the philosophy of humanism and national development to impose restrictions on the media, the Chiluba government's strategy was to create an illusion of media freedom by feeding the public with false hope: none of the promises have been implemented. This continued with other leaders for the rest of the MMD's reign. The 2011 general elections presented a nostalgic atmosphere of the 1991 change of government. Like UNIP, people felt disenchanted and that the MMD had outlived its stay in power (Rakner, 2012). When Michael Sata's Patriotic Front (PF) government assumed power, many people's hopes in Zambia were renewed with his optimistic promises for more money in their pockets (Mulowa, 2011) and to deliver a new republican constitution 90 day after taking over (Mbao, 2011).

It may be argued that the MMD's ideological preference was to liberate the market from government control and foster democratic and economic efficiency, yet based on the government's hesitation to fulfil its promises, one would argue that the intention was to maximise the party's chances of being elected and re-elected. It appears that towards the end of UNIP's rule, the MMD conducted a detailed examination of what voters wanted, and incorporated such aspirations in the party manifesto. Furthermore, there is an interesting pattern in leadership of not only the MMD, but the political parties that have ruled the country. At the critical juncture of the country's transition to democracy in 1990, upon realising that UNIP was headed for a fall, a substantial number of politicians defected to form MMD, in alliance with some unionists such as Fredrick Chiluba who later became leader of the party. Others included Michael Sata, who later became a prominent figure in Zambian politics. For the first three years, Chiluba was deputised by Levy Mwanawasa.<sup>39</sup> Mwanawasa succeeded Chiluba in 2001, and tried to renew the MMD with a *new deal* vision. In as much as he was determined to discontinue the Chiluba legacy, Mwanawasa's administration still had remnants of the old MMD, including former UNIP veterans. Mwanawasa's appointment of Rupiah Banda as his vice demonstrates this cyclic nature of leadership. Banda, who himself was still an active UNIP member on appointment, brought in some of his contemporaries into state administration. But he only ruled for three years before Sata, whose association with UNIP dates as far back as 1963, took over office.

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<sup>39</sup> Who resigned in 1994, but was hand-picked by Chiluba to succeed him at end of the latter's term of office. This angered Sata, who immediately left MMD to form PF.

Yet again, the inclusion of former key members of the MMD cabinet in Sata's new government (Rakner, 2012) builds up the claim for 'recycled' leadership in Zambia. Many politicians from older generations have "survived the transition and transformed themselves into elected presidents and ministers" (Baker, 2000: 12). This demonstrates a striking pattern in continuation of political leadership across the divide of regime change in Zambian politics. In this regard, the study's findings are consistent with Chirambo's (2011) argument that the recycled leadership which suggests that while political administrations have changed five times in Zambia at presidential level, the substance of the leadership has remained the same over time. In actual fact, it is not just the top of the political elite that get to be recycled, most of the civil service leadership, trade unions, judiciary, educational establishments and the media have internalised and survived the system. But as Baker (2000: 9) aptly puts it: "regimes carry with them historical baggage, legacies which can influence the present and the future". The mass media offer a good illustration of both the extent to which historical baggage and legacies are carried over and retained in same minds. Therefore, the cyclic nature of this type of leadership and the absence of radical change in personnel, and therefore in policy, is regarded as the fundamental problem inhibiting media reform and the prospects of a mature democracy which may sustain a free press. It also implies that old attitudes to media power and policies may still be influencing the ruling elite in the country who have gone through this political and ideological conditioning. Just as Berger (2006) observes that media systems in the African marketplace operate according to the rhythms of political lifecycles, Zambia typifies this assertion. The resulting situation is an unstable and random media system.

Furthermore, the smallness of a country like Zambia implies the smallness of its elite. The small number of powerful politicians has intensified the possibilities of recycling leadership. This is because politicians in the country have a tendency of defecting to the opposition party which they think is likely to win an election. The composition of parliament reflects this very well. Through reconciliation of interests, as discussed in chapter five, political defections and by-elections, the ruling party tries to ensure that it has the majority representation in parliament. Therefore, with respect to politics and media policy formulation, the ruling elite easily build consensus and collaborations towards legislative decisions which sustain their stay in power. Hence with such legislative structures, it appears improbable that any fundamental and complete deregulation in the media system will take place. No wonder Okigbo (1995) postulates that the attainment of free press in Africa is not simply ascertained by the replacement of one party regimes with popularly elected government. The Zambian case

suggests that what would determine a free press is a radical transformation of historical baggage and legacies alongside adequate professional journalistic training and a conducive economic environment.

Furthermore, Baker (2000: 10) presumes that these structural continuities are likely to produce “a political and social context conducive to violence, disregard for the rule of law, corruption and a politics that is conducted through clientelism”. The Zambian case may demonstrate subtle degrees of political clientelism. The study demonstrates that there has been a unification and consolidation of the state machine and a network of alliances between political and economic power in which the state plays a predominant role. The media illuminate this process quite clearly, having openly pursued business and economic interests, most media institutions have now joined the world of politics. Especially because of the liberal market economy, the worlds of politics and business have merged media in Zambia, as de Smaele (2010: 58) would put it, “media are not close to politics or business, but to politics and business”. These alliances forged between politicians, business and the media at different points in time may have been inspired by the possibilities of opportunities for exchanges of favours between and among political and economic elites. The media are now dancing with wolves, as Gross (2008) might say.

In relation to journalism practice, the result is that the profession has been increasingly subordinated to the twin pressure of market and politics (Sparks, 2010). As has been shown already, political subordination is a hangover from the past, but the market wields its power through advertising and ownership of the means of production. From the findings, it very clear that newspapers in Zambia have forcefully sought material that builds both readers and advertising, but this market driven journalism has not been enough to systematically challenge the state.

This presents a gloomy state prognosis for a free press in Zambia. Writing in 2000, Kasoma predicted a free and independent press in Africa in the first decade of 2000s. However, this was based on an optimistic assumption that democracy matured in a manner that the state surrendered ownership and control of the press (Kasoma, 2000). What he did not anticipate, however, was that the state’s propaganda apparatus would reinvigorate itself and sustain its detailed control over the politics and the economics of the press. Therefore, in order to survive, both state and privately-owned press have had to find opportunities to develop close relations with the state, in which they trade economic favours for ideological support. In the absence of

such opportunities, they would have to oppose the party in power and support a leader with whom they can reconcile their interests. Clearly, the pursuit for economic survival has transformed the newspaper business into an opportunistic enterprise, playing a power game at the expense of being an independent channel of information for the public. As the state renews itself, so does the press, and old habits die hard.

### **Theoretical and Pedagogic Implications**

The ferment in the communication field which is evident in American and European communication scholarship has not been felt in Africa. The African communication environment is still very dormant and tranquil because of the social and political climates that are primarily anti-intellectual, and the dearth of trained communication scholars with active interest in expanding the horizon of knowledge and inquiry in the field (Okigbo, 1987: 19).

Even if Okigbo made this claim about three decades ago, it still stands true today and this creative ferment in American scholarship has not yet diffused into most African countries including Zambia. This is especially so in the field of political economy of communication, which remains under researched. No theoretical frameworks have been developed to guide in scholarly explication of the political economy of communication in the African context. Instead, what has diffused are the American and European interpretations and assumptions about forms, structures and functions of communication and media systems in Africa. It is in the spirit of Okigbo's statement that this study launched an inquiry into the Zambian political economy of communication to examine the factors influencing a free press. In so doing, it has challenged the popular conception of political economy of communication as Western oriented, lacking Zambian depth. For example, when McChesney (2004: 225) claims "any discussion of media ownership raises questions about heavily concentrated private control over media. It is a worldwide phenomenon and a worldwide problem. Around the globe, media systems are controlled by a small group of wealthy firms or individuals," he does so without consideration of the different political economic conditions in different parts of the world. In fact, this thesis has established that such a discussion would not raise questions about heavily concentrated private control over media in Zambia.

Using the small country, small market approach, the thesis argues that Western conceptualization of the political economy of communication is insufficiently universalisable

to explain the Zambian media system and the sustainability of its press. At first glance, Zambia's media appear to fit the common framework of concentration of ownership, privatisation of state media and deregulation, but anomalies appear after a critical examination. There is a clear disconnect and little congruence between the political and economic realities of developed and resource-rich countries and developing and poor countries.

### **Typology of the Zambian Political Economy of Communication**

To buttress the foregoing argument, the thesis has developed a typology of the Zambian political economic of communication in relation to the sustainability of a free press. Like the discussion in chapter four, the typology takes a comparative approach, pinpointing the characteristics of the different media systems.

In terms of the political system in Zambia, political rhetoric has persistently sustained the illusion of a reformist media system, but in reality, recycled politicians' undemocratic mentalities, values and attitudes have retarded the growth of media freedom. Therefore, the essential concerns associated with a significant transformation in the Zambian media have remained unsettled. This raises questions about the nature of the country's democracy.

Contrary to Western democracies, the Zambian political system has clearly been opposed to media reform and only embraced few "elements of market transition and decided to maintain greater continuity with the previous hegemonic system" (Jakubowicz and Sükösd, 2008: 29). Liberalisation and commercialisation principles of the media system which were introduced in 1991 were not allowed to develop fully. Instead, concentration of media ownership has remained with the state. However, one thing in common with the Western-style is that either way, concentration of media ownership or absence of concentration of ownership produce undesirable effects by giving control to a small group of individuals. Whereas the Western style speaks of a small group of international private firms or individuals, for the Zambian system, power remains in hands of a few local political elite.

The Zambian newspaper business is in a precarious state. This is partly because of the under industrialisation of the country. Newspaper production equipment and material, such as newsprint, ink and other printing accessories are imported from South Africa, thereby raising the cost of production. In addition, these materials attract high taxes and duty. Newspaper distribution is also poor and costly. The dilemma of reaching economically disadvantaged demographics with news has proven to be a necessary, but loss-making endeavour.

Perhaps similar to the Western style of newspaper business management, diversification has proven to be a strategic way of handling risks in the industry. Indeed, it is acknowledged that like in Western democracies, media institutions in Zambia exist as part of business and politics. But what is potentially detrimental to the newspaper business is the form of diversification into unrelated business. This essentially takes the attention away from the core business, compromises the credibility of the newspapers, and results in political clientelism.

These relations of patronage between media institutions and politics have resulted in a questionable private media-state framework in which private newspapers become part of the state propaganda apparatus and trade economic favours for ideological support. Sometimes these favours may not only relate to advertising per se, but supplementary economic benefits for other business units (within the newspaper company's business portfolio) from the state.

What has also been established as another effect of the country's poor industrial base is the diminutive and stagnant advertising market. In resource-rich Western democracies, newspapers have a vast pool of advertising reserves (McChesney, 2015). In Zambia, a handful of top advertisers dominate the market with relatively low ad spend per annum. Coupled with other demographic factors, this small advertising market stunts the growth and sustainability of newspapers. Added to this challenge is the newspapers' overdependence on this handful of multinationals who often exploit this leverage to influence editorial content.

Therefore, such challenges have placed severe strains on the development of a free press and journalism as an autonomous profession in Zambia. They break down the autonomy of editors and reporters, forcing the logic of journalism to merge with other political and economic interests of owners. It has been discussed that the notion of professionalism which forms the basis for journalists' claims of autonomy is justified by the idea that journalists serve a public interest (Hallin and Papathanassopoulos, 2002). It is therefore expected that public interest transcends the interests of particular political parties, owners and advertisers. However, this study establishes the opposite in the case of Zambia. The overriding importance given to political and commercial interests diminishes the prospects of a free press in the country.

As can be seen, the issues that besiege the Zambian media systems and the sustainability of newspapers are very elementary. They consist of what Abraham Maslow would characterise

as lower level or basic needs. The problems, including lack of newsprint and ink, high import taxes, lack of political will and regulation, inadequate technological infrastructure and the generally slower industrialisation have to be addressed before turning to higher level problems faced by resource-rich Western democracies. Therefore, the approach to political economy of communication would not be scientifically and epistemologically coherent if it did not empirically position itself with third world countries, within their political and historical structures. In this case, attention must then be paid to basic existential factors of a newspaper before asking questions of concentration of ownership and convergence. Therefore, the conceptualisation of the political economy of communication in Zambia must focus on such nation state idiosyncrasies.

### **Pedagogic Implications**

It has been widely established that the political economy of communication is an extensively acknowledged approach to understanding media systems around the world. What must be clearly understood is that this study is not in dispute with the approach itself, but the dominant character of its universalised application to underdeveloped countries like Zambia. Apart from theoretical implications, pedagogic implications abound in the forms of globalisation of education and the political economy of knowledge production. This emanates from the fact that the Zambian media system is under-researched, especially in the area of political economy. Universities in Zambia mostly focus on being primarily teaching institutions, thereby neglecting the research aspect. Generally, they do not provide a research-friendly environment for Zambian academics or students. This implies that for teaching, academics look elsewhere for content, knowledge and analytical frameworks. This is how foreign materials originating mainly from well-developed academic systems of the North, especially the United States and the United Kingdom find their way into the Zambian system. In line with Altbach's (2004) observation, common textbooks, course materials and syllabi, stimulated by the expanding influence of multinational publishers and the internet have been imported for use in Zambia. Basically, most of the developments taking place in Zambia are a backwash of the more dominant trends in the West. The challenge lies in the possible misinterpretation, lack of modification of Western ideas to fit into the local context. For example, to date, the undergraduate programme at the University of Zambia's Department for Media and Communication Studies uses the United States Peter Zenger trial<sup>40</sup> for conceptualising press

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<sup>40</sup> Ford, E. H., and Emery, E. (1954): John Peter Zenger (October 26, 1697 – July 28, 1746) was an American printer and journalist in [New York City](#). In late 1733, Zenger began printing *The New York Weekly Journal*, in

freedom, using the American libertarian philosophy. This shows how the dominance of Western ideas results in the loss of intellectual and cultural rigour and autonomy by scholars in smaller academic systems.

This dominance is also reflected in that there are probably more international scholars who have researched and published about the Zambian media system than local academics. Most of these who write about Africa, and Zambia in particular draw on Western, functionalist frameworks of analysis (Skjerdal and Tomaselli, 2016), usually side-tracked by “ideological blinders” Hachten (1993). Hachten (1971) suggests that it is because some of the researchers making such sweeping assumptions had not even set foot on the continent that “their explanations seem far removed from the real world” (Hachten 1993: 109).

The discipline of the political economy of communication in Zambia needs to be investigated further than advertising and the sustainability of a free press. Therefore, the need to build local competence cannot be overemphasised. The primary reason for the lack of vigorous research in this field and the general area of media and communication studies is the lack of financial resources. But as De Beer (2008) points out, beyond financial constraints, there is need for a home-grown paradigm within the local context. This will not only help to emphasise distinctive features when theorising about Zambia, but will also facilitate the development of learning materials which are relevant to the needs of the country’s academic system and help address local realities.

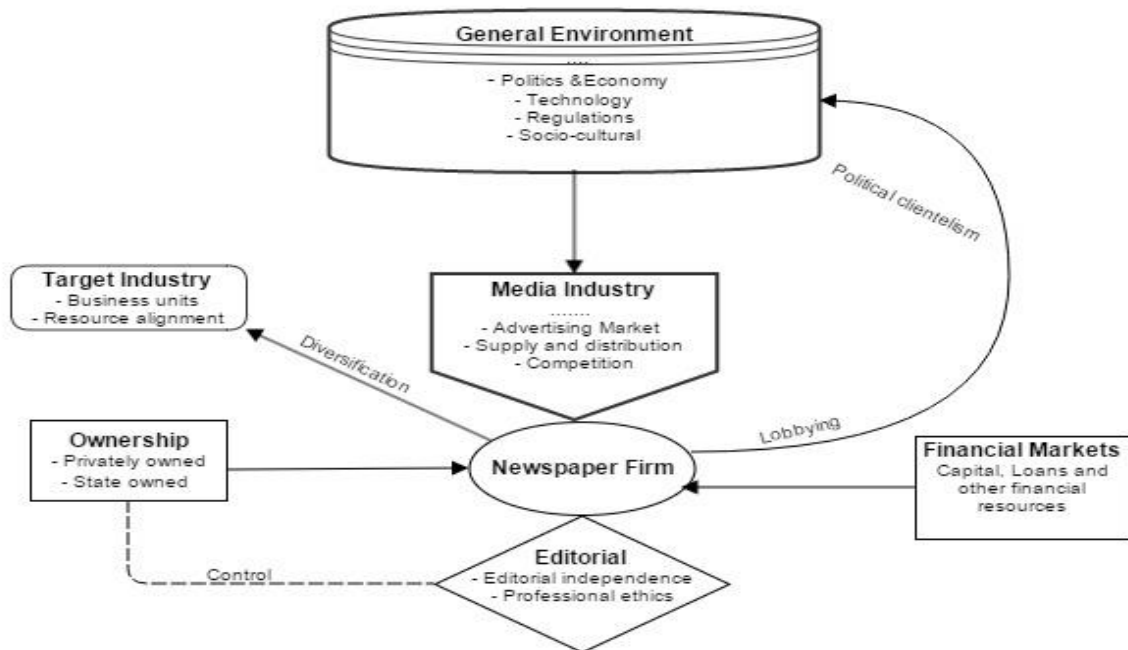
### **Factors influencing newspaper sustainability in Zambia: Analytical framework**

Finally, this study posits that there is a wide range of environmental factors that influence the sustainability of a newspaper. These include the general environment such as political, regulatory, economic, technological and cultural influences. Therefore, sustainability of a newspaper organisation is a combination of factors influencing each other in the formulation of strategy. The most immediate ones are the company’s capabilities, which in this case are defined by ownership and resources. For both private and state-owned newspapers, the axis of survival is financial capital investment. A state-owned newspaper, however, has the support of the government in addition to already existing strategic alliances with sister

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which he voiced opinions critical of the colonial governor, [William Cosby](#) and later discovered readers loved it when they criticized the local governor. But the governors discovered they could shut down the newspapers charged Zenger for criminal libel. The jury acquitted Zenger, who became the iconic American hero for freedom of the press.

companies within the cluster of parastatals. Thus, emphasis has been put on the fact that both state owned and private newspapers have to establish financial independence as a precondition for editorial freedom. At the same time, hovering over both financial and editorial independence is the country's political and legal systems which have been found to be the root for major impediments to a free press.



**Figure 12: Proposed analytical framework: Factors influencing newspaper sustainability in Zambia. Constructed by author**

This certainly confirms Picard's (2002) model, discussed in chapter one, about the forces influencing the sustainability of the media companies. The difference, however, is that the model may not exactly be fitting for a small, sluggish market with problematic political system. At a more general and extra-organisational level, the study uses the resource based view and adapts the framework to the Zambian situation. In his framework, Picard's articulation about the role of political and market factors is understated when translated to the Zambian situation. This goes to show how these influences may differ from one country to another. It can therefore be argued that country-specific conditions in the media and communication environment such as a country's media and communications infrastructure, and more rudimentary characteristics including market size, growth rate, profitability and competition should be taken into consideration. Therefore, to a great extent, no matter how distinctive a business model may be, the political system has a huge hand in shaping the state media system in Zambia.

Using the resource based view, the study has also demonstrated that company resources are greatly affected by the prevailing circumstances in the media industry. The level of industrialisation, the size of the advertising market, level of completion, the perception of the product, sources and supply of production inputs all impact of the cost of doing business. However, owing to high production costs which consequently affect the bottom line, newspapers are compelled to strategise and explore other revenue streams. Diversification has been the common outcome. In line with this, the study has also established that while diversifying and pursuing other commercial interests, newspapers tend to lose focus on the core editorial business. On the other hand, it is argued that editorial independence can be used as a strategic resource to attract more business. This emphasises the claim that ‘good journalism is good business’. It is also consistent with Meyer’s (2009) argument of the influence model which supposes that by upholding editorial integrity, a newspaper gains more believability and credibility and subsequently becomes more influential to society. Meyer argues that this social influence places the newspaper at the centre of society and translates into commercial influence, which attracts more advertisers. Used in this manner, editorial becomes a valuable strategic resource. Hence, this study makes a proposition that, alongside the business units they are diversifying into, newspaper companies should maintain and continue investing in their core editorial businesses. In sum, although organisational constraints and the pursuit for survival may, in most cases, preclude professional principles in Zambia as elsewhere – good journalism will translate into good business.

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**Appendices:**

**Appendix 1**

**Informed Consent Form**

**Topic: The Sustainability of a Free Press in Zambia's Third Republic: A case of the Zambia Daily Mail and The Post newspapers**

**Respondent's Consent**

**Dear respondent,**

You have been selected to take part in this research study on: *The Sustainability of a Free Press in Zambia's Third Republic: A case of the Zambia Daily Mail and The Post newspapers*. Your contributions in answering the questions in this paper will be highly appreciated. You are, therefore, kindly being asked to answer each question truthfully and honestly. You are not obliged to write your name anywhere on this paper and your responses will be treated confidentially.

**Tick appropriately:**

I confirm that I have read/ or the study information has been read to me and I understand the purpose of this study. [Yes/No]

I have had the opportunity to consider the information; I asked questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. [Yes/No]

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason [Yes/No]

I agree to take part in a one on one interview. [Yes/No]

I agree to have the interview audio recorded [Yes/No]

I agree to take part in the study. [Yes/No]

_____	_____	_____
Name of Participant (print)	Date	Signature *(thumb print)

_____	_____	_____
Name of Interviewer	Date	Signature

\*In case the respondent is not able to sign this form, this attests that the consent form has been read and explained accurately by the researcher, and that the respondent has fixed his/her thumbprint as consent.

**Researcher's Statement**

*I, the undersigned interviewer, have explained to the participant in a language he/she understands, and he/she understands the procedures to be followed in the study and the risks and benefits involved.*

_____	_____
Signature of interviewer	Date

## **Appendix 2: Proposed questions for in-depth interviews with past/ senior editors**

The main purpose of the following set of questions is to establish perspectives of the states of press freedom from senior journalists and editors who worked in the First, Second and Third Republics. Further an attempt will be made to determine how political change coupled with advertising tried to influence press freedom in the three Republics.

1. What role has advertising played in the development of press freedom in Zambia in the three Republics?
2. What factors contributed to the development of advertising in Zambia?
3. How is the profession of advertising and the industry organised in Zambia?
4. What are the major trends in the development of newspapers in Zambia?
5. Describe how political transitions from the First, Second and Third Republics influenced the development of the following concepts:
  - a) Newspapers
  - b) Press freedom
  - c) Advertising
6. How would you compare the state of press freedom, with specific reference to newspapers, in the three Republics?
7. What specific benefits did the development of advertising bring on the sustainability of newspaper in Zambia?
8. What negative effects did the development of advertising bring on the sustainability of newspaper in Zambia?
9. How would you describe the *Zambia Daily Mail* newspaper in the three republics in terms of editorial independence, economic sustainability and independence from political interference?
10. Describe how the transition to the Third Republic in 1991 (to multiparty democracy) affected press freedom?
11. How did the liberalisation of the national economy and state media systems affect sustainability of a free press.
12. How do you think the changes in the quantity of advertising affected the sustainability of the press before, during and after the colonial period.
13. What degree of freedom do newspaper organisation possess in relation to advertising, and how much freedom is within the organisation?

14. How would you compare the state of press freedom between the *Zambia Daily Mail* and *The Post* newspapers?
15. How have the different political leaders of the country influenced press freedom during their respective terms as Presidents?
16. Any general comments.

### **Appendix 3: Proposed questions for in-depth interviews with current editors**

The main purpose of the following set of questions is to establish editors' editorial autonomy and the influence of economics and politics on journalism in Zambia.

1. Does your organisation depend on advertising revenue for its operational costs and profit?
2. Describe the significant trends of advertising in the media.
3. How important is advertising to your organisation?
4. How do you describe the relationship between advertising and the media?
5. Do you have a say on editorial decisions?
6. Have advertisers ever dictated the type content your media outlet should or should not carry?
7. To what extent does advertiser influence affect your editorial autonomy?
8. How does your organisation respond to advertisers' pressure to change content?
9. Have you experienced advertiser withdrawals from your organisation because they were not happy with your content?
10. Have you discussed issues of advertising influence on content in your organisation?
11. What kind of decisions have been made regarding the issue?
12. Have the fears of loss of advertising revenue affected the outcome of your discussions?
13. What do you think about the power of advertisers in influencing media content?
14. Do you sometimes think that advertiser influence has a negative effect on media freedom?
15. Any general comments.

#### Appendix 4: Proposed template top five advertising spenders in Zambia

The main purpose of this template is to collect information about companies' advertising profiles in Zambia.

<b>Name of Company</b>				
<b>Dear Respondent</b> This is an information guide for a study titled: <i>The Sustainability of a Free Press in Zambia's Third Republic: A case of the Zambia Daily Mail and The Post newspapers</i> . Your contributions in answering the questions in this paper will be highly appreciated. You are, therefore, kindly being asked to answer each question truthfully and honestly. This information will be used purely for academic purposes.				
1. List media institutions you advertise with	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11.			
3. Briefly describe your advertising policy				
4. On what basis do you select your advertising media institutions				
<i>The following questions are aimed at capturing the trends during the stated period</i>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
5. What was your advertising budget in these years?				
6. In these years, how was your budget divided among media, such as:  <i>In monetary figures</i>	Newspapers [ ] Television [ ] Radio [ ] Online media	Newspapers [ ] Television [ ] Radio [ ] Online media	Newspapers [ ] Television [ ] Radio [ ] Online media	Newspapers [ ] Television [ ] Radio [ ] Online media

	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7. Considering your advertising expenditure to newspapers alone, how was allocation shared among following:  <i>In monetary figures</i>	The Post [ ] Zambia Daily Mail [ ] Times of Zambia [ ] Others [ ]	The Post [ ] Zambia Daily Mail [ ] Times of Zambia [ ] Others [ ]	The Post [ ] Zambia Daily Mail [ ] Times of Zambia [ ] Others [ ]	The Post [ ] Zambia Daily Mail [ ] Times of Zambia [ ] Others [ ]
*May you please avail me with the documents which may contain such information. It will be helpful for citation purposes				

### Appendix 5: proposed information sheet for newspaper organisations

The main purpose of this template is to collect information about the two newspapers' circulation trends and advertising characteristics.

<b>Name of Newspaper</b>		
<b>Dear Respondent</b>		
This is an information guide for a study titled: <i>The Sustainability of a Free Press in Zambia's Third Republic: A case of the Zambia Daily Mail and The Post newspapers</i> . Your contributions in answering the questions in this paper will be highly appreciated. You are, therefore, kindly being asked to answer each question truthfully and honestly. This information will be used purely for academic purposes.		
1. Please indicate the average circulation of your newspaper during these years		<b>Copies</b>
	<b>1999</b>	
	<b>2000</b>	
	<b>2001</b>	
	<b>2002</b>	
	<b>2003</b>	
	<b>2004</b>	
	<b>2005</b>	
	<b>2006</b>	
	<b>2007</b>	
<b>2008</b>		
<b>2009</b>		
<b>2010</b>		

	<b>2011</b>					
	<b>2012</b>					
	<b>2013</b>					
	<b>2014</b>					
		<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<p><i>This is aimed at capturing the trends during the stated period.</i></p> <p>2. In ranking order (from highest to least spenders) list the top five advertiser in your newspaper and indicate the total amount on money each of these companies spent every year.</p>	1.					
	2.					
	3.					
	4.					
	5.					
3. What was your total income from advertising during these years?	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
<p><i>*May you please avail me with the documents which may contain such information. It will be helpful for citation purposes</i></p>						

### Appendix 6: proposed newspaper adverts newshole analysis

The main purpose of this template is to collect data relating to volumes advertisements and editorial content on the front pages of the two newspapers.

<b>Coder's Initials</b>		
<b>Name of Newspaper</b>	1. The Post	
	2. Zambia Daily Mail	
<b>Date - (DAY.MONTH.YEAR)</b>	04.03.13	
<b>Period</b>	1. 1991 - 1995	
	2. 1996 - 2000	
	3. 2001 - 2005	
	4. 2006 - 2010	
	5. 2011 - 2015	
<b>Ad subject</b>		
<b>Above fold</b>	1. Above Fold	
	2. Bellow Fold	
<b>Page</b>	1. Front	
	2. Back	
<b>Ad ID</b>		
<b>Size</b>	1. Full Page	
	2. Half Page to Full Page	
	3. Quarter to Half Page	
	4. Quarter or Less	
<b>Ad Format</b>	1. Display Advertising	
	2. Classified Advertising	
<b>Ad Type</b>	1. Product or service	
	2. Promotes or calls an event,	
	3. Public Service Advertising	
	4. Personal message	
	5. None of the above	
<b>Ad Technique</b>	1. Product	
	2. Image	
<b>Use of Colour</b>	1. B&W	
	2. Colour: two or more colours	

<b>Promotion Device</b>	1. Price Reduction / Sale	
	2. Non-Commercial Event Promotion	
	3. Technical / Description	
	4. Competitive Comparison	
	5. Narrative story	
	6. Contest/ Raffle/ Draw	
	7. Free Gift	
	8. Coupon	
	9. Prices listed	
<b>Contact information</b>	1. Street Address	
	2. Phone / Fax	
	3. Local?	
	4. Web Address	
	5. Facebook	
	6. Twitter	
<b>Photo / Illustration</b>	1. Logo	
	2. Product	
	3. People	
<b>Ad Category</b>	1. Apparel (including shoes)	
	2. Appliances	
	3. Auto (cars, car parts)	
	4. Department Stores	
	5. Education	
	6. Electronics	
	7. Entertainment	
	8. Financial	
	9. Food/ Groceries	