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Master Thesis

Is Enough ever Enough? A case study of #ThisFlag social media movement in Zimbabwe.

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Abstract

There exists substantial amount of research on social media activism and agenda setting. Agenda setting researches are commonly conducted in the Western context without paying attention to dissent and non- Western contexts. However, empirical research is lacking on social media activism in shaping agenda especially in the non- Western countries. Only a few researches have been conducted in the non- Western context, specifically the Arab Spring. Research in regards to other non- western countries like Africa is hugely limited. This thesis seeks to fill the gap by researching social media activism in representing dissent for the case of social media activism in Zimbabwe in 2016. The case study pays close attention to the #ThisFlag movement from the period of April to September, 2016, started by a Baptist Pastor to voice dissent on social media which gained momentum over the subsequent days. The main question of the thesis is to simply understand: What is the influence of social media activism in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping governmental agenda setting in non- Western countries? The thesis delves into the general reflection on social media activism and defining dissent. It further defines agenda and agenda- setting in context, identifying theoretical explanations of dissent in agenda setting.

The case study employs a qualitative method through content analysis in the collection of data. With the enormous amount of data on social media, data is collected from 19th April, 2016, the day of the first video to the 6th of July, 2016 on both social media platforms, Twitter and Facebook respectively. Data is also collected from local Zimbabweans news outlets through the headlines and mentions of the movement over a period of 13 weeks from the 19th of April to the 17th of July, 2016. Despite the large amount of data available, they were appropriately coded to answer the research question.

Empirically, this thesis identifies that for the case of the #ThisFlag movement of 2016, poverty, injustice and inequality were mostly raised as the main issues of concern. Special attention is paid to beliefs and symbols, which lead to alignment of frames. More frames are aligned as people identify with similar beliefs and symbols. This leads to the expansion of issues to a wider audience.

Moreover, focus is shifted to the media agenda and attention of issues on the media. The more issues gained attention on the media agenda the likelihood that it may enter the political agenda. Through the analysis of the data collection on the #ThisFlag movement, the study reveals that there is a strong link between dissent and media activism. However, media activism and agenda setting had a weak link as discussion on the government websites had little or no information linked to the movement.

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Abbreviations

- ACF- Advocacy Coalition Framework
- CIO - Central Intelligence Organization
- ICT- Information and Communication Technology
- NPF- Narrative Policy Framework
- RBZ- Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe
- VPN – Virtual Private Network
- ZANU- PF - Zimbabwean African National Union -Patriotic Front

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1. Introduction

With the growing age of social media, individuals are able to connect and communicate with many people who respond to each other. Social media was created and expanded through the rise of Web 2.0 (Faris, 2013). The age of Web 2.0 has facilitated many-to-many communication and user-generated content, where people link, like and create their own content (Donelan et al, 2010; Bekkers et al, 2011a). This is in sharp contrast with the Web 1.0 that existed decades ago. Web 1.0 facilitated one-way communications where people or government agencies sent across their messages through e-mails or websites and communication was mostly one-on-one (O'Reilly, 2010), as such people barely connected in networks online.

In recent times, Web 2.0 has grown bigger with access increasing rapidly due to mobile media and smartphones (DeLisle et al, 2016). This has reflected in the large number of social media users. Social media has created a "platform for debate and knowledge sharing" (Mustvairo, 2016 p6), which reaches a wide target group in a short time, possibly within seconds. With a new era of social media, users have voiced out their opinions, discontent and views which is broadcasted to their social network on their social media account. "These views may be in support of issues or government policies and in other cases voice out your disagreement with issues". (DeLisle et, 2016 p1). These may in turn affect policy decision makers' decision as it gets on the agenda.

The #ThisFlag movement on social media sparked a lot of concerns among Zimbabweans. On 20, April, 2016, a Baptist pastor Evans Mawaririe shared a video on Twitter and Facebook with the title #ThisFlag, expressing greatly his disappointment and contempt in the Zimbabwean government. (Musarurwa, 2016). "With the national flag draped on his neck, Pastor Mawaririe questioned the promises and meanings embedded in the national flag" (Gukurume, 2017:54). In his video, he commented that "When I look at the flag it's not a reminder of my pride and inspiration, it feels as if I want to belong to another country" (Hove & Chenzi, 2017:183). He challenged the government's authority as it had failed the citizens, and emphasized that the values instilled in the flag were not being fulfilled. As such he urged the values and promises of the flag to be redeemed. (Gukurume, 2017) He also urged Zimbabweans all over the world to share pictures of themselves holding the flag which led to the movement. (Musarurwa, 2016). Many Zimbabweans who were fed up with corruption and injustices of the Zimbabwean government shared selfies of themselves on various social media platforms. What started as a personal rant on social media became a social movement for citizens to show their discontent with government. This also instigated other groups such as #ThisGown, a group of unemployed graduates; Occupy Africa Unity to voice out their opinions as well. (Gukurume, 2017)

1.1 Research question

This research provides an analytical social media content analysis covering #ThisFlag movement from 19 April 2016 to 17th July, 2016, a period of three months. Due to the broad scope of social media, focus is placed mainly on social media activism building on the case study of the social media activism in Zimbabwe in 2016. The goal of this paper is to test and build on existing theories on dissenting voices in social media activism on agenda shaping. A case study is “an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of units” (Gerrings, 2004, p342). Hence, the study of the impact of social media activism in #ThisFlag movement in Zimbabwe would be relevant in understanding the extent to which social media activism in non- Western countries are productive or counterproductive.

Consequently, the research aims stated above seeks to arrive at an answer to the main question. This research seeks to answer the question:

- **What is the influence of social media activism in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping governmental agenda setting in non- Western countries?**

The research focuses on the political or governmental agenda setting from dissent through the use of social media activism. In order to answer the main research question, sub- questions are generated to be able to reach a feasible conclusion. To begin with, in order to answer the main question, dissent needs to be understood. With the main focus on dissenting voices shaping agenda, theories of dissent are emphasized. From a long list of discussion on dissent, the theories of Fraser (1992) and Hirschman (1970) are identified. With the theoretical breakdown, this leads to the sub question:

- What is dissent in policy discourse?

The theories of dissent help to draw a conclusion on dissent as identified by the two scholars stated above.

Secondly, the research also focuses on social media activism. Social media activism is linked to dissent as identified in the research. With regards to social media activism, the term social media and activism are identified. However, as this research focuses on activism, the sub question entails:

- What is activism in relation to social media?

This would be answered looking briefly at the various relations given by scholars (Bennett, 2003; Sandval- Almazan, 2014; Faris, 2013). Social media activism would be described in order to get a better understanding of social media within the context. Social media activism in this context is in line with the argument and theories of dissent.

Thirdly, as the research question focuses on dissent voices through issue expansion and with that focus is shifted to mobilization as identified by Bekkers et al (2011), to explain how mobilization promotes or retrogress how issues are expanded. Mobilization is seen as leading to the expansion

of issues and as such mobilization and its terms are distinguished. As such, the third research goal is to understand:

- What is the role mobilization in expanding issues?

Moreover, the emphasis on the impact on agenda setting, leads to a discussion of the theories of policy process of agenda setting. However, the research looks at the media and political agenda. With political agenda been the end game, this research identifies theoretical assumptions by scholars in line with decisions of policy makers .As such, with the focus on dissent, this research, attempts to answer the sub question:

- Which political agenda setting theories are more explanatory of the link to dissent ?

Lastly, in relation to the main question, the final sub-question is

- How did agenda setting occur in #ThisFlag case?

1.2 Research relevance

Within the political system and public administration discourse, social media is of high societal relevance. Bekkers et al (2011) identify the role of social media in stirring mobilization in the Dutch community. Focus of their research is on social media to mobilize individuals in sharing their discontent, which may or may not influence the decision of policy makers. Through case studies from the Dutch community, Bekkers et al(2011) argue that, “.. the rapid penetration of social media in society has increased the possibilities for individual citizens to gain political attention” (p1). However, this thesis builds on the research of Bekkers et al (2011) and goes a step further. The underlying rationale behind this research is that of social media’s impact in representing dissent voices which may shape agenda. Due to the rapid technological advancement, social media serves as a platform where people express their views with the aim to influence agenda. Therefore, it is imperative to examine whether social media activism indeed has an impact in shaping agenda. However, “The role of social media in dissent is still less understood, especially in non western countries, as seen in Bekkers et al, (2011) and most scholarly work on social media and agenda setting. There is a gap with the lack of social media research in non-western context, largely due to the “fact that mass adoption of social media is relatively slower than Western context” (Pang et al, 2016: 144). Focus on dissent in social media in shaping agenda is generally lacking especially in non- Western context. This is important because social media has become a growing platform where young adults and a growing population in non- western countries like to express their views, and voice out their opinions which the mainstream media feels reluctant to portray (Bennett, 2016). This may go a long way in shaping agenda. This research, therefore, re-emphasizes the need to assess the impact of social media activism in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping governmental agenda within the setting of non-western countries, specifically Africa.

1.3 Structure of paper

The paper is outlined in seven chapters and sections. The paper is developed as follows. In the next chapter, theoretical frameworks in relation to dissent and agenda setting are defined and discussed. Specific focus is on the agenda setting theories of Cobb and Elder's issue expansion (Cobb & Elder, 1983), Advocacy Coalition Framework established by Sabatier (1988) and Jones & Mcbeth's (2010) the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), which focuses on narratives in policy discourse. Social media activism and issue expansion through mobilization are also addressed. This is followed in Chapter 3 with the research design which builds on a conceptual framework of the main concepts of agenda setting, with the operationalization of the main variables of the concepts in section 2 and 3 respectively. The methodology used for the research, which takes into account content analysis which includes a triangulation of multiple sources from newspapers to social media outlets is also identified in this chapter. The strategy and collection of data is further outlined. Chapter 4 gives a detailed account on the Zimbabwean economic crisis in 2016 and the social media movement, #ThisFlag. Chapter 5 opens up to the empirical findings on data collected focusing on dissent, issue expansion, media agenda, and policy agenda. Chapter 6 leads to a discussion on the results in chapter 5, with conclusions drawn in chapter 7. A summary of the research and recommendations for further research are also stated.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides a literature review conducted in dissent and agenda setting through social media activism. In order to assess the relationship between dissent and agenda setting, a review of these two areas would help in the development of a literature framework and place this research in context. This chapter seeks to address the ‘what, how and why’ of this research paper. Thus: what is social media activism? How is it connected to dissent? What is agenda-setting? And why is there a need for research on their relationship? This chapter focuses on research goals, 1,2,3, and 4 stated in the introduction chapter.

The first section looks at two main theories of dissent as outlined by Fraser (1992) and Hirschman(1970). This is followed with an outline and overview of social media activism in relation to dissent. This focuses on social media activism and how it is linked to dissent. The following section explains issue expansion in terms of mobilization in getting dissenting voices to a larger audience. Mobilization is seen as the causal agent of the expansion of issues as it is necessary and leads to issues being expanded on a wider scope. The final section looks at the theory of agenda setting, with more focus on the political agenda setting as this research seeks to explain the outcome of political decisions through social media activism.

2.1 Dissent

With focus on dissent, this sections answers sub – question 1: What is dissent in policy discourse? This section looks at dissent and goes a step further to discuss the theories of Counter publics by Nancy Fraser (1992) and Hirschman (1970) theory of Exit, voice and loyalty. As noted by Ivie (2015), earlier research on dissent has focused on discontent and criticisms. The value of dissent is found in law and history, where there has been enormous progress made since people gathered up courage to dissent from the opinion of others (Bloch, 1930). Humans have the tendency to conform to the opinions of others, and as such “unchecked by dissent, conformity can produce disturbing, harmful and sometimes disturbing outcomes” (Sustein 2005, p1). Dissent provides channels for change and opens up opportunities for learning, reopening channels of interaction and dialogue (Kelly et al, 2011) in contrary to conformity of opinions. Sustein (2005) argues that not all dissent is good as some may be destructive as it may emphasize bad behaviour such as terrorism.

Definitions of what dissent are mostly linked to protest and mobilization. Ritters (2013) defines dissent as “a coordinated attempt by non-state actors within the territorial jurisdiction of the state to influence political outcomes that is not organized by the state.” (:145). This emphasizes activities initiated by persons who are not necessarily in government and “excludes state- owned methods of participation such as voting or running for office” (Eds). Other authors emphasize on

dissent as speech that objects and criticizes the status quo, which entails belief systems, norms, institutions (Solum, 2000; Shrifin 2000) and in most authoritarian regimes may trigger the downfall of a regime.(Bleiker, 2000).

Dissent is ‘likely to challenge invalid assumptions and bring more information to bear on issue’ (Dooley et al, 1999:389).In order to challenge assumptions and policies, there is a need for disruption and restructuring which produces rejection and agitation in the political order.(Ivie, 2015). The flow of information through divergent opinions may divert the course of discussion (Dooley et al, 1999).

For the purpose of this research, dissent is categorised in Shrifin’s distinction as “part of a social practice that challenges unjust policies with the prospect of promoting progressive change” (Shrifin, 2000: 42). Shrifin(2000) focused on freedom of speech as a characteristic of individual’s rights under the First Amendment in the United States, which is criticized as “But when freedom of speech begins to impinge on important interests and to protect unpopular views, the political efficacy of the free speech principle is, at the very least, in doubt. The power of the free speech principle to inspire grass-roots movements hardly guarantees that such movements will succeed.” (Solum, 2000:871)

Building on Shrifin, Solum (2000) argues that dissent entails the expression of voice and views against the status quo in an effort to affect social change. Solum (2000) identifies that “the sponsoring and protection of dissent generally have progressive implication for social change because dissent communicates the fears, hopes, and aspirations of the less powerful to those in power.”(Solum, 2000:863). He observes that, speech an objection against the status quo can only be classified if “(1) should be changed, (2) because it (a) violates requirements of justice, (b) creates bad consequences, or (c) is an inefficacious means of achieving a desirable social goal”. (Solum, 2000:873)

Theories of Dissent

The theoretical assumptions of both theories of Counter publics and Voice, Exit and Loyalty seek to identify dissent within the policy discourse.

2.1.1 Counterpublics

Fraser (1992) coined the term counterpublics, or subalternative.in objection to Habermas public in his ‘Structural Transformation of the Public sphere’. That is, an alternative to the public which counters the discourse set by the supposed public. Fraser argues that “the notion of a singular universal sphere needs to be replaced with the theory of multiple, contending often mutually exclusive public sphere” (Mitchell 2014:34). She identifies among the subordinate and dominant as disadvantaged and advantaged groups respectively. In the public sphere where the media that is to be independent and enhance the “circulation of views are privately owned and operated for profit” (Fraser, 1992: 64), inequality is likely to exist. As such, in a public sphere where “discourse is understood as single, comprehensive, overarching public, members of subordinated groups have no arenas for deliberation among themselves about their needs, objectives, and

strategies. (Warner, 2002 p118). This facilitates a society in which inequality had been shaped by “institutional framework which generates unequal society” (eds, p 66), the dominant voice overshadows the subordinate, at their own expense.

The disadvantaged group are likely to have limited access to equal participation and resources (Mitchell, 2014). To overcome inequality in distribution and accessibility, the disadvantage subordinates establish and make up an alternative public (Fraser, 1992). This is termed “subaltern counterpublic which means “parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interest and needs (Fraser 1992:67; Warner, 2002:118).

Even though Fraser limited herself to gender issues, and feminist counterpublics, this theory is found repeatedly in many instances (Warner, 2000), and not also just limited to “ideas or policy questions but to the speech genres and modes of address that constitute the public or to the hierarchy among the media’ (Warner, 2002 :119). Fraser (1992) argues that these alternative public has rejuvenated the subordinates or disadvantages by reducing the inequalities and challenges they face. Participants are able to voice out their opinions, and in these counterpublics, individuals shape and establish their identities. (Warner, 2002). Fraser (1992) identifies the functions of a counterpublic as: “1) As spaces of withdrawal or regroupment and 2) bases and training grounds for agitational activities directed towards wider publics” (p 68). She further states that “in the process of their deliberation, participants are transformed from a collective of self - seeking , private individuals into a public spirited collectivity capable of acting together in the common interest” (Fraser, 1992:72). To reduce inequality in the stratified societies, she argues that what was needed is “political voice through social movement contestation that challenged some basic features of bourgeois publicity” (Fraser, 2007:121). “In the process of their deliberation, participants are transformed from a collective of self - seeking , private individuals into a public spirited collectivity capable of acting together in the common interest” (Fraser, 1992: 72)

Building on the argument of Fraser, Warner (2002) argues that “fundamentally mediated by public forms, counterpublics incorporate the personal/ impersonal address and expansive estrangement of public speech as conditions of their common world (121). He argues that counterpublics enforces identity of persons who share the same view. Warner (2000) argues that although counterpublics are targeted at “indefinite strangers” (p 120), through its ‘ambiguity’ as they are able to bring strangers and friends together who share the same concerns and issues. (Bolton, 2012)

2.1.2 Exit, Voice and Loyalty

Hirschman (1970) sought to identify dissent within organizations. Hirschman’s Book ‘The Exit, Voice and Loyalty’ relates to the response in the process and decline in organizational behaviour

in firms, organizations, customers, and states (Hirschman 1970). “Hirschman’s goal was to introduce the concept of voice to economist, habituated to conceiving exit as the only mechanism through which firms are held accountable” (Warren, 2011: 683). He identifies ‘exit’ and ‘voice’ as possible solutions and limitation to “market-based solutions to economic problems” (Flew, 2009: 797). Although his focus was on the economic approach, he identifies it would be applicable to societal issues as well. This theory can also be adopted in another realm such as in social movements and dissent as it focuses on social behaviour as well (Gammage, 2004).

Hirschman theory “defines exit and voice as options that can be used to police or correct defective or inefficient behaviour”. (Gammage, 2004:744). He observes that in organizations and societies, some actors may fail in their activities and may not live up to their duties. (Hirschman, 1970) as such this may lead to decline from consumers or clients, and in relation to the state, citizens. “These dissatisfied consumers may either opt for exit, voice or both or may be loyal to the organization in hopes of things getting better”. (Hirschman, 1970; 1993).

Hirschman identifies that some may opt to exit a group instead of voicing out their opinions. (Warren, 2011). With regards, to the state an individual can only migrate to another state, it is however unlikely to denounce citizenship as it would be seen as betrayal or treachery on the part of citizens. However, in public discourse, people seek to voice out their opinion when exit seems unlikely. (Flew, 2009). Voice can be seen as “any attempt at all to change, rather than to escape from, an objectionable state of affairs, whether through individual or collective petition to the management directly in charge, through appeal to a higher authority with intention of forcing a change in management, or through various types of actions or protests, including those that are meant to mobilize public opinion”. (Hirschman, 1970: 30)

Voice is identified as “the act of complaining or of organizing to complain or to protest, with the intent of achieving directly a recuperation of the quality that has been impaired” (Hirschman, 1993:176). Hence, the deteriorating state of a policy or activities may infuriate discontent which would be expressed through voice. He further observes that, for voice to be effective it thrives on the need for collaboration and group action. (Hirschman, 1970). He argues that, “mobilization and voice of the citizens can thus be seen as substitute for the failed responses” (Hirschman, 1993:197) of the organization, and in the case, the state.

Building upon the argument of Hirschman, Warren (2011) argues that, voice is a political action as it expresses directly one’s critical views publicly which generates from “faint grumbling to violent protest” (685).

Even though scholars like Flew (2009) criticized Hirschman’s theory as being limited to large organizations and institutions, he argues that even with the advent of new technologies, specifically the internet “it continues to provide fruitful ways of thinking through some of the questions that new media technologies present for more deliberative and democratic political communication”. (p 990). One of such new technologies is the use of social media platforms.

2.2 Social media activism

In recent times, there have been several accounts of social media activism particularly geared towards policy change. This section seeks to answer sub-question 2 which states: What is activism in relation to social media? In order to answer this, social media is first explained within context. This question seeks to understand the mechanism by which dissent is represented through social media to get on the agenda of policy makers. To begin with, there is no definite definition of social media. One is likely to be overwhelmed by the abundance of literature on social media. This stems from entertainment to social movements.

Sandoval et al, (2014) looks at social media in relation to collective action and mobilization for change. Dezelan & Vobic (2015) emphasized the use of social media as the 'maker' or 'breaker' of change. Social media has been known to bring people together especially in crisis. (Mutanana, 2016). Others like Faris (2013) link social media to information cascade. Kaplan & Haenlein (2010) identify that people mostly use social media as a platform to "present themselves in a cyberspace (p 62). That is, sell one's image on the space. Social media is seen as a space where individuals "create personal information, profiles, inviting friends and colleagues to have access to these profiles and sending e-mails and constant messages between each other". (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010:63). Others like Sheedy (2011) critically looked at social media as a platform with so much data available simultaneously and though it may enforce the voice of the voiceless, it may be 'unreliable' due to large volume of data.

As the focus of this research is on social media activism in shaping dissent to get on the agenda, activism in this context refers to a political activity where an individual or group of people come together to achieve a common goal. (Sandoval- Almazan, 2014). Recently, social media has led to a number of activism cases, with the most notable being the Arab Spring, Moldova, Iran, Nigeria and Spain (Faris, 2013; Dezelan & Vobic, 2016). Even though governments of countries like China have limited access to social media platforms to prevent people from expressing their views and mobilizing (Jacobson, 2013), it has become a force to reckon with. News production in recent times has changed mostly due to social media platforms which are quicker and reaches a large audience mostly operated by citizens and not largely by journalists (Bennet, 2016; Faris, 2013).

Through social media activism, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter have provided an "alternative space in which information can develop and circulate widely with fewer conventions or editorial filters in mainstream media" (Bennett, 2003:281). This has enabled dissent to get on the agenda. These alternative spaces enable "many-to-many communication, enabling the creation of new publics that are geared toward conversation, co-creation and sharing" (Faris, 2013: 15). However, social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube do not mean the end for mainstream media such as television, radio or newspapers, it will only influence how people watch and relate to them. (Enli, 2017).

Social media platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Whatsapp are the most popular being used, especially in non- western countries. “The social media revolution makes it possible for individual citizens to produce and distribute often high- quality and insightful reporting” (Bennett, 2016: 228) .Social media has activated people to voice out their opinions which has mostly led to people taking actions to express their discontent with issues or the status quo and to be heard by the appropriate channels. (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil- Garcia, 2014; Bekkers et al,2011). This can activate social media savvy individuals into “an organized public that stimulate a national conversation about important issues” (Bennett, 2016: 88). It has reinforced individuals or groups to mobilize and express their views with the aim of being heard. Bekkers et al (2011) identify that social media acts as a channel through which individuals can “organize their supporters, exchange resources, create a common goal of action and to identify and voice political demands that go beyond those in institutional policy discussion” (p2) By sharing, commenting and liking of comments, videos and pictures the public agenda is shaped, reaching a wider audience as people who share common concerns come together to achieve a common goal. The aim is to express their views and discontent mostly targeted at changing the status quo or policy change. As such, individuals mobilize themselves through their various resources to achieve their common goal. With this in mind, the following section delves into issue expansion in relation to mobilization as a likely source for issue expansion.

2.3 Mobilization

Dissent as seen is most likely to bring groups together to expand issues. Issue expansion refers to the spread of issues to a wider audience. Issue expansion is facilitated through mobilization as individuals with shared beliefs and common interests come together to achieve a common goal. (Bekkers et al, 2011). These individuals put together their resources and efforts with the aim of reaching their goal together. In this regard, this section answers the sub- question: What is the role mobilization in expanding issues?

Mobilization is identified as leading to issue expansion as it is necessary for individuals to come together to get issues to a wider audience. Through the theories of dissent, it can be understood that “a dissident group can be of any size from among the population, have any defining characteristics, and exhibit any level of organization” (Ritters, 2013:145). Most individuals mobilize themselves with the aim of “gaining political attention in order to overcome the bias towards the status quo which normally exists in political systems”(Bekkers et al, 2011a:2). In that sense, mobilization refers to an effort through which individuals persuade others in bringing together their resources to support a common and particular cause.(Bekkers et al, 2011b; Birkland, 1998).Through mobilization, individuals or groups seeking change in the status quo and failure in policy implementation seek to reach a broader audience to get their message across. (Birkland, 1998). These are mostly “small ad hoc groups, which use the information infrastructure of the internet to achieve the type of political mobilization that has traditionally

been dominated by the resource- rich organizations like political parties and interest groups that occupy the center of the political system” (Bekkers et al, 2011a:2). Bekkers et al (2011) identify this process of adhoc groups using the internet and in this case social media to advance their interest and bring about change as ‘micro-mobilization’. Micro- mobilization refers to the use of social media platforms and the internet by individuals and adhoc groups to challenge the status quo and bias in the system. These adhoc groups come together for a period of time to address common issues. “Micro mobilization is likely to confront traditional intermediary organizations and public managers with unanticipated demands for change that are difficult to control” (Bekkers et al, 2011b: 1005). The advent of social media platforms offer powerful and efficient resources for individuals and small groups’ political mobilization. (Bekkers et al, 2011b). With this, individuals voice out their dissent.

“Successful mobilization depends on the alignment of frames (Bekkers et al, 2011b:1005).Bekkers et al, (2011b) define framing as “the creation and reproduction of interpretative schemes of frames” (p1005) As such, frames are created by individuals in an effort to persuade people to support their cause. This leads to the alignment of frames when individuals adopt frames established by actor or individuals with frames expressing their common views or concerns. Snow et al, (1986) identifies frame alignment as “the linkages of individual and social movement organization interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interest, values and beliefs”. (p 464).This involves the linking of frames through shared beliefs and experiences which facilitates and enhances mobilization of actors. This has been facilitated by social media activism (Bekkers, Beunders et al, 2011). Bekkers et al (2011a) observed that social media enhances the linking of frames as “... the increased significance of images and videos may also help to frame an issue in a more advanced way than using traditional media”(p3) With the advent of social media, individuals are more likely to align their frames as “individuals pick up particular versions of reality in order to understand them”(Bekkers et al, 2011a:p3). This is mostly based on the nature of issues and its sensitivity as outlined by Cobb & Elder, (1983).

Frame alignment is a prerequisite in instances of issue expansion to a broader audience in order to attain agenda setting status. (Snow et al, 1986). As such, through mobilization, particularly micro- mobilization, issues are expanded to a wider audience through the alignment of frames. To understand the role of mobilization in issue expansion, this section has identified that, by aligning frames, dissidents come together to express their concerns on a larger scale. This results in the expansion of issues to a wider audience.

2.4 Agenda

The previous section looked at mobilization facilitating issue expansion. With issues expanded to the wider audience, attention is now shifted to the agenda of policy makers. This section on agenda and agenda setting addresses sub- question: Which political agenda setting theories are

more explanatory of the link to dissent? In order to answer this question, agenda should be understood in relation to agenda setting. The various agenda setting from public, media and political are identified to reach the end game of shaping the agenda of policy makers. With that said, theories explaining political agenda setting within the context of dissent is outlined.

Various scholars have sought to define the term 'agenda'. (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Sabatier & Jenkins- Smith 1993). An agenda is "a collection of problems, understandings of causes, symbols, solutions and other elements of public problems that come to the attention of members of the public and their governmental officials" (Birkland 2007: 63). Dearing and Rogers (1996) have identified three main types of agenda: the media agenda, public agenda and policy agenda. The media agenda focuses on the attention given to particular issue within the mass media. On the other hand, the public is more concerned with the attention given to particular issues on the public scene. This focuses on the extent the public can influence an issue into action. Lastly, the policy agenda is more concerned with policy makers' action and attention to certain issues over others. This is often in "response to media agenda and the public agenda". (Dearing and Rogers, 1996:6).

Dearing and Rogers (1996) observe that, "the media agenda is powerful in its impact because it usually launches the agenda- setting process". (p 89). This is because the media sets frames by influencing how individuals perceive messages, broadcasts messages to a larger public and shifts attention to beliefs, issues as it "shapes our perspective of the world". (McCombs, 1977:89;Cobb & Elder, 1983;Bekkers & Beunders et al, 2011; Bennett, 2016). "The media confers attention on both people and issues". (Dearing & Rogers, 1996: 24). McCombs(1977) argues that, media uses "cues" to determine which news need to be broadcasted. (p 93) and the more attention issues get the likelihood of it influencing agenda of policy makers. (Dearing & Roger, 1996). As such, the media is used as a tool, as "groups go public with a problem by using symbols and images to induce greater media and public sympathy for their cause". (Birkland, 2007: 65). Through the media agenda, issues are expanded which leads to decision makers giving attention to issues on the agenda to be discussed. This makes up the political agenda, where issues are placed on the agenda.

On the other hand, Cobb and Elder(1983) identify between two types of agenda: systematic and institutional agenda. Systematic agenda "consists of all issues that are commonly perceived by members of the political community as meriting public attention and as involving matters within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority". (eds,: 85). On the other hand, institutional agenda is "set of items explicitly up for the active and serious consideration of authoritative decision makers". (Cobb & Elder, 1983:86). Issues may move within both agendas, and in order for politicians to gain public support, institutional agendas may have to go through systematic agenda. (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Birkland asserts that "the goal of most contending parties in the policy process is to move policies from the systemic agenda to the institutional agenda, or to prevent issues from reaching the institutional agenda". (Birkland 2001 p 109;

Birkland 2007:65). With limited space, resources and time, issues compete to enter institutional agenda. This leads the discussion into agenda setting.

This research focuses on the political agenda looking at issues placed on the agenda of policy makers to determine the impact of social media activism.

2.5 Agenda setting

Agenda setting is the process where certain issues gain attention than others. (Dearing & Rogers 1996; Birkland, 2007). Agenda setting is best studied “in the context of policy communities or subsystems because of the impact of the nature of the policy community on the policy process”. (Birkland, 1998:57). This is in relation to the political agenda, where some issues are not seen to be placed on the political agenda, either due to limited space or not seem to as meeting the political agenda. (Cobb & Elder, 1983).

The main aim of agenda setting is to overturn existing issues into more favorable situations which actors view to be unsatisfactory. (Dearing & Rogers, 1996). “The likelihood that an issue will rise on the agenda is a function of the issue itself, the actors that get involved, institutional relations, and often, random social and political factors that can be explained but cannot be replicated or predicted” (Birkland 2001:131). Groups or actors compete for their issues to gain attention or have to wait for an opportunity or event to get their issues on the agenda (Birkland, 2007). Dearing & Rogers (1996) argue that, “the potentially conflictual nature of an issue helps make it newsworthy as proponents and opponents of the issue battle it out” (p 2).

Focus of the research is on the political agenda setting of policy makers. As such, this research adopts agenda setting theories of: the issue expansion model developed by Cobb & Elder (1983), the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier & Jenkins- Smith 1993) and the Narrative Policy Framework (Jones & McBeth, 2010).

Theories of Agenda - setting

The Theories of agenda setting focus on the media and political debate of agenda setting. With this, the theories of Cobb and Elder, (1983) which focus on the media agenda setting influencing the political debate is seen. This is followed by the political debate of the Advocacy Coalition Framework and Narrative Framework Policy to identify the political debate. With the end game focusing on the political agenda, much focus is in that direction.

2.5.1 Cobb & Elder - issue expansion

Cobb and Elder(1983) in their book ‘Participation in American Politics’ focus on agenda setting in light of issue expansion and how issues are extended to a broader audience or public.

According to Cobb and Elder (1983), there exists scarcity in the system for limited space for

issues to be discussed as such groups or people have to compete amongst themselves. They borrow Schattschneider's 'mobilization of bias's stating that the system is naturally built up to favour some at the expense of others (Moody, 2010), where "stable unrepresentation suggests a bias in terms of issues and demands that will be considered" (Cobb & Elder, 1983: 5) and as such as a result of inertia of the system, the status quo is difficult to change in relation to issues placed on the agenda. (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Moody, 2010).

To begin with, according to Cobb & Elder (1983), an issue "is a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of positions or resources" (p 82). This implies that groups or individuals compete among themselves in relation to positions and allocation of resources, in order to have their matters at the forefront. The model as designed by Cobb and Elder focuses on the framework of issues in three ways. First, issues are identified as a human constructions which are created by groups or persons in pursuit of their own interest (Moody, 2010). The first is linked to the second as the pursuit of interest is as a result of the perception of "unfavourable bias in the distribution of positions or resources". (Cobb & Elder, 1983: 82). Third, issues are created by 'unanticipated events' which, stem from triggering events which cannot be predicted beforehand (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Triggering events may either be internal or external events which are mostly sudden and unforeseen (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Internal events are mostly domestic issues which include natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcano eruptions, man-made events like, bias in resource allocation. (Cobb & Elder, 1983). On the contrary, external events include occurrences beyond the domain of just internal affairs of a country but involves "other countries in the equation" (Moody, 2010: 54). War, technological advancement such as nuclear weapons are but a few.(Cobb & Elder, 1983).Another aspect of issue created involves individuals or groups who perceive their efforts to be in the interest of the general public (Moody, 2010). They do not seek their own interest in terms of allocation of resources, and strive to serve the interest of the larger population.

Triggering events as well as groups and individuals known as 'initiators' (Cobb and Elder, 1983; Moody, 2010) who create issues, give shape to issues. Cobb and Elder (1983) argue that, "the formation of an issue is dependent on the dynamic interplay between the initiator and trigger device" (p 83).

Once issues have been created and taken form, the focus of initiators is to get their issues on the agenda. (Moody, 2010). "An issue is solely dependent on whether the issue expands to a larger public and to what degree". (Moody, 2010). This implies that, the broader an issue expands to a larger audience and the medium through which it is expanded as well as the intensity of issues the higher the possibility it will be placed on the agenda (Cobb and Elder, 1983; Birkland, 2007). In order for an issue to reach a broader audience, initiators of issues "must have either access to the mass media or resources necessary to reach people". (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Emphasis should be placed on media channels to get issues across.

Cobb and Elder argue that groups may use symbols in expanding their issues. (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Symbols may be narratives stories, language, historical context or image to expand groups' line of reasoning. (Birkland, 2001; Cobb & Elder, 1983). Symbols may be used differently by various groups in an effort to influence support for their argument. (Cobb and Elder, 1983). "Its meaning depends on how people interpret it and use it, or respond to it". (Birkland, 2001:125). Cobb and Elder (1983) identify that groups use four different strategies when using symbols. This may be for "1)arousal of support 2)provoking groups to take action 3)dissuasion by persuading opponents to switch their allegiance through discouragement of support for opposition 4)to show the strength of commitment 5)and for affirming groups participation in order to have demands met" (Cobb & Elder, 1983: 142 - 149) Furthermore, Cobb and Elder (1983) identify symbols and media as "two key mechanism by which groups can channel their demands to a wider constituency and enhance their chances of success" (p 150).

Cobb and Elder(1983) stress that an issue is not only dependent on the extent to which it is expanded to the larger public but it also depends on the patterns of entrance. This involves the entry of issues expanded to the larger public onto the agenda. Issues first need to go beyond the identification group before it could move further down to the various publics. (Moody, 2010). Issues which have expanded beyond the general public is assured of entry into the agenda. This, Cobb and Elder (1983) observe to be "immediate as is its spot on governmental agenda" (p 156) Figure 1 below outlines the Cobb and Elder issue expansion model as discussed.

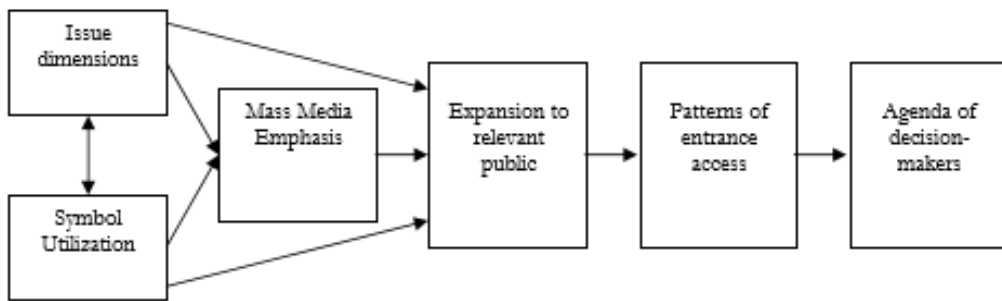


Figure 1 : *The Cobb and Elder issue expansion model. Source. Cobb and Elder, 1983:141 - 151.*

2.5.2 Advocacy Coalition Framework

The Advocacy coalition framework (ACF) has been used by various scholars in the light of policy change and agenda setting status. (Sabatier, 1988; Jenkins- Smith & Sabatier, 1994; Weible et al, 2011; Jenkins Smith et al, 2014). The framework as developed by Sabatier and Jenkins- Smith explaining policy change as a result of "goal conflicts, important technical

disputes, and multiple actors from several levels of government” (Sabatier & Weible, 2007: 189). People or individuals from various backgrounds with the same beliefs form groups which is known as ‘advocacy coalitions’. (Sabatier, 1988; Jenkins - Smith & Sabatier, 1994). Advocacy coalitions are seen as the most ideal way in dealing with overload of actors due to the large numbers. (Sabatier and Weible, 2007). The main focus of the framework is on core beliefs shared by groups which explains the differences in problem definition in an effort to change policies in one’s interest.

The framework outlines that policy processes take place within a subsystem which is relatively small with limited space for all to take part in policy decision making. (Jenkins - Smith et al, 2014). The policy subsystem is the space with “actors from a variety of public and private organizations who are actively concerned with a policy problem or issue”. (Sabatier, 1988:131). With limited space in subsystems, “people sharing same belief systems come together to engage in nontrivial coordination in their activities with the aim of influencing the policy subsystem”. (Sabatier, 1988:139; Jenkins- Smith et al 2014, 195).

ACF stipulates that individuals are rationally bounded in their cognitive abilities and are unable to process all information available. (Jenkins et al, 2014). As a result of “limited cognitive abilities, individuals simplify the world through their belief systems” (Jenkins- Smith et al, 2014:191). Sabatier (1988) argues that “coalitions seek to translate their beliefs into public policies” (p 143). They are “mechanisms for simplifying and interpreting the world for simplifying and interpreting the world”. (Jenkins - Smith et al, 2014:192). Sabatier & Weible, (2007) identify core and secondary beliefs as influencers of change. Core beliefs are seen to be difficult to “change in response to new information”, whereas secondary is prone to change. (Sabatier & Weible, 2007:198). (Jenkins- smith et al, 2014). ACF identifies groups “will coalesce based not only on their core beliefs, but often on their periphery beliefs, provided that the coalition will advance their goals”(Birkland, 2001: 118). However, coalitions are formed mostly on core beliefs.

The different coalitions have different perceptions and interpretations of problem definitions due to belief systems which may lead to “biased assimilation” of information. (Jenkins- Smith et al, 2014: 191). This tends to cause conflict as the different coalitions have different strategies which makes them weary of their opponents as people tend to filter information may lead to “devil shift, the tendency for actors to view their opponents as less trustworthy, more evil, and more powerful than they probably are. (Sabatier, 1988: 194). Figure 2 below gives an overview of the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF).

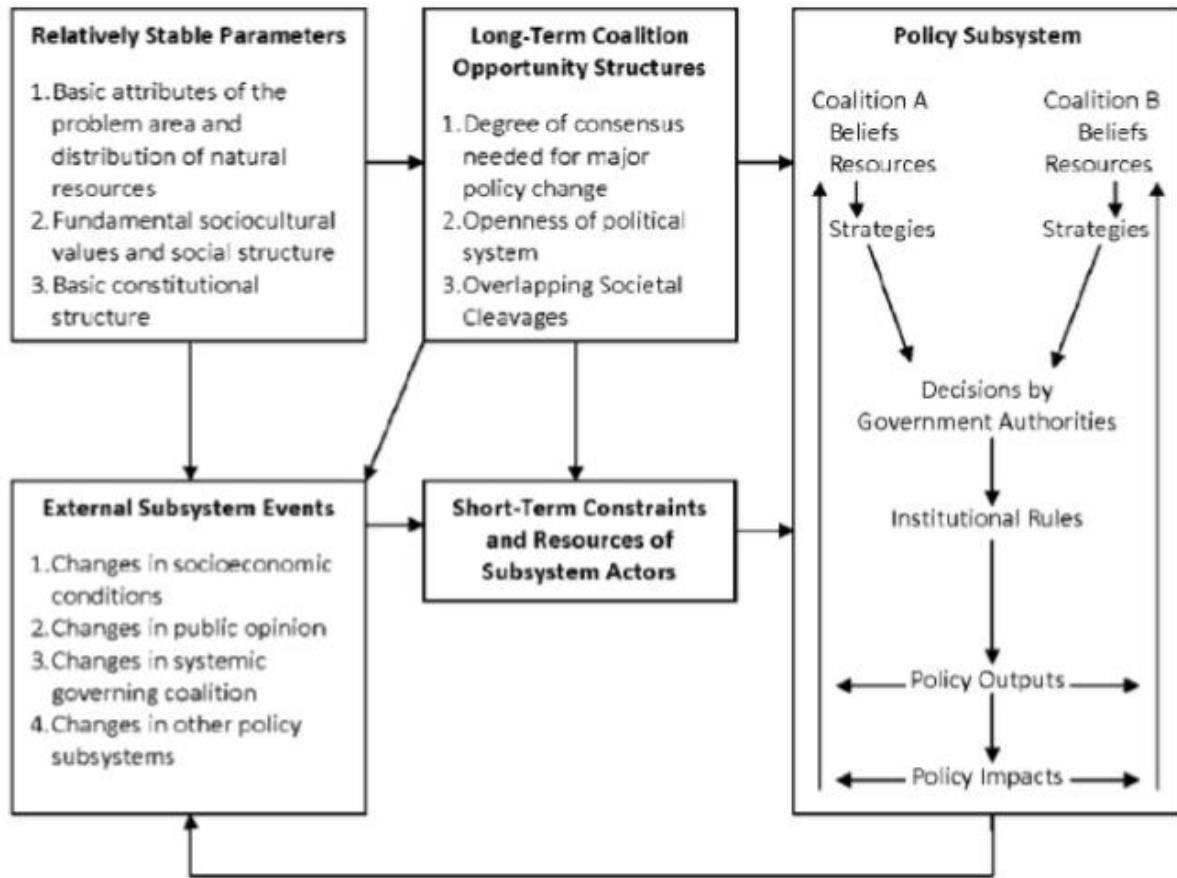


Figure 2: Advocacy Coalition Framework. Source. Weible et al (2011): 352

In Figure 2 above, the framework begins with stable parameters and dynamic events which serve as “constraints and opportunities” (Sabatier,1988:132; Jenkins- Smith et al, 2014) for actors within the subsystem and may affect behaviour of actors. (Sabatier and Weible, 2007). Stable parameters include “distribution in natural resources, social cultural values and the basic structure of the constitution” (Weible et al, 2011: 353; Sabatier & Weible, 2007, Jenkins - Smith et al, 2014). On the other hand, the dynamic events are changes in “socio- economic conditions, public opinion, external policy systems affecting the policy system”. (eds).

Both factors can influence policy change (Sabatier, 1998). Sabatier and Weible (2007) emphasize that “change in one of these dynamic factors is a necessary condition for major policy change” (p 193).

Subsystems emerge when “a group of actors become dissatisfied enough with the neglect of a particular problem by existing subsystems” (Sabatier, 1988: 138). “Within the subsystem, the

ACF assumes that actors can be aggregated into a number of coalitions ... who share a set of normative and causal beliefs” (Jenkins- Smith & Sabatier, 1994:180).

Sabatier places emphasis on beliefs as “the principle glue of politics”. (Sabatier, 1988: 141).

Sabatier and Weible (200) identify that belief systems are seen as not the only driving force of policy change. (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). Relevant resources can be used by coalition actors to shape and influence policy change. Such resources include” public opinion, information expansion and access, mobilization, financial resources and skillful leadership”. (Sabatier and Weible, 2007: 201).

Actors or groups adopt strategies with the aim of reaching their goal of getting their issues on the agenda, (Sabatier 1988; Jenkins-Smith et al, 2014). With different strategies, groups tend to clash over differences in issues.

2.5.3 Narrative Policy Framework

The third agenda setting theory identified in this research is the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), “a holistic framework designed to accurately capture and describe narratives” (Shanahan et al, 2011a). The framework identifies and explains the impact and power of narratives in influencing policy change, outcomes and public opinions. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011; Jones & McBeth, 2010). A narrative is defined as “a story with a temporal sequence of events, unfolding in plot, that is populated by dramatic moments, symbols and archetypal characters” (Jones & Mcbeth, 2010: 329).Policy narratives takes place in a setting with temporal sets of events developing and evolving over time involving characters who play a role in the sequence of events as source or fixers of problems. (Jones & Mcbeth, 2010; Shanahan,Jones et al, 2011). The end result is mostly a “moral to the story” which offers a solution. (Jones & Mcbeth, 2010: 341). Characters are defined in a narratives through plots (Shanahan,, Jones et al, 2011) and are categorized into heroes who are problem fixers, villains identified as the ‘devil’ or instigators of problems or victims who are mostly the affected and those harmed by the problems. (Mcbeth et al, 2005; Jones & Mcbeth, 2010).

Policy narratives are described as “strategically constructed stories which contain predictable elements and strategies whose aim is to influence public opinion toward support for a particular policy preference” (Shanahan, Mcbeth et al, 2011: 374). Narratives are powerful tools used by actors to persuade the public towards the acceptance of shaping of policies in the policy subsystem.(Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011).

NPF observes policy narratives “to be strategically constructed, to present information as rational but based on beliefs, and identifies losses more than wins in the policy subsystem”. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011:540). As such, like the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF), NPF advocates that policies are “translations of beliefs that are communicated through policy narratives”. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011: 540). Beliefs are “primary means by which individuals organize, process and convey information” (Jones& Mcbeth, 2010: 330).

The external environment in the NPF plays an important role. The changes in the external environment tends to influence narratives as “the changes in the setting can change the policy

narratives”. (Mcbeth et al, 2014:238). , Narratives stemming from beliefs of the external conditions tend to shape the behaviour of actors. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011). Actors adjust their strategies by aligning with allies in the policy system through their beliefs with the aim of influencing the policy outcome (Mcbeth et al, 2014). The intention of actors is to get their issues on the agenda by either expanding or containing issues depending on whether they are winning or losing the narrative in an effort to influence public opinion and their position in the policy subsystem. (Mcbeth et al, 2014; Shanahan et al, 2011b). McBeth et al, (2007) argue that, “competing policy narratives incorporate strategies such as identification of winners and losers, framing who benefits and who sustains cost in the policy conflict”. (p 90). Winning groups tend to contain the issue in their favor, whereas a losing groups tend to expand issues in order to gain grounds and recognition as well as more participation and mobilization. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011). The expansion and containment of issues through narratives are done through frames by using language and symbols (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011), where those losing expand issues because “when a policy story becomes dominant, that story will drive policy change” (Mcbeth et al, 2014: 345). These frames are developed by defining problems “based on the inclusion of some evidence and no other information to bolster a particular policy”. (Shanahan, Mcbeth et al, 2011:374)

Figure 3 below gives and overview of the Narrative Policy Framework

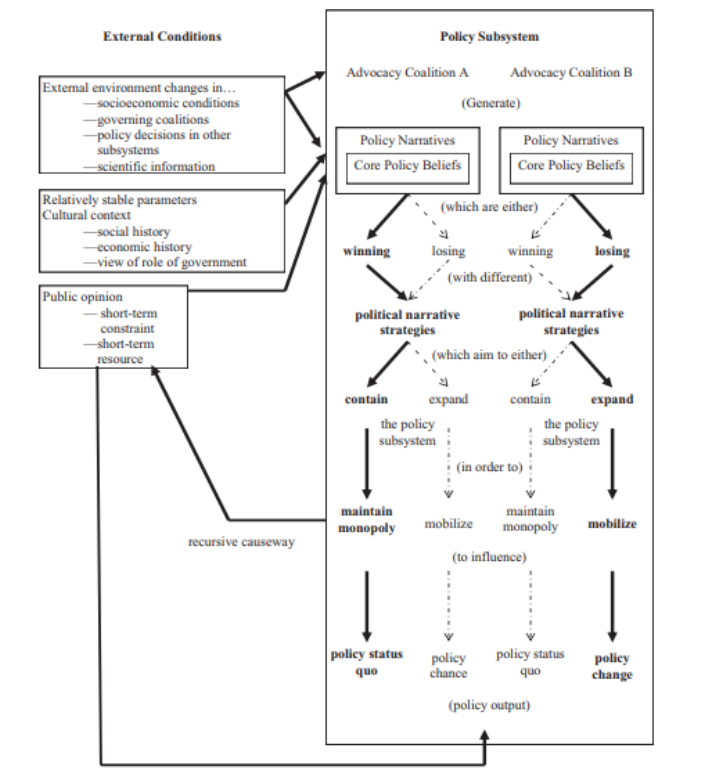


Figure 3: Narrative Policy Framework. Shanahan et al, 2011: 54

To conclude, there is a need to establish a relationship between the various theories to come up with a feasible framework for the research. The theoretical assumptions outlined from social media activism, issue expansion and political agenda setting help to develop a research design. Since there are a lot of elements from the theories outlined, this research adopts specific elements from the various theories to draw conclusions. These are parts of theory this research will continue to use to develop a conceptual framework in chapter 3. From the theories of dissent, Fraser's (1992) sub-alternative space as a form of dissent is emphasized to identify bias in the system. This is because this research seeks to focus on how social media activism represents dissent and as Fraser(1992 makes clear, sub- alternatives are use to overcome bias in the system.As such, this would help determine whether social media activism indeed proves this point.Hirschman's theory of voice is used with less focus on exit and loyalty, as this research seeks to identify dissent in relation to voice. This leads to social media activism and mobilization to identify issue expansion through the process of micro- mobilization through the use of social media platforms by small groups or individuals to express their dissent.

Subsequently, theories of agenda setting also establish dissent through the use of conflict in distribution leading to issues (Cobb & Elder, 1983) which are expressed by these adhoc groups. through the use of beliefs (Sabatier, 1988) and symbols which Shanahan et al (2011) identify as policy narratives where beliefs and symbols are used to express views which lead to the creation of frame. In relation to beliefs, perception of values from the ACF (Sabatier,1988) and the role of characters from the NPF helps identify belief systems held by individuals. The belief systems and symbols are important for this research to understand the rise of issues on social media. Through beliefs and symbols, individuals align their frames. Snow's frame alignment is adopted where individuals align their frames and mobilize themselves to expand issues. This is based on Hirschman's(1970) argument that, for voice to be effective it thrives on the need for collaboration and group action. This is done to determine the relationship between alignment of frames and issue expansion.

Cobb & Elder (1983) identify mass media emphasis which stems from the expansion of issues on the public scene. This is used to understand the cross over from social media to the mass media, in order to understand how it may influence the political agenda. With emphasis on issues from the mass media, there is a possibility for the political agenda to be influenced as policy makers may react to issues from the public scene through the mass media to understand the rise of issue on the political agenda. With this, chapter 3 build on these elements from the theoretical assumptions to develop a conceptual framework for the research.

3. Research design

This chapter outlines the research design the researcher seeks to employ. Research design helps in guiding the researcher in drawing conclusions as it is “the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research question, and ultimately to its conclusion”. (Yin, 1989: 19). In light of this, the research design will help in the collection and analysis of data. This chapter begins with the building of a conceptual framework built on theories of agenda setting discussed in chapter 2. The subsequent sections outline the variables and indicators used in measuring data collected. Section three focuses on the methodology and methods used to collect data. The research method used is qualitative, which would be discussed briefly. The chapter concludes with the testing of findings quality based on reliability and validity.

3.1 Towards a conceptual framework

In analyzing dissent through social media in influencing the agenda, this conceptual framework builds on the main concepts from the three theories on agenda setting. This section build on the main concepts of all three theories of agenda setting previously discussed to identify the common characteristics.

3.1.1 Conceptual framework on agenda setting

This section collaborates all the three theories of agenda setting discussed in order to develop a conceptual framework. The main concept and variables of agenda setting discussed would be expanded to explain the issue of dissent in shaping agenda. The concepts of the various theories interchange with each other on several accounts.

First of all, agenda setting is identified to take place in a policy subsystem as they “do not occur in a vacuum”. (Birkland, 2001: 131). The policy subsystem is the space where individuals and groups interact with each other both within and outside its boundaries. In the subsystem, issues are contested due to the limited time, space and the allocation of resources (Cobb & Elder, 1983, Jenkins- Smith et al, 2014; Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011). This is because the policy system is built up to favour some groups at the expense of others. (Cobb & Elder, 1983: Birkland, 2001). This is due to the bias in the system which leads to an imbalance with issues affecting most in the society being overlooked (Birkland, 2001, Cobb & Elder, 1983). Issues is “a conflict between two or more identifiable groups over procedural or substantive matters relating to the distribution of position and resources” (Cobb & Elder, 1983: 82). There is a bias on what issues enter the policy system where those with resources are seen to be favoured. (Cobb & Elder, 1983, Fraser, 1992; Hirschman, 1970). Dissatisfied individuals or group put their issues across against the bias of the system either for their own interest or for the benefit of all. Individuals create a sub-alternative space within the policy subsystem to counter issues. (Fraser, 1992). Mostly, this

alternative space is social media platforms. Contestation is done through groups of actors (Sabatier, 1988).

Secondly, groups or individuals create issues based on their perception of the bias in the policy subsystem (Cobb & Elder, 1983, Sabatier 1988; Mcbeth & Jones, 2010). This is through policy narratives where actors identify with their beliefs and symbols. Actors in the policy subsystem have different perceptions and frames of a problem and issue which stems from their beliefs. Due to limited processing information due to bounded rationality, individuals are guided by their beliefs. This is because the world is a social construct, where individuals define reality. (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011) Belief systems are often described as “the glue” that binds individuals together with a common goal and interest. (Sabatier 1988; Jenkins- Smith et al, 2014; Mcbeth & Jones, 2010; Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011). Beliefs are a set of values and assumptions upheld by individuals and groups on policies or issues. (Sabatier, 1988).

Beliefs systems may be shaped by stable and dynamic events and environment. These may either constrain or provide opportunities for actors which shape the behaviour of actors. (Sabatier, 1988; Mcbeth & Jones, 2010).

Moreover, the general and ambiguous nature of symbols help to adjust and interpret meanings in different ways based on one’s beliefs. (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Shanahan, Jones et al, 2014; Birkland, 2001). They are used for issue definition and redefinition. The nature of symbols help invoke some feelings. Symbols are used to reduce complex issues into “simple, manageable or memorable forms”. (McBeth et al, 2007:3). These feelings may be that of arousal, provocation, discouragement, commitment or re- affirmation of values (Cobb & Elder, 1983) Symbols include language, images, stories or narratives. Symbols are used to “define policy issues in memorable ways”. (Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011; 542). In Narrative Policy Framework, symbols are narratives or stories. (Mcbeth & Jones, 2010; Shanahan, Jones et al, 2011). Storytellers use persuasive stories to emphasize their beliefs, which is mostly done through the identification of characters as villains, heroes or victims. (McBeth & Jones, 2010). Symbols may be used strategically by groups or individuals to facilitate expansion. These are frames created by storytellers which are used to help break down issues to make sense of it.

Both beliefs and symbols are narratives used by actors and through beliefs and symbols, frames are created. Creating frames help to attract interested groups and parties into one’s problem definition. (Snow et al, 1986; Mcbeth et al, 2005). Framing is based on experience and beliefs. Individuals who interpret symbols to their own beliefs align themselves with frames that reinforce their beliefs (Birkland, 2001; .Shanahan, Mcbeth et al, 2011). Frame alignment is necessary for individuals to collectively take action. Frame alignment is the combination of individuals’ interpretation of beliefs and values with a common interest. (Snow et al, 1986). By aligning frames, individuals mobilize themselves in order to expand their issues to a wider audience. As such, by mobilizing through alignment of frames on social media platforms, issues are expanded which may end up on the media agenda.

Mobilization and support does not necessarily assure that issues will gain agenda setting status (Birkland, 2002). Although mobilization is important for actors to shape and influence policy change (Sabatier, 1988), media attention is necessary. Issues that gain attention seek to incorporate into the media. The media agenda plays an important role as it independent but interconnects with the policy agenda. This is the emphasis placed on issues by the mass media (Cobb & Elder, 1983), which may make its way to the policy agenda. As such, the dependent variable is policy agenda where all theories link to change or outcome in policies. Cobb & Elder (1983) identify entrance of issues to the broader public leads to major policy change. ACF assumes strategies by coalition of actors may effect change whereas NPF looks at the use of strong narratives as persuasive tools for change. The main aim is to reach a broader audience in order to mobilize more participants, as attention from the wider public will place it on the media agenda. In this vain, issues that gain attention in the media agenda, move to the public agenda of decision makers. As such, the higher attention is given to an issue in the media, the more likely it is to end up on the agenda of decision makers.

Figure 4 below illustrates the overview of the conceptual framework

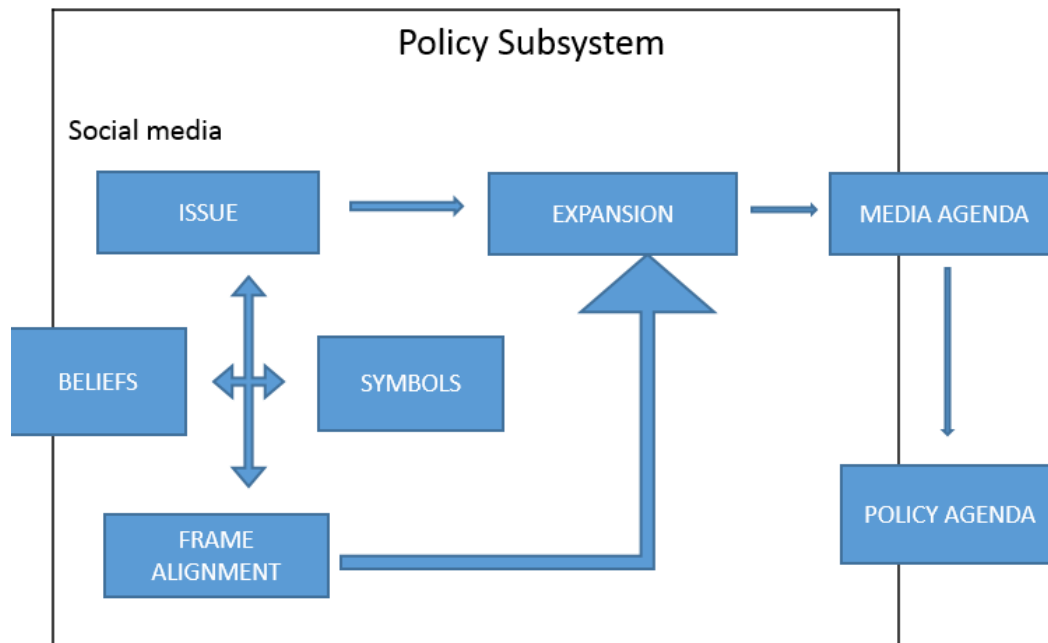


Figure 4. Conceptual framework. Source: Own adaptation

Figure 4 above gives an overview of the conceptual framework the research seeks to draw conclusions from. The main research question is: What is the influence of social media activism

in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping governmental agenda setting in non- Western countries? And the conceptual framework follows 3 main steps. Firstly, the framework identifies the rise of issue on social media. Due to the bias of the policy subsystem (Cobb & Elder, 1983) in the allocation of resources there is contestation as individuals contest their issues. In an effort to counter the bias in the policy subsystem, individuals create a sub- alternative space (Fraser, 1992) through social media within the policy subsystem. The aim is to counter the status quo of the original subsystem. Participants are able to voice out their opinions, and in these counterpublics, individuals shape and establish their identities. (Warner, 2002). Issues descriptions are based on individual beliefs, which shapes their perspectives and reinforced through symbols. Symbols may be interpreted based on individuals beliefs. Beliefs may also be shaped based on symbols represented. Beliefs and symbols play a role in shaping issues which are reflected on social media platforms by groups or individuals to get their message across. Cobb & Elder (1983) refer to such individuals as initiators. These initiators create frames by the use of beliefs and symbols for the issues and the aim is to get their issue on the agenda. Individuals who identify with the frames of individuals with a common goal as them align their frames. People or individuals from various backgrounds with the same beliefs form groups (Sabatier, 1988). As issues are dependent on the extent it is expanded to a larger public individuals who align their frames come together by combining their resources to a larger public. This is done on social media through sharing, liking of comments as well as of pictures of videos to their social networks. This has a potential of broadening a groups scope and reach.

The next step identifies the cross over from social media to the mass media. This emphasizes on the media agenda. In order for an issue to reach a broader audience, initiators of issues “must have either access to the mass media or resources necessary to reach people”. (Cobb and Elder, 1983). Through the expansion of issues through social networks, the mass media is likely to adopt the frames used by groups. The media is used as a tool, as “groups go public with a problem by using symbols and images to induce greater media and public sympathy for their cause”. (Birkland, 2007: 65). The mass media picks on ‘cues’ from groups using their frames in putting across the message, which fits with their media logic .(Bennett, 2016).

Lastly, the final step identifies the rise of issue on the political agenda. It can be identified that emphasis on the media agenda is likely to influence the policy agenda. The intensity and nature of issue portrayed in the mass media and the attention and rise of issue has the potential to influence the policy agenda and lead to policy change.

3.1. 2 Operationalization

De Vaus (2001) notes that, concepts are abstract and difficult to measure. As such, there is a need for “identifying and clarifying abstract concepts and developing indicators for them”, to be measurable (De Vaus, 2001:24). This De Vaus (2001) terms as ‘operationalization’. In order to be able to operationalize, the main concepts of agenda setting are defined and broken down into variables and indicators. This would guide the research process. Derived from the conceptual framework, Table 1 below outlines the indicators to be used in the analysis.

Table 1. Operationalization of agenda setting

Concept	Definition	Indicator
Issue	Conflict between two or more groups over allocation of resources. Mobilization of bias	The topic at hand
Symbol	Symbols are in the form used for arousal, provocation, dissuasion, affirmation, commitment to influence media and public unity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use of image of historical precedence 2. Use of pictogram 3. Symbolism in text, linking to other historical events
Beliefs	Set of values held by individuals. This may consist of assumptions of a character as hero, villain or victim	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perception of values expressed 2. Perception of hero, victim and villain
Frame alignment	The linking together of individuals’ shared beliefs and values which brings them together in a group	Number of people with the same perception of values and beliefs
Expansion	Consist of more participation and mobilization	Number of people who share comments
Media agenda	The number of attention given to an issue in the	Number of attention given to the issue in the mass

	mass media	media per week
Policy agenda	Response of decision makers	Discussion on government platforms or website

3.2 Methodology

This section outlines the methodology in reference to the collection of data for the research. The chapter looks at the approach used by the researcher in collecting data and the rationale for it would be identified. As stated in chapter 1 on the introduction, this research paper seeks to employ a case study, as a strategy, through content analysis on the Zimbabwean social media movement in 2016.

Method

3.2.1 Qualitative Research Method

As outlined in the introduction, this research seeks to use a qualitative research approach in the collection of data. The qualitative nature of the research entails “the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things” (Berg & Lune, 2014: p.3). Denscombe (1998) explained qualitative research to be studied within the context of a social setting, which builds on the realities and experiences of people.

Silverman (2006) in his work, observes that qualitative research “can provide access to social worlds, as evidence both of what happens within them, and of how individuals make sense of themselves, their experience and their place within these social worlds” (p 253). Others like Creswell (2007), identified qualitative research to be inquiry and exploration into social and human problems, that individual or groups of individuals face. This helps to “study a group or population, identify variables that can be measured, or hear silenced voices”. (Creswell, 2009: 40).

In the use of qualitative research, multiple sources of data collection may be used in the gathering of information (Creswell, 2007). These include the use of interviews, document analysis, as well as observation. (Kohlbacher, 2006).

Qualitative research method has received a number of backlash from critics. Denscombe (1998) argues that, the method is quite tedious and takes a lot time. This makes it exhausting to collect and analyze data. He further identifies that, as individual is an integral part of the research, data may not be interpreted in relation to its context as researcher’s subjective view may cause bias. (Denscombe, 1998). Furthermore, Denscombe(1998) noted that, qualitative design is prone to

subjectivity as researcher's background, values may play a role as researcher is an essential part of the data collection and analysis process.

Although critics have justified their cause of concern, the use of qualitative research also has some advantages. Qualitative research helps give an in-depth knowledge on issues on the ground. (Creswell, 2007). Researchers collect data within the context of a setting reflecting realities as such more information is likely to be discovered in the process. (Denscombe, 1998). Given the nature of the research question, qualitative research method seems to be justified in the collection of data as it gives an in-depth knowledge of the experience of people. This is done through the testing of theories which emphasizes on the deductive approach.

3.2.2 Approach: Case study

The qualitative method approach of inquiry this research seeks will employ includes a case study on social media activism in Zimbabwe in relation to the social media movement #ThisFlag. The use of a case study is a strategy of what is researched.(Kohlbacher, 2006). A case in this context refers to “the object of study, unit of analysis about which we collect information”. (De Vaus, 2001:219). A case study offers an in depth focus from a few units to a larger context. (Gerrings, 2004). Denscombe (1998) argues that case studies “understand the complex relationship between factors as they operate within a particular social setting”. (p 4). Case studies help give insight into social realities and events. (Yin, 1989). The interpretive approach of case studies “studies things within their context and considers the subjective meanings that people bring to their situation”. (De Vaus, 2001:10). Case studies “unique strength is its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence documents, articulated, interviews, and observation”. (Yin, 1989:8). In the subsequent section, the use of the case study approach is justified in the research design which would enable the researcher make inferences to the research question is identified

3.3 Research design

In relation to the main research question, this research validates the process of content analysis in collection of data on social media platforms, Twitter, Facebook and that of trends and headlines in mainstream media channels, as well as government websites. This includes a triangulation of data which provides the research with multiple sources and can give a more detailed description of the situation. The data collection used by the researcher is described with the coding scheme used for the analysis justified.

3.3.1 Content analysis

The method used in this research is content analysis, which is used in analysis of data which may be in visual, written or electronic form (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Hsieh & Shannon (2005) highlight that content analysis was previously mostly used by quantitative researcher, however, the approach has been adopted by qualitative researchers as well. Content analysis has been used recommended for its flexible nature, it can be used for variety and large

sums of data. (Krippendorff, 2004; Elo & Kyngas, 2008). Downe- Wamboldt (1992) noted that, the main aim of content analysis is “to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon under study” (p 314)

The focus of content analysis is on drawing conclusion from texts to help answer research questions. Texts are seen as information and communication tool, which have meanings and are significant to a setting, context or individuals. (Krippendorff, 2004). Krippendorff (2004) noted that “ works of arts, images, maps, sounds, signs, symbols, and even numerical records may included as data - that is, they may be considered as texts- provided they speak to someone about phenomenon outside of what can be sensed or observed”. (p 19).

Content analysis could also be used deductively based on testing theories or inductively, depending on the purpose the researcher aims to seek. (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). This based on the problem to be solved. Elo & Kyngas (2008) distinguish between deductive and inductive research. According to them, deductive research entails the study based on existing theories to build concepts which is built from broad to particular. However, inductive research moves from ‘specific to general’, where theories are built during the process of data collection. (Elo & Kyngas, 2008). In this research, content analysis is used to enable researcher to break down texts into categories based on concepts built on theory. (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Krippendorff, 2013). This helps in testing of theories in understanding data collected. (eds).

Hsieh & Shannon (2005) distinguish between three approaches to content analysis which entails: directed, summative and conventional, used in the interpretation of texts in data collected. Conventional approach is mostly used in inductive research, where theories are developed in the case of limited theories. This is used in the description of a phenomena. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). On the other hand, directed approach as the name suggests is directed and based on theories. The aim is “to validate or extend conceptually a theoretical framework or theory” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1281). This is because theories guide the researcher to focus on the research question. (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This is in conjunction to the deductive approach. The last approach, summative, focus is shifted to key word and ‘latent meaning’, which are counted and interpreted in their context. (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005).

Content analysis has a number of advantages. Elo and Kyngas (2008) argued that, a variety of data sources could be used in the analysis of text data collected. This is due to the “large volume of textual data” available. (Elo & Kyngas, 2005:114; Krippendorff, 2004: 43). Krippendorff (2004) noted that, the internet has played an unimaginable role in the large volume of data. This is because “availability of electronic texts..... make content analysis an increasingly important research technique”. (Kippendorf, 2004: 43). Hsieh & Shannon (2005) indicated that content analysis are flexible, this allows texts to be interpreted within context. This fits with the analysis of social or human problems (Denscombe, 1998).

Despite the advantages, content analysis has been criticized on its shortcomings. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) argue that, with the use of directed approach in content analysis, the researcher is bound to be limited due to the use of theory, as research is based on foundations which may

not be evident in the context. This tends to “blind researchers to contextual aspects of the phenomenon” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005: 1283). Others like Elo & Kyngas(2008) argue that, texts may be interpreted in different ways and researcher is at a risk of interpreting out of context. Although, content analysis has been criticized heavily, based on setting and social experiences of individuals, the research method gives an in depth examinations of text and in this case, to the expression of voice

3.3.2 Case selection

Content analysis is used in the collection of data in the research. In order to explain the impact of social media activism in representing dissent to shape agenda setting, this research uses a case study to arrive at a feasible conclusion. As Yin (1989) noted, case study “allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real - life events”. (p 3). As indicated in research aims four, the research seeks to identify how agenda setting occurred through the #ThisFlag movement with the case study, inferences can be deduced. In using case study, the researcher will analyze critically, the use of dissenting voices to shape agenda, within a context. As stated in the previous section, this research employs a content analysis in the collection of data. This would be done through the directed approach, which seeks to test theories. Hsieh and Shannon emphasize that, “a qualitative researcher might choose to use directed approach to content analysis” (p1281), which supports the researchers approach. In light of this, the researcher seeks to interpret the meaning of textual data based on the concepts derived from the theories of agenda setting. This would be done through the use of multiple sources to reach a feasible conclusion. In the collection of data, text analysis from social media platforms, Twitter, and Facebook; as well as governmental, and the #ThisFlag movement websites, will be used. From Twitter, only original tweets and retweets with the hashtag #ThisFlag Zimbabwe would be analyzed. To narrow the search, tweets and retweets from April 19, 2016 to 6th July would be used as this is where the issue takes ground. Facebook comments would be collected from Pastor Evan Mawarire’s Facebook, as the main actor of the movement. Videos on the 19th of April, 2016, the first video which initiated the movement would be analyzed. This is because this plays a great role in the beginning of the movement. To have a deeper understanding of the movement, videos and comments from 1st May to 25 May, where he calls for citizens to support movement by sharing pictures and videos of themselves with the flag would also be analyzed. Data from Facebook would be concluded with that of the shutdown organized by the movement. Online news sites reports and headlines will be analyzed. Five main news online sites were selected: Herald, NewsDay, Daily News. Chronicle, Standard. The first three are the daily national newspapers in Zimbabwe, with the Herald as the state newspaper while both NewsDay and Daily News are private owned¹. These three have been accounted for as reaching most if not all communities in Zimbabwe. This is evident as “The Daily news has been accounted for to

¹ Press Reference Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <http://www.pressreference.com/Uz-Z/Zimbabwe.html> on 1 July, 2018

have a circulation of 100,000 whereas Herald has that of 50,000”². NewsDay is also one of the influential in Zimbabwe as it is the first independent newspaper since 2003³. The Standard is a national weekly papers, whereas Chronicle is a local daily newspaper but widely read. Both boast of as the most read weekly papers as per their websites. Data is collected from the 19th of April, 2016, when the movement begun over 13 weeks till the 17th of July, 2016. This is because this is where the movement gains momentum, to determine the trend of events. Data is analyzed per week to determine the attention the topic received over the weeks on the mainstream media. An examination of tweet, retweets and comments would provide an information regarding the discontent with the status quo and the regime in relation to the economic crisis and employment issues in Zimbabwe. The multiple use of sources will give a detailed insight into the situation. The sources would provide a comprehensive description of events which took place since the first outburst. A selection was made to include only issues with the #ThisFlag in relation to Zimbabwe. The method focuses on specific set of date from April to July, 2016. The case of Zimbabwe was selected because it offers conditions to identify dissent expressed on social media which expanded the issue to other platforms such as mass media and takes into account the theoretical approach for data collection.

3.3.3 Coding

Data collected was reduced to include only data with the issues relating to the #ThisFlag campaign. However, those selected were further reduced as some were links to other websites or are in Shona. Although Shona comments were taken out of the data this is not with disregard of a culture, or exemption of a culture.

Data selected is analyzed through deductive approach, based on concepts derived from theories, which have been operationalized in measurable terms in section 3.2. The indicators are allocated with codes, which would be coded in the number of occurrences. Beliefs were however coded inductively from general to specific, as some codes were identified in the data. This is because important indicators of beliefs in relation to perception of values were identified within the data. 7 main indicators were throughout the data collected from comments, tweets and retweets from Facebook and Twitter respectively. All data were coded manually by the researcher, with indicators allocated a specific code and color. The research was coded within the operationalization scheme and as such coded appropriately to create a clear overview of concepts and are present in the data (Appendix I, p 91- 94)

3.3.4 Reliability

Reliability in reference to content analysis identifies that “reading of data as well as of research results is replicable elsewhere”. (Krippendorff, 2004: 211).

² Press Reference Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <http://www.pressreference.com/Uz-Z/Zimbabwe.html> on 1 July, 2018

³ Press Reference Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <http://www.pressreference.com/Uz-Z/Zimbabwe.html> on 1 July, 2018

However, one of the criticism of the research is that of the interpretation of meaning to data and content. Texts are prone to multiple interpretations, as such the significance and meaning to a researcher may mean different things to another (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This is a challenge as researcher who undertakes the same research may interpret texts in different ways. This questions the reliability of the research.

Furthermore, subjectivity of researcher plays a role. As the research is undertaken by a single researcher. Collection of data as well as analysis are done by a single researcher which has limitations as qualitative research is based on interpretations in different way. In this sense, the different interpretation of data in content analysis makes it difficult to draw similar conclusions in repetitive work.

Anonymity is also reserved in the collection and analysis of data. With the sensitivity of the issue, data collected from social media platforms, and websites were kept anonymous. This ensures that the identity of individuals or groups are secured.

Language barrier also plays a critical role. Some of the comments are in Shona language, a dialect in Zimbabwe. As such, those had to be taken out of the data and not taken into account, as it was quite difficult to get an interpreter. This however does not disregard or marginalize the culture.

3.3.5 Validity

The focus of validity in the research is divided into construct, internal and external. (Yin, 1989). In order to achieve construct validity, this research adopts a multiple sources of data to draw a conclusion. The interpretation of data from various sources gives the research a firm base and conclusion, if various sources refer to the same conclusion. Theory used plays a role, as correct indicators would lead to the same conclusion. (Yin, 1989). With the use of multiple sources, construct validity is rated highly. However, with time constraint, multiple sources may lead to large data where all available data cannot be used.

In relation to the internal validity, concepts are deduced from the theoretical framework. As research is based on theory, a causal relation is established between dissenting voices to agenda setting, emphasized through social media activism. Coding is done specifically through the variable and indicators derived from concepts, this indicates a high validity as analysis is based on concepts from existing theories. However, even though beliefs are coded inductively, the research was geared towards the operationalization scheme and the researcher is confident it was done appropriately.

In terms of external validity, there is a challenge as the case uses a single case of the #ThisFlag in Zimbabwe. This does not guarantee that the research can be generalized (De Vaus, 2001), as issues are sensitive within their own context. As such, occurrences in one event may not necessarily apply to another, due to difference in political, social and cultural factors.

4. Case Description

This chapter opens up to a brief overview on the social media activism in Zimbabwe in 2016. The chapter details out the accounts of the #ThisFlag movement in Zimbabwe, from April, when the movement sprung up to September, 2016. This chapter gives a description of how citizens used social media to address pressing issues in the country and get their voices heard.

4.1 Background on Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe attained independence from its colonial masters the British in 1980 (Hove & Chenzi, 2017), when it was known as Rhodesia Island.⁴ Robert Mugabe was the “most prominent leader of the 1972 - 1980 war of against white minority rule”. (Hassman, 2010) and for about 37 years, he was the president of Zimbabwe, the longest serving leader. In the beginning stages of his reign, President Mugabe promised to uphold the rights and freedom of citizens (Kagoro, 2005), however, Masunungure (2011) identifies the regime to be “easily characterised as a reign of terror”. (p 54). This is as a result of violence, brutality and fear instilled in citizens by the government to silence them. (Kagoro, 2005; Kasambala, 2006). It has been recorded that citizens barely see themselves as part of the decisions of the government but as ‘subjects’ (Masunungure, 2011). “The masses have grown fearful of confronting the state in the face of its massive display of repression”. (Masunungure, 2011:51). President Mugabe and his party Zimbabwe African National Union- Patriotic Front (ZANU- PF), have instilled fear in its citizens and opposition is not tolerated, as laws have been put in place to deal with opposition (Kagoro, 2005). These laws include 2001 Broadcasting Service Act, Public Order and Security Act, Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in 2002 and the Interception of Communication Acts in 2007, all in an attempt to prevent opposition and dissent. (Hove & Chenzi, 2017; Hassman, 2010; Moyo, 2011). Those deemed to violate these laws are beaten, and imprisoned, some have even been accounted for as ‘missing’, by the police and Central Intelligence organization (CIO), the ‘special’ police force of the regime. (Coltart, 2008; Kasambala, 2006). Independent journalists mostly became victims of such issues when found criticizing Mugabe and the regime (Hassman, 2010). One notable journalist was Itai Dzamara, who has allegedly been captured and killed by state police after protesting at Occupy African Unity Square, which is not far from the Parliament House, “The President’s Office and the Constitutional Court”⁵. This has limited the role as custodians of public good within the mainstream media in Zimbabwe

⁴ The Guardian. (2017). Veterans condemn Robert Mugabe in surprise backlash. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/21/zimbabwe-veterans-condemn-robert-mugabe-surprise-revolt> on 31st May, 2018.

⁵ The Guardian(2016).#ZimShutdown 2016 and the new protest politics taking root in Zimbabwe . Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/08/zimshutdown2016-and-the-new-protest-politics-taking-root-in-zimbabwe> on 21st June,2018

In 2009, the economy was in shambles as the Zimbabwe dollar became “worthless because of hyperinflation”.⁶ “The government has turned to more violent and repressive tactics as economic and political conditions continue to deteriorate”. (Kasambala, 2006:5). With immense corruption, injustice and economic crisis in the country, citizens are at the losing end. (Kagoro, 2005). As government does not permit individuals to freely express their views and discontent, citizens in Zimbabwe have been left to flee to neighbouring countries as South Africa and Botswana (Hassmann, 2010), whereas others in Zimbabwe have found a refuge in social media to voice out their discontent against government policies and issues in the country. (Mutsvairo & Sirks, 2015). One of such people was Pastor Evan Mawarire, who started the #ThisFlag movement on social media. On social media, citizens have been able to “produce and disseminate news and told stories about the harsh realities of Zimbabwe life and politics”. (Moyo, 2011:746). “The rapid growth of mobile phones services led to a burgeoning population of social media” (Gukurume, 2017:59). In 2015, Mutsvairo & Lyst-Anne (2015) identified that about 60% of the 12 million ‘mobile subscribers’ in Zimbabwe used their cell phones to gain access to the internet. Also, the reduction of data prices in terms of “data bundles and zero rated services by the major mobiles service providers” of internet usage has increased the use of social media (Mare, 2015:7). #ThisFlag is not the first of social media activism in Zimbabwe, as most civil society organizations such as workers union, have initiated protests through blogs to voice their opinions. (Gukurume, 2017). However, what makes #ThisFlag distinct is that it was initiated by ordinary citizens without any political affiliations or civic society backing, who were frustrated by the issues in the country.

4.2 #ThisFlag

“In 2016, Zimbabwe experienced dire economic challenges including, but not limited to high unemployment food insecurity, cash crisis, poor service delivery, health system collapse and lack of civil servants remuneration”. (Hove & Chenzi, 2016:174). The country’s economy was crippling (Gukurume, 2017), as citizens who showed contempt withdrew their money from the bank with the announcement of the introduction of the bond notes (Hove & Chenzi, 2016). With the economy crushing, unemployment on the rise and injustice still rampant, concern and discontent among citizens in the government rose. One of such citizens was Pastor Evans Mawarire, a Baptist pastor and youthful cleric (Gukurume, 2017), who shared a video on his Facebook account when he could not pay his children’s school fees, as civil servants had not been paid⁷. The video was posted on the 19th of April, 2016, a few days after the 36th independence day of Zimbabwe (Gukurume, 2017), and with the Zimbabwean flag wrapped around his neck, Pastor Mawarire, recorded a 4 minute long personal rant. In his Facebook video

⁶ Burke, J & Enders, C. (2016). ‘Now we are waking up’: Zimbabwe protests leader seeks international help. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/11/zimbabwe-thisflag-protests-leader-calls-for-international-support?CMP=share_btn_tw on 31st May, 2018.

⁷ Marima, T(2016). #This flag or #Ourflag. The Digital Fray for Zimbabwe’s Soul. Retrieved from <http://www.thedailyvox.co.za/thisflag-ourflag-digital-fray-zimbabwes-soul/> on 31st May, 2018

highlighted:“#ThisFlag. If I have crossed the line, then I believe it was long overdue. I’m not a politician, I’m not an activist...just an ordinary citizen.”⁸, he questioned the promises of the flag and stated that the promises of the flag cannot be seen in Zimbabwe.⁹ He stated:

“Hmm... This flag... This, (holding flag) this beautiful flag

They tell me that the eh green, the green is for the vegetation and for the crops,

I don't, I don't see any crops in my country, they say.

.and the yellow, and the yellow is for all the minerals: gold ...diamonds, platinum, chrome,

I don't know how much of it is left, and i don't know who they sold it to and how much they got for it.

The red, the red, the red they say that it's the blood, it's the blood that was shared to secure freedom for me and I am so thankful for that.

I just don't know if that, they were here, they that shed their blood and saw the way that this country is, and that they would demand their blood be brought back.

This flag. They tell me that the black, the black, it's for, it's for the majority, people like me (pointing to himself) , and yet for some reason I don't feel like i am a part of it .

I, I look at it sometimes and then I wonder is it, is it a story of my future or is it just a reminder of a, of a sad past that wherever I go and I put on the colors of Zimbabwe, they, they look at me as if they want to love to ask me are you from Zimbabwe?”¹⁰

He reaffirms the promises of the flag and empowers citizens to stop being spectators and take a stake in the affairs of the country:

“This flag (haha). It is my country, my Zimbabwe, we go through so much, we , we don't look like so much , even now but there is promise in it, I will fight for it , I will live for it ,and i will stand for it.

This is the time, that a change must happen, quit standing on the sidelines,

And watching this flag fly and wishing for a future you are not at all wanting to get involved in.

This flag every day that it flies, is begging for you to get involved,

It's begging for you to say something, it's begging for you to cry out and say why must we be in this situation that we are in. This flag, it's your flag, it's my flag.”¹¹

⁸ Evans Mawarire. #ThisFlag. Facebook. 19/04/16 retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 2nd July, 2018

⁹ Bloggo, M.(2016). We really believe social media will drive change in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/748132/we-really-believe-social-media-will-drive-change-in-mugabes-zimbabwe/> on 31st May, 2018

¹⁰ Youtube. This Flag - A lament of Zimbabwe- Evans Mawarire - spoken word. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LubMilbHiPg> on 31st May, 2018.

¹¹ Youtube. This Flag - A lament of Zimbabwe- Evans Mawarire - spoken word. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LubMilbHiPg> on 31st May, 2018.

People commented and shared their views on the current issues in the country. The video received over 85000 views in three days¹² and about 200000 in just a matter of a week (Gukurume, 2017). Mawarire was astonished by the enthusiasm with number of views and comments he received (Gukurume, 2017) for his personal rant which he claims was recorded in the heat of the moment and thus not scripted¹³

“Mawarire's Facebook page became a space of citizen dissent where people expressed their disgruntlement with government”. (Gukurume, 2017: 55). The message seemed to voice the daily struggle and issues most people from all walks of life faced in Zimbabwe. In a tweet. Mawarire stated that “So I had a little rant and it has turned out to be how so many Zimbabweans feel”¹⁴

As Zimbabweans expressed their opinion on the current situation in the country, some highlighted:

‘... its time to stand up and stand your ground!! I want my real Zimbabwe, not where some animals are more equal than me’¹⁵. Others emphasized, “wow! Well said Pastor E. thank you for carrying the words of a fearful and hopeless people. You said it as it is with no fear or bias”¹⁶

#ThisFlag Challenge

With the amount of messages streaming in on his video, Mawarire made another video expressing his gratitude to Zimbabwean for their support¹⁷.

With the amount of support received, Pastor Mawarire, launched a 7-day challenge where citizens would share selfies of themselves with the flag. He invited all Zimbabweans to take part, both in Zimbabwe or in the diaspora. He urged citizens:

*“Wherever you go, take this flag with you and let’s make a statement that our politicians will hear whether they are they are the ruling party or the opposition party, we want them to know Zimbabweans..... we just want this country to work.”*¹⁸

¹² News24(2016). Zim pastor’s heartfelt #ThisFlag video prompts flag selfies. Retrieved from <https://www.news24.com/Africa/Zimbabwe/zim-pastors-heartfelt-thisflag-video-prompts-flag-selfies-20160423> on 21st June, 2016

¹³ Evan Mwaririe Facebook. Day 1. #ThisFlag challenge is on folks 29/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153571647777043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 2nd July, 2018

¹⁴ Evan Mawarire @PastorEvanLive (20/04/16) Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/PastorEvanLive> on 1July, 2018

¹⁵ Evan mawarire facebook Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos_by on 2nd July, 2018

¹⁶ Evan mawarire facebook Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos_by on 2nd July, 2018

¹⁷ Evan Mwaririe Facebook. Day 1. #ThisFlag challenge is on folks 29/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153571647777043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 2nd July, 2018

¹⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.29/04/16 Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153571647777043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab On 31st May, 2018

The Zimbabwean flag was to be their symbol to express their dissent. Citizens were to go about their normal activities with their flags with them¹⁹. The challenge was set for the 1st of May to 7th of May, 2016, a 7 day period to get their voices heard. His main concerns revolved around corruption, poverty and injustice as he kept hammering on these three conditions:

*“As way of saying to our government and the government ministers and to those that are running our country.....enough is enough. Okay, we have had enough of corruption, we have had enough of injustice, and we have had enough of poverty”*²⁰

During the challenge, each day, Pastor Evan put up videos with updates in the country and encouraged citizens to keep the movement alive till they get the government to hear them. (Gukurume, 2017). Citizens put up selfies and videos of themselves with the flag and shared them on Facebook and Twitter in an effort to make government listen to their contempt. With the 7 day challenge growing to become a movement, Pastor Evan extended the original challenge which was supposed to end on the 7th May to a 25 day challenge ending on the 25th of May, 2016. He stated:

*“My fellow citizens I want to ask you to do something, as we extend now ...to 25 May, is the last day that we will carry our flags. I want to ask you ...one more thing. Would you comment on this video the one thing you would want this government to do One thing, just one thing...I won't tell you what it is , but just go ahead and write that thing ...Facebook, WhatsApp , this is where we can meet together and talk and air our views... So we extend this we carry on”.*²¹

On the 25th day of the challenge, he stated it was not the last day but just the beginning for the movement, “forcing government to hear the people’s voices and demands for accountability and transparency”. (Gukurume, 2017:56). In his comment on Facebook, he emphasized:

*“#ThisFlag Day 25. We have learned in 25 days that 1) Government does not care about us 2) Fear cannot build anything 3) We are our own voice 4) We are powerful when we united. We're Fed up and not afraid anymore”*²². The movement’s vision as emphasized on their website foresees “a Zimbabwe where citizens are emboldened to speak out, as questions and act against corruption, injustice and poverty”

²³. In his videos, Mawarire consistently stressed that the movement was not affiliated to any party and argued the movement was spearheaded to give the citizens a voice and break the ‘chains’ of fear in order to question the government.²⁴ Pastor Evan in an interview with Daily Maverick

¹⁹ Evan Mwarire Facebook. Day 1. #ThisFlag challenge is on folks 29/04/16. Retrieved from

²⁰ Evan Mwarire Facebook. day 3- 7 retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos_by on 2nd July, 2018

²¹ Evan Mwarire. Facebook Day 6 of #ThisFlag. 6/05.16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 2nd July, 2018

²² Evan Mwarire. Facebook day 25. 25.05.16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153623004042043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 2nd July, 2018

²³ thisFlag(2016).vision of the movement. Retrieved from <http://thisflag1980.com/about-us> on 2nd July, 2018

²⁴ Newsday(2016). The simple genius of Zim’s #ThisFlag protest and the man who started it. Retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/05/simple-genius-zims-thisflag-protest-man-started/> on 2nd July, 2018

stated that he had been threatened by an unknown caller who said “this flag around your neck can strangle you, and if you carry on like this it will strangle you”²⁵. This still did not stop him.

Counter Narrative- #OurFlag

With the #ThisFlag movement gaining momentum, it quickly gained the attention of Professor Jonathan Moyo, the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, “one of Mugabe’s trusted propagandists”²⁶ who mocked the movement as a “pastor’s fart in the corridors of power”²⁷. He soon spearheaded a counter narrative which he named #OurFlag where he emphasized:

“#OurFlag. The people will use it to defend Zimbabwe’s sovereignty”²⁸

This resulted in a ‘twitter battle’ among the #ThisFlag and #OurFlag supporters, as in most cases most people got confused with the hashtags.(Gukurume, 2017). However, as time went out people were able to identify the difference as one states:

“#ThisFlag is ours. #ThisFlag is personal, don’t be fooled by the word”²⁹, another could not hide the emotions as he wrote: “the moment people start seeing #ThisFlag as different from #OurFlag... lol”³⁰

The #OurFlag movement was strongly backed by “the state broadcaster, ZBC, which run dozens of adverts on national tv” (Kalemra et al,2016). The #OurFlag campaign was used to advertise the One million March organized on the 25th of May by the ZANU -PF government to consolidate President Mugabe’s rule and show support for the president³¹

Professor Moyo further accused the U.S.A Ambassador and some European Union ambassadors, Harry Thomas and Phillippe Van Damme who he felt were backing the movement.³² He mockingly referred to Harry as ‘Dirty Harry’ as he stated the flag belonged to Zimbabweans and not anyone else³³. However, the U.S embassy openly denied accusation of being the third force of the #ThisFlag movement as Moyo claimed Pastor Mawarire was “pastor for hire”³⁴.

²⁵ Newsday(2016). The simple genius of Zim’s #ThisFlag protest and the man who started it. Retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/05/simple-genius-zims-thisflag-protest-man-started/> on 2nd July, 2018

²⁶Chidza, R(2016). #ThisFlag protest rattles under fire Mugabe henchmen. The Standard News.(22.05.16). Retrieved from <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2016/05/22/thisflag-protest-rattles-fire-mugabe-henchmen/> on 21st June,2018.

²⁷ Professor Jonathan Moyo. @ProfJNMoyo. 9/05/16. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/profjnmoyo/status/729546908876865536?lang=en>

²⁸ Professor Jonathan Moyo.@ProfJNMoyo. 16/05/16.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/ProfJNMoyo> on 1 July,2018

²⁹ Twitter (counter narrative) - thisflag is ourflag- 14/05/16. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 1 July, 2018

³⁰ Twitter counter narratove -the moment people see the difference -14/05/16.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 1 July, 2018

³¹ Tendai, M.(2016). #thisFlag or #OurFlag? The digital fray for Zimbabwe’s Soul. retrieved from <https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/thisflag-ourflag-digital-fray-zimbabwes-soul/> on 2nd July, 2018

³²Chronicle. Prof Moyo blasts foreign embassies 3/09/16. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/prof-moyo-blasts-foreign-embassies/> on 1 July,2018

³³ ProfJnMoyo 17/05. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/ProfJNMoyo> on 1 July,2018

³⁴The Chronicle (2016). U.S denies hand in flag protest .19/05/16. Retrieved from <http://www.chronicle.co.zw/us-denies-hand-in-flag-protest/> on 2nd July, 2018

With the movement gaining ground and more recognition, other government representatives slammed Pastor Mawarire. One of such was Supa Mandiwanzira, Minister of ICT & Cyber Security, who discredited Evan as a ‘liar’ and stated the pastor was in it for self-interest as he tweeted:

“Have met Pastor Ivan #ThisFlag many times. Only thing he has ever asked of me is to facilitate ‘just a hand- shake’ with H.E President Mugabe!”³⁵.

Even with comments and counter narratives, the movement continued to grow from strength to strength and Pastor Mawarire urged citizens to engage with government officials personally to do their work. As such Pastor Evan led the movement on 16th June, 2016 to hold a public debate with Dr. John Mangundya, the governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe.³⁶ This was to address the issue of the bond notes and “citizens wanted the RBZ governor to defend in front of the public the introduction of bond notes, which for many people would mean a possible return to the unstable local currency” (Gukurume, 2017:56). Mawarire encouraged citizens to attend in their numbers, and huge crowds of people showed up at the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe headquarters (eds). With the amount of success obtained with the public debate, the movement took another step further. The movement later urged citizens to sign a petition to dismiss the Minister of Energy, Power & Development, Samuel Undenge, who was allegedly accused of corruption in a \$5m ‘power- generation project’³⁷. The petition was both online and on the streets and within a couple of days, they reached their limit (Gukurume, 2017). However, this wasn’t taken up by government, which frustrated the movement led by Pastor Evan to take action.

Shutdown Zimbabwe

On 4th July, 2016, Pastor Evan in a Facebook post urged citizens to stay home on Wednesday, 6th of July, 2016, as a sign of making a statement to government to meet their demands³⁸. The aim was to address corruption, injustice and unemployment issues in the country. (Hove et al, 2017). This was termed #Shutdown Zimbabwe, a day long where citizens stayed home and in Mawarire’s words “we are closing, we are done”.³⁹ “The coordinated stayaway in part achieves two things: It registers a message with the government and ensures safety of its participants against flying bullets and teargas”⁴⁰ On the said day, many citizens heeded the call “although state media reported it was business as usual, the reality on the ground and pictures circulated through WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook pointed to the contrary” (Gukurume, 2017:57).

³⁵ Supa Mandiwanzira @SupaCollinsM. 17/05/16 retrieved from <https://twitter.com/SupaCollinsM/status/732568948189843456> on 2nd July, 2018

³⁶ African Focus Bulletin Zimbabwe: #ThisFlag. Retrieved from <http://www.africanfocus.org/docs16/zim1607a.php> on 11th July, 2018.

³⁷ The Independent Zimbabwe (2016). Zesa scandal: Undenge blames CEO. Retrieved from <https://www.theindependent.co.zw/2016/05/27/zesa-scandals-undenge-blames-ceo/> on 2nd July, 2018

³⁸ Evan Mawarire. Facebook. 4/07/16. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire>

³⁹ Evan Mawarire. Facebook. 4/07/16. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire>

⁴⁰ Bloggo, M. (2016). We really believe social media will drive change in Mugabe’s Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <https://qz.com/748132/we-really-believe-social-media-will-drive-change-in-mugabes-zimbabwe/> on 2nd July, 2018

Schools, shops, businesses were closed on the day. This was seen in Herald newspaper which stated “Many people ignored the threats of violence on July 6, and went about their business”⁴¹ Professor Moyo again addressed the shutdown stated in a tweet that “the notion that anyone can build #Zimbabwe by shutting it down is an oxymoron”⁴². However, on the national stayaway, internet access was allegedly blocked for over 4 hours, with inability to use the internet to access social media platforms WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook⁴³. As one stated: “WhatsApp and twitter closed?”⁴⁴. Another stated: “My WhatsApp has been disconnected. We are together even in silence. #ThisFlag #ShutDownZimbabwe”⁴⁵. Techno- savvy citizens found a way to bypass the restriction by using VPN (virtual private networks) which they shared to get others onboard⁴⁶. Many blamed the government for having a hand in it but they denied any knowledge of it⁴⁷.

With not much response from government a week after the first shutdown, Pastor Evan stated that the movement would call for a new shutdown if demands are not met⁴⁸. This would last for two days on the 13th and 14th of July, 2016, as stated by the pastor and the demands were “the sacking of corrupt ministers, the payment of delayed salaries and the lifting of roadblocks that residents say are used by police to extract bribes”⁴⁹. Other demands included “abandoning the bond notes and lifting the import ban”⁵⁰.

Government response

In the wake of a pending stayaway, the government through the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe issued a warning to citizens that it could trace perpetrators through their sim cards which is registered as per the law of Statutory Instrument 142 of 2013,

⁴¹ Herald(2016):Zim’s well - intentioned law triggers violent agitation.01/09/2016.retrieved from www.herald.co.zw/zims-well-intentioned-law-triggers-violent-agitation/ on 2nd July, 2018

⁴² Kalerma, A., Nalwoga, L., Nanfukia, J., &Wakabi,W.(2016)State of internet freedom in Zimbabwe 2016. Charting Patterns in the Strategies African Government use to stifle citizen’s digital rights. Retrieved from https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=231 on 2nd July, 2018

⁴³ Kalerma, A., Nalwoga, L., Nanfukia, J., &Wakabi,W.(2016)State of internet freedom in Zimbabwe 2016. Charting Patterns in the Strategies African Government use to stifle citizen’s digital rights. Retrieved from https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=231 on 2nd July, 2018

⁴⁴ Evan mawarire. Facebook 6/07/16. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire>

⁴⁵ Evan mawarire. Facebook 6/07/16.Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire>

⁴⁶ Shearlaw, M.(2016). The Guardian: Armed with smart phones and memes, Zimbabwe’s protestors find their voice online (11/07/16) . retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/11/armed-with-smartphones-and-memes-zimbabwes-protesters-find-their-voice-online> on 2nd July, 2018

⁴⁷ Magaisa, A. (2016). The Big Saturday Read: Citizens movement and the resurgence of the repressive state in Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://www.bigsr.co.uk/single-post/2016/07/09/The-Big-Saturday-Read-Citizens%E2%80%99-movement-and-the-resurgence-of-the-repressive-state-in-Zimbabwe> on 2nd July, 2018

⁴⁸ Mananavira, B., & Tafirenyika, M. (2016). Zimbabweans plot another shutdown. Retrieved from <https://www.dailynews.co.zw/articles/2016/07/08/zimbabweans-plot-another-shutdown> on 2nd July, 2018

⁴⁹ Burke, J., & Enders, C. (2016). The Guardian. “Now we are waking up”. Zimbabwe protests leader seeks international help. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/11/zimbabwe-thisflag-protests-leader-calls-for-international-support> on 2nd July, 2018

⁵⁰ Shearlaw, M.(2016). The Guardian: Armed with smart phones and memes, Zimbabwe’s protestors find their voice online (11/07/16).Retrieved from <http://www.shutdownzim.net/2016/07/11/armed-smartphones-memes-zimbabwes-protesters-find-voice-online/> on 2nd July,2018.

with individual information⁵¹. This could make citizens believe the government had a hand in the social media blackout during the first stay away

However, Pastor Evan got arrested by the state police on the eve of the beginning of the second stayaway.⁵² He was arraigned in court on charges of inciting violence, with citizens calling for his release.⁵³ On the court day, Pastor Evan was “facing charges of undermining a constitutionally- elected government”⁵⁴. Over 50 lawyers came out to represent him with thousands, prayer and singing outside the courthouse⁵⁵. However, the case was dismissed on the fact that the pastor was not aware of the change of charges when he was arrested which the judge stated was against his constitutional rights⁵⁶. Mawarire fled to South Africa following threats, but continued with his #ThisFlag movement online. (Hove & Chenzi, 2017).

With recent events stirred on social media, and to curb future events the government passed a law “which disallowed anyone except registered institutions to carry a national flag and those who would risked paying a heavy fine or being arrested” (Hove & Chenzi,2017:187). Issue of the flag further disrupted discussions in parliament when two opposition ministers entered Parliament with the flag wrapped around their shoulder, which spurred confrontation from the MPs of the ruling government, who stated they should be removed as the Speaker had suggested no flags in the Parliament.⁵⁷

A bill was drafted by the Ministry of Information in August, 2016 (Gukurume,2017) known as the Computer Crime and Cybercrime Bill which passed “would allow authorities to remotely install surveillance spying and forensic tools onto the devices of individuals of interest”⁵⁸. This law when passed would give Zimbabwe police force the authority to confiscate all devices and “to intercept private communications search and seize any ‘electronic gadgets’ and send any abusers to jail for five years”⁵⁹. In its defense, the government stated the bill would deal with

⁵¹ Mcgrath, C.(2016). What’s everyone getting wrong about Zim’s #thisflag movement.(21/07/16). Retrieved from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/21/what-everyones-getting-wrong-about-zimbabwes-thisflag-movement/> on 2nd July,2016

⁵² Kalerma, A., Nalwoga, L., Nanfukia, J., &Wakabi,W.(2016)State of internet freedom in Zimbabwe 2016. Charting Patterns in the Strategies African Government use to stifle citizen’s digital rights. Retrieved from https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=231 on 2nd July, 2018

⁵³ Samukange, T. (2016). Newsday:Netizens respond to Mawarire’s arrest.Retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/07/netizens-respond-mawarires-arrest/> on 2nd July,2018

⁵⁴ Herald(2016). #thisflag campaigner Mawarire freed. (14/07/16) retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/07/netizens-respond-mawarires-arrest/> on 2nd July, 2018.

⁵⁵ Nehanda Radio(2016) #thisFlag Pastor released .. jubilation outside court. retrieved from <http://nehandaradio.com/2016/07/13/thisflag-pastor-evan-mawarire-released/> on 2nd July, 2018

⁵⁶ Herald(2016). #thisflag campaigner Mawarire freed. (14/07/16) retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/07/netizens-respond-mawarires-arrest/> on 2nd July, 2018.

⁵⁷ Newsday(2016). Flag euphoria spreads to Parliament. Retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2016/07/flag-euphoria-spreads-parliament/> on 2nd July, 2018

⁵⁸ Kalerma, A., Nalwoga, L., Nanfukia, J., &Wakabi,W.(2016)State of internet freedom in Zimbabwe 2016. Charting Patterns in the Strategies African Government use to stifle citizen’s digital rights. Retrieved from https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=231 on 2nd July, 2018

⁵⁹ Thornycroft, P. (2016).The telegraph. New Zimbabwe law allows seizure of smartphones and laptops as Mugabe turns on social media. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/07/new-zimbabwe-law-allows-seizure-of-smartphones-and-laptops-as-mu/> on 2nd July, 2018

cyber bullies and “help the extradition of Zimbabweans in other countries who use social media to organize protest at home”⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Thornycroft, P. (2016).The telegraph. New Zimbabwe law allows seizure of smartphones and laptops as Mugabe turns on social media. Retrieved from <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/08/07/new-zimbabwe-law-allows-seizure-of-smartphones-and-laptops-as-mu/> on 2nd July, 2018

5. Results

In this chapter, the findings from the data collected is presented. This is done in order to answer the sub- question, How does agenda setting occur in the #ThisFlag case? Results is divided in sections with that of Social media platforms; Twitter and Facebook presented. This is followed with News sites outlets and discussion on government websites.

5.1 Social media

In order to identify whether social media activism represents dissent, videos, comments, tweets and retweets were coded from Facebook and Twitter respectively. Data was derived based on concepts in the operationalization scheme and coded through the indicators identified in table. In coding, another indicator was observed which was not in the operationalization scheme. This indicator is the use of biblical quotes as a symbol.

As identified, beliefs are divided into two main indicators. This includes perception of character role which was derived from the concepts and perception of values expressed. However, during coding, other indicators that were important codes in relation to beliefs people held with regards to perception of values were observed. Codes identified for beliefs include judgement, humiliation, affirmation, disappointment, hope, pride and doubt. These have been color coordinated in Appendix table 1, 2 and 3 (p. 91 -94). In this context:

- i) Judgement: drawing a conclusion on someone or something based on morals
- ii) Humiliation: feeling of shame or embarrassment
- iii) Affirmation: confirmation or support of one's views
- iv) Disappointment: sorrow in dreams that have not been fulfilled r expectations not met
- v) Hope: expectation of a positive outcome
- vi) Pride: this represents self- worth and dignity, fulfillment
- vii) Doubt: disbelief.

The following section outlines the results from twitter and Facebook based on the codes on symbols, beliefs, frame alignment and expansion. Based on the findings, the researcher is able to deduce the role of social media activism in dissent. This section seeks to identify the use of social media in dissent as it addresses the issue of social media activism and how it represents dissent.

5.1.1 Twitter

A total of 370 tweets and retweets were derived from Twitter between 19th April, 2016 to 6th July, 2016 on #ThisFlag. However, this was reduced to 341 tweets with the #ThisFlag Zimbabwe. Also, some tweets were in Shona, which was taken out due to failure to interpret. This does not disregard any culture as most were in English.

1) Symbols

The symbols identified in the data included use of image of precedence, use of pictogram, symbolism in text to other historical events and use of biblical quotes.

The use of image of precedence was the most used of the symbols on the platform. It was identified 71 times in the data as people either took pictures or videos with the Zimbabwean flag. Others also put a picture of the Zimbabwean flag in their comments. The flag is a priority in countries which represents historical events of that country. For the sake of anonymity pictures and videos cannot be included in the research

The use of pictogram were also seen in the data. This represented a word or phrase, symbolizing an emotion, or expression. It was identified 22 times in tweets and retweets of individuals.

The use of symbolism to other historical events was also seen in the data. It appeared 11 times in the data. This was observed when one tweeted ““1st they ignore u, then they laugh @ u, then they fight u. Then u win.” - Ghandi #ThisFlag the unstoppable movement of ZW citizens is alive”⁶¹This was in reference to Mahatma Gandhi during the Indian independence in the 1940’s. It can also be observed when another stated “A reminder to those who think Pastor Evan is getting too political - that also what the Klu Klux Klan said of Martin Luther King #ThisFlag”⁶². Martin Luther King Jr was also a Baptist minister and activist in the United States of America in the 1960s who clashed with the Klu Klux Klan in 1996 who were having a “counter protest” the same day.⁶³ This links a historical event to the situation the people are facing in Zimbabwe.

Many others made reference to Martin Luther King as another quoted him saying “where evil men would seek to perpetuate an unjust status quo, good men must seek to bring into being a real order of justice” MLK #ThisFlag”.⁶⁴ This was in reference to the era of Dr. King and his civil rights movement. Others quoted Hitler referring to the situation on the ‘ground’ and stated “I guess Hitler was correct when he said people are generally stupid. #ThisFlag”⁶⁵. Symbolism to other historical events was also used from local contexts as the #ThisFlag twitter account tweeted after their meeting with the RBZ governor “#ThisFlag our parting gift to the RBZ governor of 1 trillion dollars as a reminder of 2008”⁶⁶. 2008 was a critical time in Zimbabwe as violence spread

⁶¹ Twitter.#thisflag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

⁶² Twitter.#thisflag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

⁶³ Miller, W.J (2018). When MLK and KKK met in Raleigh.Retrieved from <https://www.newsobserver.com/opinion/op-ed/article207785869.html> on 7th July, 2018

⁶⁴ Twitter.#thisflag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

⁶⁵ Twitter.#thisflag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

⁶⁶ Twitter.#thisflag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

through the country after the presidential elections, with a round off on 29th March and 27th June, 2008 respectively.⁶⁷

In relation to biblical quotes, there was none in the data collected from twitter.

With the use of symbol it can be deduced that images, visuals and texts with symbolisms attached to them helped to get message across. According to Bekkers et al, (2011), the use of images through social media help in the advancement of issues as people are able to align themselves to these frames better as compared to the traditional media. In the case of #ThisFlag a significant use of the image of precedence, which is the flag of Zimbabwe is used. This symbol brings Zimbabwean people together despite their race or background. This means that the use of symbols are used in order to attract people to adopt a specific frame.

2) Beliefs

Beliefs were coded with two separate indicators; perception of values expressed and perception of role. Sub- indicators were identified on each as identified in table 1 of the research design. First, the results of perception of values expressed would be identified.

i) Perception of values expressed

Judgement of one's character or a system based on morals was observed in the data. It was seen 23 times in the data collected. Judgement is seen when one states "those ridiculing #ThisFlag are beneficiaries of crisis in Zimbabwe. No right thinking soul can be against desire for normalcy"⁶⁸. This is a conclusion drawn by the individual based on morals of what they think is not the right conduct of behavior. Another concludes "anyone who pretends that what's going on in Zimbabwe is normal and should not be challenged has a mental health problem"⁶⁹. Others draw conclusion on leaders like Professor Moyo, who started the counter narrative stating "just because Prof Moyo was hired by mahachi to co-ordinate the Zanu - PF election campaign in 2000.He now thinks everyone is for hire.#ThisFlag"⁷⁰. Another condemns the regime claiming "the next government should have integrity as its core value, instead of having thieves who use proximity to the President to steal. #ThisFlag"⁷¹

Another belief observed in the data is a feeling of embarrassment which results to humiliation. This occurred 9 times in the data. One tweeted "i can't believe we were stupid enough to vote

⁶⁷ Crisis in Zimbabwe. International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect.Retrieved from <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/crises/crisis-in-zimbabwe> on 7th July,2018.

⁶⁸ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

⁶⁹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁰ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷¹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

this guy into power...’’⁷². This shows he is embarrassed with the decision they took as citizens which qualifies them being stupid. One tweets about the embarrassing circumstances they have to live with in a foreign country stating “when people are being peacefully xenophobic towards you with words like “Zimbabweans are here because their country is run down” #ThisFlag’’⁷³. Humiliation is also observed in a tweet referring to Zimbabwe as Banana republic, “President Mugabe’s distribution of bananas at a Zanu Pf rally in Gutu confirms Zim is a banana Republic’’⁷⁴. Banana republic is used as a belittling phrase for an insecure country’’⁷⁵

Affirmation is the most seen in the data, with most people in support of the values of the movement. It has a number of 134 occurrences. As one stated “#ThisFlag was started by a pastor who just couldn’t find school fees for his kids. Many Zimbabweans can relate to this struggle’’⁷⁶. Another also tweeted in support of the movement saying “#ThisFlag: I had to share this, it simply describes how I feel about my country Zimbabwe. #DeepMessage’’⁷⁷. While another confirms the message “A flag is the center of patriotism, love for a nation (2.3) and Evan Mawarire makes that clear. #ThisFlag’’⁷⁸, another gives assurance “ThisFlag covers everyone... no blacks, no whites, no mulattos & indians .. There is now just Zimbabwe #quote S.Machel 1980’’⁷⁹. One also shows support stating “ I need a selfie with a flag for the #ThisFlag but don’t have a flag to drape round myself *cries patriotic tears*’’⁸⁰. Others claim it is a safe haven “#ThisFlag has become the only safe place to express yourself without any repercussion. Put differently it is place where there speech freedom’’⁸¹.

⁷² Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷³ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁴ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁵ Collins English Dictionary(2018). Banana republic. Retrieved from <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/banana-republic> on 10th July,2018

⁷⁶ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁷ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁸ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁷⁹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁰ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸¹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

The next belief identified is disappointment, mainly due to failed dreams. With a total of 48 occurrences, one stated “#ThisFlag is not funded by the west. It is funded by the pain, hunger, frustration and disappointment brought by gvt’s failure”⁸². Another stated “No matter what defence the politicians/ govt bark #ThisFlag is about us Zimbabweans, us the citizens you have failed”⁸³. Many others expressed their disappointment by stating “We won the fight against “white privilege”. Now we struggle against “black privilege”. An elitist minority oppresses the majority #ThisFlag”⁸⁴, whereas others who had their dreams crushed tweeted “my heart breaks for my generation. We did everything right. We got the qualifications but we didn’t get the jobs”⁸⁵ “just want to go home #ThisFlag, when I was a child i dreamed great believe me i never dreamt of diaspora #Zimbabwe #ThisFlag”⁸⁶

Hope and pride were also observed. With hope identified 42 times, pride was only identified 17 times. In relation to hope one tweeted “#ThisFlag represents our hopes and dreams. We must dream again”⁸⁷ Another emphasized “this journey is long. #ThisFlag has given us hope. Hold onto it”⁸⁸. Others hope for a better Zimbabwe stating “my beloved Zimbabwe, I cry! I yearn for your glory to be restored”⁸⁹ with another claiming, “I dream of a Zimbabwe where the inherent dignity of every human being is respected, protected & fulfilled #ThisFlag”⁹⁰ Whereas another stated “... We shall overcome their repression #ThisFlag”⁹¹. Another retorted “we have to get to a

⁸² Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸³ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁴ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁵ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁶ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁷ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁸ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁸⁹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹⁰ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹¹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

place where holding Govt to account without fear is the new normal for every ZW citizen. That's the narrative of #ThisFlag"⁹².

With regards to pride, one exclaimed “#ThisFlag is my beautiful flag and I'm proud of it!! It shall be well with zim"⁹³. Others expressed self-dignity by stating “I will never apologise for being patriotic and loving my country ZW #ThisFlag"⁹⁴. “I may be half British, but I consider myself 100% Zimbo and proud"⁹⁵. Other expressed their pride in the call for shutdown and in the citizens, “I'm proud to be Zimbabwean today, finally we are starting to speak with one voice. #ShutDownZimbabwe2016 #ThisFlag"⁹⁶, “I am so proud of you Zimbabwe. #ShutDownZim #tjamuka #thisflag"⁹⁷

However, one seemed to doubt the values upheld by the movement through social media activism and stated “reality is: any political mvt with ambitions to take #Zimbabwe have to look other mobilization tools apart from the internet"⁹⁸

ii) Perception of role

The perception of a hero was identified 9 times in the data. Hero is identified as the solution to the problem. Most people identified Evan Mawarire as one to solve the problems as one stated “..... People like @PastorEvanLive are the address and location of the change Zimbabwe desperately needs”.⁹⁹. Another retorted “What you are doing for us fellow Zimbabweans is going

⁹² Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹³ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹⁴ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹⁵ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹⁶ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018.

⁹⁷ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

⁹⁸ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

⁹⁹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

to be a legacy that should be remembered”¹⁰⁰. Others even suggested statues to be made stating “hope they name more things after him & even erect statues.”¹⁰¹

However Mwarire felt it was the citizens who were the heroes claiming “#ShutDownZimbabwe2016 is the entrance of the true heroes of Zimbabwe, we are the citizens #ThisFlag”¹⁰².

Another role identified is a villain which was identified 37 times. Most was in relation to the government and President Mugabe. As one tweeted’ “Mugabe’s decades in office... marked by economic decline, repression, vote rigging and mass unemployment”... #ThisFlag”¹⁰³. Another retorted, “it’s only under Zanu PF rule when you’re told by a hospital that there are no ambulances. An entire general hospital #ThisFlag”¹⁰⁴. While others claimed “Zimbabweans will win this war against Black elitist minority who have plundered the country”¹⁰⁵, one tweeted “considering that #ZanuPf has ruined Zim economy, that’s not a bad idea. #ThisFlag”¹⁰⁶. Evan Mwarire also blamed the government stating, “After the 1 million man march you Govt still need to answer the \$15billion question. #ThisFlag will haunt you till you answer”¹⁰⁷

Victims were also observed in the data, with 30 identified. Mwarire identified that “politicians have never missed their salary yet we go for months without & then you want to tax me #ThisFlag says no more”¹⁰⁸. Others expressed their pain tweeting, “Zimbabweans are like the battered and abused wife who just stay for the sake of her children and has nowhere else to go

¹⁰⁰ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰¹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰² Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰³ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰⁴ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰⁵ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰⁶ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

¹⁰⁷ Twitter. Evan Mwarire. .Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

¹⁰⁸ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July,2018

#ThisFlag”¹⁰⁹ while another retorted “my mom collapsed, my sister..., called the hospital only to be told there are no ambulances. Wanna know what happened she died. #ThisFlag”¹¹⁰. One tweeted, “what have we done to deserve this #ThisFlag We need deliverance”¹¹¹. One also tweeted the pain inflicted on them by the police, “#Policebutality!!! enough!!! why are they doing this! We can’t keep getting beaten and killed citizens”¹¹²

With the beliefs, individuals expressed their belief systems on their perceptions of values and the role of various actors within the policy system. This means that individuals create belief systems based on their perception of values which in turn influences how they view various actors are the victims, villains or heroes.

As seen, Twitter served as a platform citizens put across their issues through their beliefs which reinforced their beliefs and symbols. This means that as a platform, citizens expressed their views and opinions on issues of poverty, injustice and corruption, based on their beliefs of values shared and their perception of heroes, victims and villains. Using symbols such as the Zimbabwean flag, biblical quotes and historical events to represent their beliefs and opinions.

5.1.2 Facebook

With the huge amount of data on Facebook it was limited to the first video on the 19th April, 2016, #ThisFlag challenge 1st May to 25th May, 2016, and the call for shutdown on the 4th July, 2016. In total, a number of 2789 comments and 24 Facebook videos were coded.

1) **Symbols**

The use of image of precedence was coded 44 times in the data collected. In this cases the flag of Zimbabwean flag. The flag as a symbol was used 3 times on the 19th of April, 2016, 39 times on the 25 day challenge and only 2 on the 4th of July, 2016.

The use of pictogram is also identified enormously in the data. In the first video it was only identified 4 time in the data. However, within the 25 day challenge it increased to 91 times in

¹⁰⁹ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

¹¹⁰ Twitter.#ThisFlag Zimbabwe. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

¹¹¹ Twitter.#ThisFlag. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

¹¹² Twitter.#ThisFlag. Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/search?l=&q=%23thisflag%20zimbabwe%20%23thisflag%20since%3A2016-04-19%20until%3A2016-07-07&src=typd> on 10th July, 2018

total. The call for shutdown also recorded more pictograms used for a day with 21 identified in the data.

The use of symbolism in text to other historical events is also identified in the data. A total of 77 codes linked to this symbol is identified. It was identified 4 times on the 19th April, 2016. This is seen when Pastor Mawarire in the video states "... it's the blood, it's the blood that was shed to secure freedom for me and i am so thankful..."¹¹³. This symbolizes the fight for independence. Another comments stating ""there are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction" John F Kennedy¹¹⁴. During the 25- day challenge, the code is identified 69 times in the data with the call for shutdown accounting for 4 occurrences recorded in the first video. The use of symbolism in text to other historical events is seen when one comments, "Politicians are not afraid of social media campaigns but are afraid of an organized generation that takes it upon themselves to change the course of history by going into the streets, the places of entertainment, the place of worship yes (Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Garfield Todd), the work places and the corridors of power to demand real change and their generational share of the cake."¹¹⁵ Another states, "they are feeling the heat!... The gaddafi"¹¹⁶, whereas another retorted, "We all remember the Arab Spring/ uprising that led to regime change in Tunisia and Egypt- so let's not give up."¹¹⁷. Others made reference to Martin Luther King Jr, "our own Martin luther King"¹¹⁸, "Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering and struggle: the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals- MLK Jr"¹¹⁹, " Dr Martin Luther King Jr did it and it worked!... we do it the Malcolm X"¹²⁰. Some also described President Mugabe with past leadership as one commented, "Zimbabwean Idi Amin "¹²¹, whereas another stated "Just know that they are fighting to find a way to set you up but they can't set up the whole country. Even the greatest Hitler burnt himself"¹²². Another stated "they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce, growling dogs roamed everywhere, and

¹¹³ Evan mawarire. Facebook 19/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁴ Evan mawarire. Facebook 19/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁵ Evan mawarire. Facebook Day 5. 5/05/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁶ Evan Mawarire. Facebook. Day 12. 12/05/16 Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁷ Evan Mawarire. Facebook. Day 13. 13/05/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁸ Evan Mawarire. Facebook.day 17. 17/05/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹¹⁹ Evan Mawarire day 18. 18/05/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²⁰ Evan Mawarire.Day 24. 24/05/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²¹ Evan Mawarire.Day 16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²²Evan Mawarire. Day 18. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes”.
George Orwell, animal farm”¹²³

Others praised Evan by stating, ‘And today there is Evan, tomorrow it’s us all! Remember Steve Biko and the black consciousness movement, today its #ThisFlag”¹²⁴. Another stating, “Our Martin Luther”¹²⁵. Others made mention of local events as one stated “We crying for growth, unity and development. yet if one dares challenge or question the system, the same Segregatory Laws of the past regimes that governed Africa are applied”.¹²⁶, with another retorting, “ It reminds me of Henry Olonga and Andy Flower’s decision to wear a black armband during the cricket world cup Zimbabwe was co - hosting with RSA, mourning death of democracy in Zimbabwe”¹²⁷. With the use of symbolism in text to historical events, individuals used incidents in history as frame of reference in getting their message across. Through this symbol, individuals were able to express their opinions of their current situation in Zimbabwe. Through this symbol they either showed support for the movement through examples like Martin Luther King Jr, or expressed discontent of the issue through the use of figures like Hitler.

Another symbol identified is the use of biblical quotes. With a total of 99 identified, 1 was seen on the first video. The 25 day challenge recorded 90 biblical quotes, with the call for shutdown accounting for 8. This can be seen when one comments, “But Amos 6: 14, we are that nation chosen to rise against injustice and oppression and our weapons are mighty to the pulling down of every stronghold!”¹²⁸, Another writes, “I’m reminded of the parable of the persistent widow in the bible- Luke 18:1-8. Judge”¹²⁹. Others also state, “Remember that when David’s brother tried to stop him from tackling Goliath by even mocking him, he responded “...is there not a cause... “1 Samuel 17:29. NASB”¹³⁰. “.. Be strong and be of good courage. When the Spirit of the lord came upon Samson, he single- handedly slaughtered 300 Philistines! Fully behind...”¹³¹. Others also refer Evan to biblical characters, “you surely are God- sent. Our politicians - opposition and otherwise, have failed us and you are our Moses”¹³² “you are the chosen Moses of our generation.”, “thank God for answering my prayer as I prayed for months for God to raise up Nehemiah’s to have a passion to rebuilt our country many are there for you than against you

¹²³ Evan Mawarire.Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²⁴ Evan Mawarire.Day 21. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²⁵ Evan Mawarire.Day 14. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²⁶ Evan Mawarire.Day 18. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹²⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 22. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018,

¹²⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.19/04/16.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018,

¹²⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 13. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

behind you all the way”¹³³. Through this symbol, the faith and the religion of majority of Zimbabweans can be identified as Christianity. However, as this research is not focused on the major religion in Non- western countries, more would not be said about the religion. Through the use of biblical quotes, citizens expressed various beliefs in prayer of either progress of the movement or resolution of problems.

As identified in section 5.1.1 on Twitter, symbols are extensively used by dissenting groups. This enable them to create frames. It can be deduced that based on the nature of symbols (Shanahan et al, 2011) and how they are used (Cobb & Elder, 1983), individuals came together to address an issue to identify as a common problem. These symbols are seen to be connected to beliefs and vice versa as through symbols, beliefs could be identified and vice versa.

2) **Beliefs**

The findings on belief from Facebook is identified.

i) Perception of values expressed

Judgement as a belief is identified 254 times in the data collected. 3 is recorded on the first video made, with the highest recorded during the 25- day challenge with a total of 242 observed. The call for shutdown video had 9 identified. Judgement can be seen as Mawarire in one video states, “if we stand firm and say no to the wrong and immoral system we will triumph, but that requires us all to be extremely irritated by the irritant facing us today”¹³⁴. One commented “Can we start being honourable people with integrity and are accountable to society”¹³⁵, whereas others added their voices stating, “Complete overhaul of the current government system. Doesn’t represent the humble, hardworking, God-fearing, peaceful Zimbabwean at all”¹³⁶ “...Shame on you evil voices of injustice, poverty, greed are speaking so loud and noisy in Zim”¹³⁷ “...Who is in their right state of mind would have a table overflowing with food while a neighbour is malnourished and think its normal...”¹³⁸ “ this is what real man of God do. They see the ills of society and do not dine with the devil then come turns churches and preach about prosperity instead of telling us about God and him only”¹³⁹. Others used stronger words for the government, “They are plain

¹³³Evan Mawarire.Facebook. 4/07/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 3. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 9. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹³⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

evil to the core. What a shame!”¹⁴⁰ “Zim replaced a white elite with a black elite. The problem is that the black elite wants everything for itself. Greed ... demonic”¹⁴¹, “... it’s time for this useless, toothless, demonic regime to go...”¹⁴² “Mugabe is one of the most evil leaders in the world, how can he do that to his own people? / That man will be punished by God”¹⁴³.

Humiliation is also observed in the data. It is recorded 55 times, with 7 in the first video and 48 in 25 days. However, the video on the 4th July does not record any. Humiliation is seen when Mawarire concludes in the first video, “it a story of my future or is it just a reminder of a, of a sad past that wherever I go and I put on the colours of Zimbabwe, they, they look at me as if they want to love to ask me are you from Zimbabwe? ...It feels as if I just want to belong to another country”¹⁴⁴. In another video Mawarire states, “We cannot keep quiet anymore. I am absolutely embarrassed to report back to you citizens that last night professor Jonathan Mayo responded and his response, he said that ‘this flag is being funded by the west’”¹⁴⁵. Humiliation is also observed when one comments, “...Zimbabwe has indeed become an embarrassment,..”¹⁴⁶, Others stated, “Restoration is what we need, we lost our pride, value and dignity”¹⁴⁷, “...despite what you have caused us to be, including being ridiculed by other nations across the globe because you have reduced our nation into one of paupers”¹⁴⁸, “I just watched a video of Mugabe in Japan, falling asleep while standing up. Come on guys he must go asap, how is embarrassing.”¹⁴⁹

Affirmation is the most identified in the data.it has a number of 1410 occurrences with 52 identified on the first video, 1182 in the 25-day challenge and 176 on the 4th July video. Affirmation is seen as most seem to connect with the message and values in the videos made by Pastor Mawarire. One states, “My heart echoes your sentiments and i take heed to the “call to

¹⁴⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 23. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴²Evan Mawarire.Facebook. Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.19/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 15. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 22. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 18. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

¹⁴⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 1. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire?ref=br_rs on 11th July, 2018

action”¹⁵⁰, another retorts, “that really cuts deep to the core of the contemporary issues playing out in Zimbabwe, what more can one say ! thank you Sir”¹⁵¹. Others also comment saying, “wow, Pastor E, I feel the passion, profound message. This is touching, you allowed to cross the line with this message. The pain resonates with all Zimbabweans everywhere.”¹⁵². “..making me cry. This is the painful truth that no other man of God has ever spoken. The truth that is in this post is so real”¹⁵³, “he message is loud and clear and each word is echoing in the rightful corridors!”¹⁵⁴, “these are pertinent issues being raised by Mr. Mawarire.”¹⁵⁵, “one can only understand if affected, everyone has been exposed one way or another to the devastating facts you have outlined”¹⁵⁶. Others showed their support by stating, “making this viral”¹⁵⁷, “yes, I throw my weight behind this”¹⁵⁸, “well done my brother , we are behind #thisflagmovement is going all the way to the top backwards never forward ever”¹⁵⁹, “well done Evan at last someone with brains”¹⁶⁰.

Disappointment is observed 348 times. In the first video, it is observed 12 times, with 306 occurrences in the 25-day challenge, with 30 recorded in the call for shutdown. It is observed

¹⁵⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.19/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153595523682043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 13. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153599313417043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook. Day 14. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153601128842043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 10. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153593643127043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153595523682043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁵⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 16.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153605030557043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab

¹⁶⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153595523682043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

when one comments, “the pain of disappointment and desperation is a sad reality we are fighting so hard not to accept”¹⁶¹. Others also state, “ I want a country where when I graduate my first thought shouldn’t be “i need to leave the country”¹⁶², “sad that our flag has become a weapon to strangle people into silence, “¹⁶³, “ I remember 2007 i went to SA with R20 in my pocket, prayed to God to open doors for me. I remember those days were hard & i had to pray, sometimes i would pray and go outside..... to think that we are going back to that dispensation is really disappointing.”¹⁶⁴. Some also identified that, “... With no jobs.in a normal economy these are the people who should be driving the economy forward. It’s painful to graduate just to just work in the garden at home”¹⁶⁵. “Imagine 1956, by white people and our own is doing this to us... what was the point of liberating us from the whites then?”¹⁶⁶

Hope and Pride are also observed in the data. Hope is identified 336 times.19 on the first video, 293 in the 25 day challenge and 24 in the last video. Hope is identified when Mawarire states “it is my country, my Zimbabwe, we go through so much, we, we don’t look like so much, even now but there is promise in it”¹⁶⁷. Many expressed a feeling of hope by commenting, “They can kill individuals but they can’t kill Hope. And what drives us is not Evans but the hope that one day we shall walk in a free Zimbabwe”¹⁶⁸, “This gives me hope”¹⁶⁹, “pastor may God bless you for raising our hopes that Zimbabwe cannot be the same again”¹⁷⁰. Others stated, “Victory will

¹⁶¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁶² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6 https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁶³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 8 https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153589544052043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 13 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153599313417043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁶⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 15 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153603192202043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁶⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 23 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153619071537043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁶⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁶⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 22 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153617161242043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

be certain”¹⁷¹, “this is just the beginning of us... We are going to #liberate ourselves from this #dictatorship... very soon”¹⁷², “...Hope the stayaway is a total success”¹⁷³.

Pride is also identified with a number of 55 occurrences.⁹ is observed in the first video, 43 in the 25- day challenge and 3 in the last video. Mawarire on the first day of the 25- day challenge states, “This country is too beautiful, and we are too proud of this country for it to be in the state that it is in”¹⁷⁴. Others also expressed pride, “am proud to be living in your generation Pastor Evan”¹⁷⁵, “now flies #ThisFlag our nation's glory, we live with pride inside our hearts... This our land....”¹⁷⁶, “#ThisFlag after many years I am now proud to stand up and say I’m Zimbabwean”¹⁷⁷

Doubt in the values of the movement is also identified. In the first video, no doubt is observed. However, in the 25- day challenge, 75 is observed with 24 in the call for shutdown. Doubt can be seen when one comments, “how often have I heard this heartfelt rant. Bla, bla, bla. It goes nowhere....”¹⁷⁸. Others also doubted stating, “Just this flag this flag won’t get us anywhere”¹⁷⁹, “... I don’t see any future for this movement. I will remind you after you have dismally failed”¹⁸⁰, “...but there is one thing that will make this campaign a failed mission? You can never have any successful campaign against the Zanu PF thugs peacefully”¹⁸¹. Others on the shutdown

¹⁷¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 23 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153619071537043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 25 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153623004042043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 4/07/16. .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153708818247043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 1 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153571647777043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 12 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153597529442043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 14 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos_by on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 25 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos_by on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153595523682043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁷⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 16 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153605030557043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 18 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153609012562043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 18 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153609012562043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

stated, “You want a change then get rid of the problem. Close for one day ha that is not a protest that is a mid-week break”¹⁸², “staying away and protesting will not resolve Zimbabwe”¹⁸³.

ii) Perception of role

The perception of a hero was identified 133 times in the data. It is observed 2 times in the first video, 125 times in the 25-day challenge and 6 times in the last. Hero is seen when people identify Mawarire as their hero stating, “You are a hero Pastor Mawarire”¹⁸⁴, “Pastor living hero of our time! History in the making”¹⁸⁵. Others commented, “Pastor Evan you sir you are legend. This is the beginning of a revolution. Change is coming”¹⁸⁶, “ we need more men like you ... change agents thanx speaking truth”¹⁸⁷. “You are my man. This is the solution to the new Zimbabwe”¹⁸⁸ Others referred to the citizens as heroes, “For those not pretending back in #Zimbabwe and making a stand i commend you because actions get things done not likes. You are the real heroes. The best we can do from our hiding places is commend you for your bravery and until we choose to come back home”¹⁸⁹

Villains are also observed in the data. It is observed 412 times, with a number of 3 occurrences in the first video, a total of 382 in the 25- day challenge and 26 in the last video. The perception of a villain is observed when one states, “The economy is not sustainable because of poor governance and lack of accountability”¹⁹⁰. Others also commented, “You won us independence

¹⁸² Evan Mawarire.Facebook. 4/07/16 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153708818247043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook. 4/07/16 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153708818247043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day17 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 20 Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153612939477043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.19/04/16 .Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook. Day 17. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁸⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁰Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

...but you did that for us... now you prevent is from making a better country for our children”¹⁹¹, “Zimbabweans need to realise that we don’t have a government, we have rulers”¹⁹², “honestly it’s time we stop this madness in our country, it seems as if Zanu pf caucus to destroy everything good in Zim”¹⁹³, “ i blame the government for everything lost in my lifetime with my brothers, sisters, mother father..... , all this because of some corrupt, selfish ,man in authority”¹⁹⁴, “ this is because of poverty in Zimbabwe. I blame Mugabe for this. desperate time calls for desperate measures”¹⁹⁵, “Bob the destroyer”¹⁹⁶.

The perception of a victim is also identified in the data. With a total number of 253 occurrences, 4 is observed in the first video and a total of 218 within the 25- day challenge. It is also observed 31 times in the call for shutdown video. Victims are identified when Mawarire states, “This flag every day that it flies, is begging for you to get involved ...It’s begging for you to cry out and say why must we be in this situation, that we are in.”¹⁹⁷. Others also identified as victims sharing their experiences, “this is painful. What we are going through. Love compels us to action. This suffering can’t continue”¹⁹⁸, “our generation has been robbed of a lot of business opportunities because of the prevailing economic environment which is unsustainable for legit businesses to thrive”¹⁹⁹, “We are not free to speak out our minds. We are not free to protest in the streets of Zimbabwe. You are not even free to air out your view in kombi because you do not know who is

¹⁹¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 9. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153591821817043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹³ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 11.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153595523682043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁴ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 12. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153597529442043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁵ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 13. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153599313417043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

¹⁹⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.19/04/16. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁸ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 5. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153583914847043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

¹⁹⁹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

listening”²⁰⁰,” lost an uncle last week from an ailment that could have been treated in a normal working health system”²⁰¹, “People are suffering basic salaries from those on payroll cannot even pay rent send children to school yet alone buy food”²⁰²

As seen, Facebook served as a platform citizens put across their issues through their beliefs which reinforced their beliefs and symbols. This means that as a platform, citizens expressed their views and opinions on issues of poverty, injustice and corruption, based on their beliefs of values shared and their perception of heroes, victims and villains. Using symbols such as the Zimbabwean flag, biblical quotes and historical events to represent their beliefs and opinions. To conclude, it is right to say that both Twitter and Facebook were used to express dissent and discontent with the status quo and the bias in the system. As such, social media activism indeed represents dissent, as citizens voice their opinions and discontent through social media platforms. With this, the findings prove that social media activism represent dissent is true.

5.1.3 Frame alignment

To answer the sub- question: the role of mobilization in issue expansion, the alignment of frames and expansion are identified. First, with frame alignment then expansion. Frame alignment is the agreement between people. This is derived from the data as the number of affirmation codes per day of the videos Pastor Mawarire made. Focus is mainly on Facebook as it has a total of 1410 which gives a strong basis in analyzing confirmation on a daily basis. Table 2 gives an overview of the affirmation codes observed per day to identify the agreement between people on the values of #ThisFlag movement. A graphical representation is also given.

²⁰⁰ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 6. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153585380102043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

²⁰¹ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 17.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153607097772043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

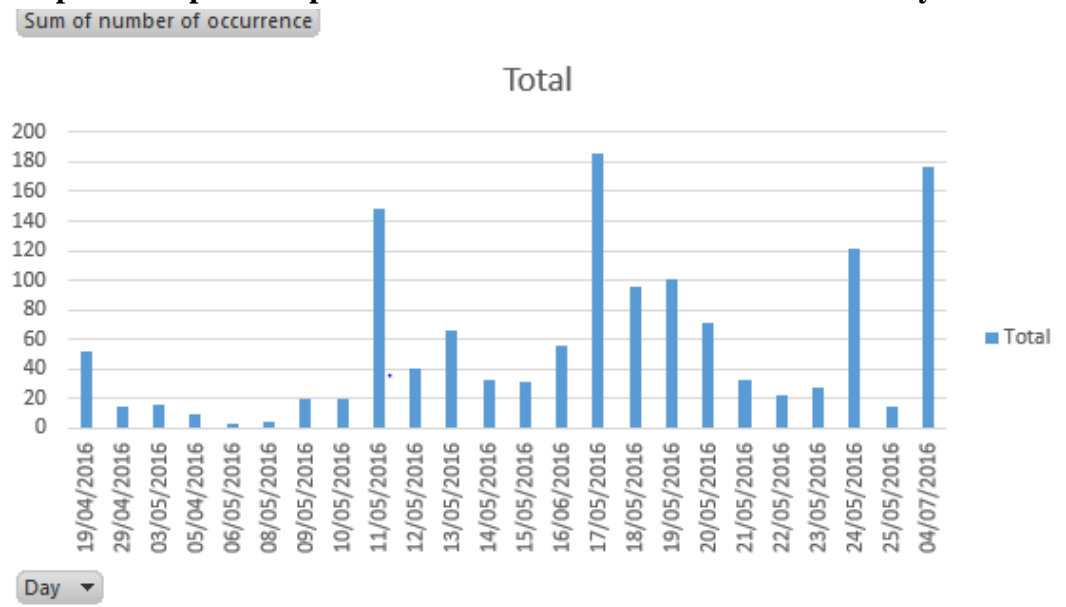
²⁰² Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Day 19.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153611069832043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018

Table 2. Overview of affirmation codes on Facebook per day

Day	Number of occurrence
19/04/2016	52
29/04/2016	15
03/05/2016	16
05/04/2016	9
06/05/2016	3
08/05/2016	5
09/05/2016	20
10/05/2016	20
11/05/2016	148
12/05/2016	41
13/05/2016	66
14/05/2016	33
15/05/2016	32
16/06/2016	56
17/05/2016	186
18/05/2016	96
19/05/2016	101
20/05/2016	71
21/05/2016	33
22/05/2016	22
23/05/2016	28
24/05/2016	121
25/05/2016	15
04/07/2016	176
Sum total	1365

Table 2 above illustrates the affirmation and support for the movement. To understand the rise and fall of affirmation over the days, Graph 1 below gives a graphical representation showing the fluctuation in support and alignment.

Graph 1: Graphical representation of Affirmation codes over 26 days on Facebook



Graph 1 above illustrates that the first video on the 19th April, 2016 had a number of 52 occurrences in agreement with the values shared. The 25 day challenge which started on the 1st of May, 2016 had 15, followed by 16 on the second day of the challenge which was the 3rd of May, 2016 as a video was not made on the 2nd. With another gap, the next video on the 5th decreased with 9 numbers, followed by 3 on the 6th. This increased steadily on the 8th day of May, with 5 codes observed day. Videos were back on track to be recorded each day. 20 codes were observed on both the 9th and 10th day. On the 11th of May, 2016, the number increased massively, recording 148 in support. However, this number decreased to 41 on the 12th day. The 13th saw another increase from 41 to 66. Both the 14th and 15th day recorded 33 and 32 respectively. With an increase to 56 on the 16th day, the number rose again to 186 codes observed on the 17th day. This number decreased massively to 96 on the 18th. On the 19th, it increased slightly to 101 codes observed. From the 20th to the 23rd the number continuously dropped, with the 20th recording 71 codes, the number decreased to 33 on the 21st and 22 on the 22nd. The number of occurrences further dropped to 28 on the 23rd. With two more days to go on the challenge, the number rose steeply to 121 on the 24th of May, 2016. With the 25th being the last day of the challenge the number dropped shockingly to only 15. With a break in video updates, the call for shutdown video on the 4th of July, 2016, 176 affirmation codes were observed. The rise and decrease in affirmation could be explain as people losing hope in the movement. This can be explained as in the sense that, from the beginning of the video to the 10th of May, most people had not heard of the movement. An increase the following day shows that more people were aligning themselves with the movement. However, with the sudden decrease, people lost hope as no efforts from the government were seen. It continues to rise and fall till the 25th with the hopes of achieving their goals. The rise of affirmation in the video on the 4th July,

2016, could be explained as hope to achieve goals once the movement moves from the online discourse to the offline environment. From the findings it can be deduced that, when dissidents come together through alignment of frames, it does not just end there. Enthusiasm in groups to achieve their goal at the beginning of movement's establishment is high. However, as days go on without any results, individuals begin to lose hope. In the case of social media activism, it can be identified that, once groups start out on social media, the expectation is high. With no results, and no offline activities such as protests, individuals tend to doubt the progress of the group. However, once the advent of offline activities are launched, hope is instilled in individuals once more as seen in the rise on the call for shutdown.

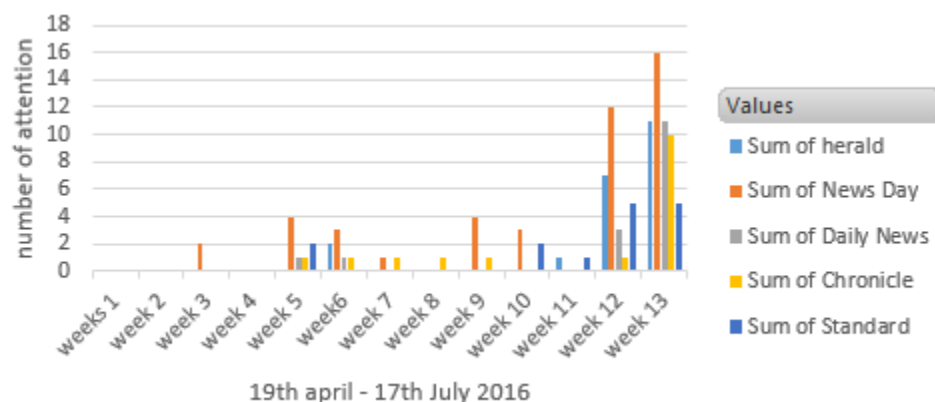
5.1.4 Expansion

To identify issue expansion in impacting agenda setting, data derived was to be coded on the number of shares each video posted or tweet by Pastor Mawarire on Twitter and Facebook respectively, within the proposed dates stated in the research design. However, the code was not measurable in the data as it has been 2 years since the first video was made on the 19th of April, 2016. As such, the researcher could not determine the number of shares between 19th April, 2016 and the first shutdown on the 6th of July, 2016. With this, it means that issue expansion in impacting agenda setting is undetermined and deemed inconclusive.

5.2 The Media Agenda: Media mentions

In order to identify the media agenda, data was derived from concepts with the number of mentions per week identifying the trends and popularity on issues within the mainstream media. Throughout the thirteen weeks period, news outlets published a significant amount of new articles regarding the #ThisFlag movement. Derived from five news outlets, there were 113 online news mention of the #thisFlag movement published between 19th April, 2016 to 17th July, 2016; a period of three months. With the most mentions, NewsDay, an independent news outlet published 45 online news articles which constitutes (40%), which was higher than the state owned media, Herald of 21 coverage of the movement, (19%). The Daily news had the least mentions for a daily national paper with only 16 news article coverage within the period which constitutes (14%). The two weekly news outlets The Chronicle, a state owned news media and the Standard, an independent were amongst the lowest mentions. This is because the Chronicle is a local daily news outlets in the Bulawayo, second largest city in Zimbabwe whereas Standard only report news on a weekly basis but both have a great influence in Zimbabwe. The Chronicle makes mention of Pastor Evans Mawarire and the #thisFlag movement 16 times, (14%), slightly higher than the Standard with only 15 online news articles during the period, (13%). Graph below illustrates the trends of media attention over a period of 13 weeks from the start of the video to the second stayaway

Graph 2: A graphical representation of media mention of #thisFlag over 13 weeks



Graph 2 above illustrates that in the first week which is 19th April to 24th April, 2016 all five media outlets made no mention of the movement. The week after records the same results of no mentions, which indicates that the month of April, did not have any significant news coverage on the news outlets. The following month saw a significant increase from 0 to 20 articles. During the third week beginning from the 2nd to 8th May, only NewsDay, published 2 articles on the #thisFlag movement, while the other four: Herald, Daily News, Chronicle and Standard, still had no coverage. The following week saw all news outlets decreasing in the quantity of news mentions with none reporting on the movement. In week 5, beginning from the 16th of May to 22 May, 2016, there was a sharp decrease with regards to news coverage for the movement in Herald as it recorded none with a slight increase the remaining four still had a low coverage. Newsday had 4 articles on the movement, Standard had 2 articles covering #ThisFlag, with Daily News and Chronicle both having 1. Week 6 saw all news outlets covering the movement with exception of the Standard. Herald slightly increased from the previous week to 2 articles on the movement, Newsday with 3 and Daily News and Chronicle with the same amount of quantity as the previous week:1. Week 7 saw a decrease in the amount of time coverage with News Day and Chronicle only addressing the issue once each, whereas Herald, Daily News and Standard made no mention. Week 8 saw the same results with only Chronicle with 1 article on the movement. Week 9, saw a slight increase in the quantity of news coverage with NewsDay publishing 4 articles, whereas Chronicle still published only one article. However, the other three news outlets published no article on #ThisFlag. Week 10, 20th June to 26th June, 2016, follows the same pattern of coverage with a slight difference with NewsDay publishing 3 articles and Standard publishing 2, whereas Herald, Daily news and Chronicle make no mention of the movement. Week 10, still has a low quantity of news coverage with both Herald and Standard publishing 1 article each, whereas NewsDay, Daily News and Chronicle do not publish any article. However, the month of July sees a significant quantity of articles published as news coverage shoots up. From 4th July to 10 July, 2016, all five news outlets publish articles mentioning the #ThisFlag movement. With the highest news coverage, NewsDay publishes 12 online articles, followed by

Herald with 7 articles. Standard has 5 articles published whereas Daily News only publishes 3, with the lowest news coverage being the Chronicle with only 1 article published. However, as displayed in figure 5, the quantity of publications in the thirteenth week, 11th July to 17th July, for all five media outlets slightly increased. With the most amount of publications, NewsDay published 16 articles, followed closely by both Herald and Daily News which both published 11 articles. Chronicle increased significantly from the previous week with 10 publications, with the Standard publishing 5 articles as the previous week.

Overall, the number of publications by NewsDay and Chronicle seems to increase overtime, whereas those of Herald, Daily News, and Standard seemed to rise and fall over time. From the findings it can be deduced that, with the beginning of the movement on social media with the first video, no significant media mentions were made. However, as frames were aligned and more people voiced their opinions by aligning their frames, media mentions increased. Media adopted the frames adopted by the movement with the significant been the Flag. However, over the days, media mentions increased depending on the content of the issue between the state and private media. It could be explained that, most of the state media were in denial of the rise of the movement, as such did not give much attention to the movement. In contrast, the private owned media reported significantly on the movement and issues in Zimbabwe as outlined by the movement. This could be identified as the nature of issues mentioned and expanded on the media agenda is dependent on the issue as outlined by Cobb & Elder (1983) and the type of coverage argued by Bekkers et al, (2011).

Furthermore, it could also be identified that in the weeks for the call of shutdown, all media mentions were directed to the movement and the shutdown. This means that when social media activism moves from the online space to the offline environment, the possibility of increase in media mentions is high in comparison with staying online. Regardless of the ownership of media, media mention significant amount of media mentions are given to the topic. However, the difference is in the reporting of issues based on type of media outlet. As outlined in chapter 4 of the case description, the state reported on the activities of government in minimizing the efforts of the shutdown as it was seen to be a step- back for the economy. The private media outlets reported it from the perspective of the movement and individuals in support of the movement. This clearly shows that type of media outlet in non- Western context plays a significant role.

5. 3 Policy agenda

The policy agenda identifies the discussion of the movement and its aftermath in relation to policies made by decision makers. Interestingly the main Zimbabwean government portal (<http://www.zim.gov.zw/>) and the parliament of Zimbabwe website (<http://www.parlzim.gov.zw/>) do not make any mention of policies and issues linked to the movement. However, several news outlets have made mention of the Cybercrime and cyber

security bill, which was brought to Parliament for discussion in August, 2016²⁰³. The Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and Cyber Security made mention of two laws pertaining to cyber activities which include social media. These laws include the Data Protection bill which is still in the discussion phase, which when passed will “process personal information by private and public bodies, to prevent unauthorized and arbitrary use, collection, processing, transmission and storage of data of identified persons”²⁰⁴. The website also makes mention of the cybercrime and cybersecurity bill²⁰⁵. As these laws are still bills there is not mention of it. The Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and Cyber Security is the only government website that makes mention of these two policies. In discussion with the Assistant Counsel to the Parliament of Zimbabwe, it was made known that the bill is still a draft and open for discussion in the Office of the Attorney General’s Legislative Drafting Department, and as such not yet made public. Hence, the reason it has not had much discussion on the respective government websites

Although, government put in place bills and laws to suppress the issues of dissenters, it was done in order to contain the issues to reduce further expansion. As such, this can be seen as a political agenda undertaken by the policy makers. This is in line with the NPF framework which identifies that groups at the winning end try to contain issues in order to maintain the status quo (Shanahan et al, 2011). This is a limitation in the framework of the research as it contends that issues on the media agenda leads to policy agenda, without identifying the counter strategies employed by different actors based on whether they are on the winning or losing end. As such, with this findings it can be deduced that, although the movement did not achieve its goal of reform as such proving futile, government tried to suppress the movement through the passing of bills. In light of this, in the non- Western context, governments try to suppress dissenting groups. As such, it can be explained that, the movement does influence the policy agenda but not in the resolution of issues they raise, rather to the suppression of the movement.

²⁰³ Cyber Crime Bill: The details. The Herald. Retrieved from <https://www.herald.co.zw/cyber-crime-bill-the-details/> on 11th July, 2018.

²⁰⁴ Data Protection. The Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and Cyber Security. Retrieved from <http://www.ictministry.gov.zw/?q=data-protection-bill> on 10th July, 2018.

²⁰⁵ Cybercrime and Cyber security bill. The Ministry of Information, Communication, Technology and Cyber Security. Retrieved from <http://www.ictministry.gov.zw/?q=cybercrime-and-cyber-security-bill-2017> on 10th July, 2016.

6. Analysis

In the previous chapters, an outline of the research, research design, the context and findings of the research have been highlighted. The goal of the research was to answer the following research question: What is the influence of social media activism in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping agenda setting in non- Western countries? From the analysis of the findings from Chapter 5 on the #ThisFlag Zimbabwean movement, this chapter seeks to analyze the conceptual framework in relation to the case study. This leads to the answering of the research question, in order to draw conclusions in connection to the conceptual framework in Chapter 3.

6.1 Discussion

In order to understand the findings, a review of the conceptual framework is given in Figure 6 below to build on the analysis.

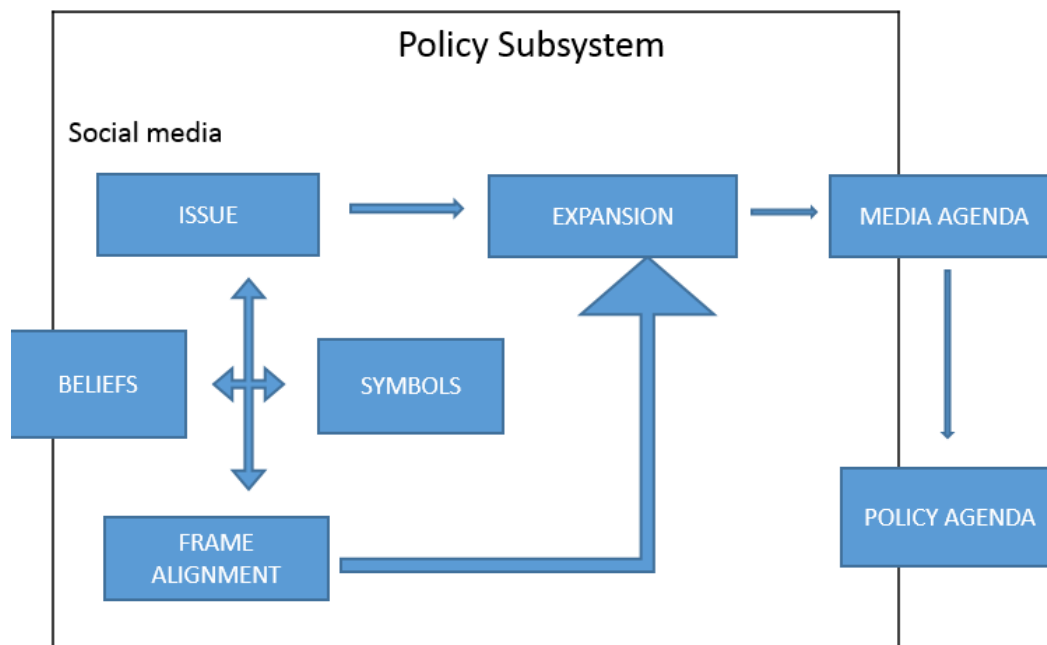


Figure 5. Overview of conceptual framework

Building on theory of agenda setting, Issue Expansion, Advocacy Coalition Framework and Narrative Policy Framework, a conceptual framework was proposed. In the conceptual framework above, the model stresses how issues could bring individuals together to expand to a larger audience. The media picks on issues, with attention on issues ending up on the policy agenda. In detail within a policy subsystem, individual interact within and outside its boundaries. However, in such subsystem, there are limited access to the distribution of resources, which

favours some at the expense of others (Cobb & Elder, 1983). Individuals or groups dissatisfied or at the losing end put their issues across, which is a conflict in the distribution of resources. With this individuals who are discontent with the policy subsystem create an alternative space within the policy subsystem to contest the issues, which is social media. Individuals or groups, base their issues on their perception of beliefs which makes them create symbols in line of their belief system. These beliefs bind people together, as they are seen as the driving force for change (Sabatier,1988).Beliefs may enhance symbols and vice versa as people interpret meanings based on beliefs. Through beliefs and symbol frames are built with individuals identifying with the same beliefs and symbols align themselves to a group they identify themselves with. As the ACF and NPF identify, Actors adjust their strategies by aligning with allies in the policy system through their beliefs with the aim of influencing the policy outcome (Mcbeth et al, 2014; Sabatier, 1988). By aligning frames, individuals come together in order to expand their issues to a wider audience. The more issues gain attention, the likelihood it is to end on the media agenda. Emphasis on issues placed on the media agenda may make its way to the policy agenda.

To begin with, in identifying the rise of issues on social media, #ThisFlag movement identifies the policy subsystem favouring some at the expense of others. Zimbabwean citizens created an ‘alternative space’ which is social media within the policy subsystem. This alternative space was a ‘counter public’ to the publics which had limited resources and as a result led to conflict on the distribution of resources and equality which creates issues. The advent of an alternative space indicates that the counterpublics theory by Fraser is indeed evident in the #ThisFlag case. As Fraser identifies an alternative space is created when the main public disadvantages others in terms of participation and resources. This clearly shows dissent as people create a separate space to contend the public sphere. Social media platforms serve as a space where issues are contested to counter the policy subsystem. Furthermore, within the alternative space, issues raised included poverty, injustice and corruption as the main imbalance in the policy subsystem. This illustrates a bias in the system as some are disadvantaged. Looking back at Cobb & Elder (1983) and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988), this claim is consistent with the concept of issues as imbalance in the system is identified in the allocation of resources. This clearly shows that there exists conflict among individuals identified as issues highlighted by Cobb & Elder (1983).

Issues are created based on the perception of beliefs and symbols. These issues were created based on frames of the initiator being Pastor Mawarire. Within the #ThisFlag issues were raised based on perceptions individual attached to issues. Perceptions of values varied from Judgement, Humiliation, Affirmation, Disappointment, Hope, Pride and Doubt. These perceptions shaped the meaning attached to issues. With this, it shows that people indeed translate issues based the perception of values they hold. This is in line with the Advocacy Coalition Framework and Narrative Policy Framework which both identify that beliefs are the driving force of change as

they describe it as the “principle glue of politics” through which “Individuals organize, process and convey information” (Sabatier, 1988; Jones & McBeth, 2010:330).

Also, individuals also identified between heroes, victims and villains as characters who play a role in the issues in the subsystem which their beliefs were also based on (McBeth 2010). In the #ThisFlag case, the pastor, Evan is seen as a hero by most as they believed he spoke for most if not all Zimbabweans. He was identified as leader who could bring up solutions. Citizens, on the other hand, identified themselves as victims as they seemed to be on the losing end. However, President Mugabe and his ZANU- PF led government were mostly identified as villains, who seem to cause all the problems leading to issues of inequality, poverty, injustice and corruption. This shows a connection to the NPF and ACF which shows there is really a belief system as people classified individuals and the system based on a character role, either as a villain, victim or hero.

The conceptual framework also identifies beliefs are connected to symbols. As people attached meanings to symbols based on their beliefs. However, Beliefs may not necessarily enhance similar interpretations of symbols and only do so in certain conditions. In this sense, the movement identifies that a symbol of historical precedence is more likely to enhance belief systems. The main symbol identified is the Zimbabwean flag which re-echoes the love and patriotism of citizens. This is consistent with the model of issue expansion and NPF as symbols are used to enhance beliefs and vice versa. Both theories identify that symbols are used to influence support for arguments.

More so, frame alignment is seen to stem from beliefs and symbols. Individuals adopted the frame of the Zimbabwe Flag created by Pastor Mawarire to voice out their dissent. Through the confirmation of values in the #ThisFlag values and the flag as a symbol, citizens identified themselves together as the ‘we- group’ who face the same predicaments. In relation to the flag, by sharing a picture or video, citizens identified themselves as part of the group by adding the voice to the movement. Individuals aligned their frames with the frame the Zimbabwe flag liberating them from injustice, poverty and corrupt. Affirmation in support of the movement is observed to steadily increase within some days more than others. With the 25 day challenge, it rose in the middle of the challenge and dropped close to an end. This seems to be caused by the fact that government was not responding and many seemed to withdraw support. However, with the call of the shutdown, people once more aligned themselves to the movement as it was going on the ‘ground’. The framework emphasizes that by aligning frames citizens identify with the same issues. This is true in the #ThisFlag movement as only those who aligning with a group have similar issues as them as identified in Zimbabwe. This shows that there is micro-mobilization as the people aligned their frames. This is because the citizens through social media created an alternative space without any civic or political organization as a counter space to contend with the supposed main public. As Snow et al (1986) identified micro- mobilization as “various interactive and communicative processes that affect frame alignment” (p. 464), the #ThisFlag movement attest to the point raised by Snow et al (1986) as people created an

alternative space through social media, communicated with each other and through their beliefs and symbols frames were aligned. This clearly fits the conceptual model showing how issues rise on social media.

Frame alignment is also identified to lead to expansion. However, in the #ThisFlag cases it cannot be justified and as such deemed inconclusive, as it cannot be proved from the data. This therefore, contradicts with the theory of Snow et al (1986) that identifies that with the frames aligned, there is expansion to a wider public. However, a cross over from social media activism to the mass media is observed. From the findings, it can be observed that as people aligning their frames more attention is giving to the issue, which may or may not end on the media attention. It is seen that the more frames are aligned the more the possibility of it reaching the media agenda. This is observed three weeks with no mention with just one news outlet reporting on the movement. Mentions are made in the media on week 5, when more frames are aligned. The media agenda is shaped with the number of attention given to the issue of the movement. The media agenda is observed to have had fluctuations in attention within the weeks. Media mentions massively increased in the 12th and 13th weeks, where the first shutdown was organized. This also includes the second planned shutdown and the arrest of the pastor. The 13th week accounted for the most, as all newspaper reported but for the state news outlet, it recorded the most within all the weeks. This shows that when the movement moved from the online discourse to the offline efforts as in the stay away, media mentions increased. This could be explained as the more social media activism expands to the offline environment, media focus tends to increase. This fits with the assumption by Dearing & Rogers(1996) who state that potentially conflictual nature of an issue helps make it newsworthy” (p2) .

Furthermore, the review of the media agenda shows that, the attention given to issues depends largely on the type of news outlet as public or private. With the public news outlets, it can be observed that most were in denial of the movement taking shape, and reported on the government efforts to sustain the issue as well as challenges the government faced, which they conclude is no fault of theirs. On the other hand, the private news outlets reported intensively on the efforts of the #ThisFlag movement led by Pastor Evan. However, as the research was not focused on the influence of public and private news outlets on issues, more emphasis was not placed on it. With the attention of media mentions increasing from the private news outlets, the public news outlets also picked up increased reporting on the movement and the government’s role. However, this analysis on media agenda emphasizes on the ownership of news outlets in relation to media attention. The theory of issue expansion by Cobb and Elder (1980) lacks this point in theory as it just links mass media emphasis to the attention given and does not identify ownership as a factor in attention given in mass media. This could be that Cobb and Elder’s model is limited to the Western context. However, Cobb and Elder (1983) argue that the conflictual nature of an issue may influence it being on the media agenda, which may explain the point of ownership.

With regards to the policy agenda, just a little information on the government website, and as such in its place the media was the main source as it reported on political discussions. The rise of issues on the political agenda is unsuccessful as the government did not seem to take any concrete steps into addressing the cries of the citizens and then taking actions. The movement begun with the hopes of changes in reform by standing up for their country and what they believe in to be the equal distribution of resources and justice for all, which is the point of social media activism or activism in general. With regards to the policy agenda, the framework is seen to be lacking, as it does not make mention of counterstrategies employed by different actors as deduced in the ACF (Sabatier, 1988) and NPF (Shanahan et al, 2011) frameworks. These theories if included in the framework would have indicated that an issue does not simply access agenda's without resistance and that other parties may try to inhibit success.

Furthermore, from the Zimbabwean context it can be deduced that it appears due to the self-centeredness and the deep rooted thirst for power among most African leaders, the development and future of the Africa citizen's dream of is very farfetched. This makes social media activism quite unsuccessful in shaping governmental agenda as compared to most campaigns in the West. In comparison with another popular social media activism campaign in the West, which was successful in its right because policy makers addressed the issues raised by the dissidents. One of such was the 1040- hour campaign in the Dutch secondary educational policy in 2007, as observed by Bekkers et al, (2011b). This campaign stated when students protested against the 1040- hour 'norm' "which refers to the total amount of teaching hours that students are required to follow each year during secondary school" (Bekkers et al, 2011b:1012). Students were discontent with the policy by policy makers. However, with an initiative from one student named Kevin, who called for a strike by students through social media to not attend school as a way of telling policy makers to revert the policy, other students shared the message and by the close of day the message had reached hundreds, and a protest was launched. Bekkers et al (2011b) argued that, "social media helped to produce and reproduce a shared understanding about the need to protest" (p 1012), which caught the government by 'surprise'. They were backed by the "National Student Action Committee (Landelijk Actie Komitee Scholieren) –LAKS, a trade union for secondary school students" (Bekkers et al, 2011b:1011). The policy was framed as a danger to educational quality as they perceived the 1,040 only caused harm to students in terms of quality. The media played with the frame adopted by the LAKS and students. (Bekkers et al (2011). As a result, over time, the policy agenda was influenced as policy makers adjusted the policy to a 1000- hour secondary education. (Bekkers et al, 2011a).

In comparison, this gives a solid basis to conclude that; social media is indeed a powerful tool in activating people for a common course as seen in the #ThisFlag movement, the 1040- hour campaign , just to name a few. However, judging from #ThisFlag movement, it could be deduced that location plays a huge role in measuring the success of such campaigns in shaping agenda, especially African countries in particular. This is inconsistent in theory which links media emphasis on policy agenda, as the findings have proven success of movements may be

influenced within context. The failure of the movement could be explained that the demands did not allow for that as elite saw demands as unrealistic and unreasonable. Some of the demands affected elites and as such did not sit well with them. This includes demands such as sacking of officials and stopping the use of the bond notes currencies²⁰⁶. Also, it could be deduced that, the way the issue was framed in light of corruption, injustice and poverty made it hard to gain support from the elite to take the issue up as most of the elite were in denial and believed there were more pressing issues such as teachers uniforms. The sensitivity of the issue made it more difficult for the movement to achieve its goals, and with a country suppressing dissent with laws and reforms this made it more unlikely as compared to the 1040- hr campaign. This conclusion agrees with the assumption that “the likelihood that an issue will rise on the agenda is on a function of the issue itself, the actors that get involved, institutional relations, and often, random social and political factors that can be explained but cannot be replicated or predicted” (Birkland 2001:131).

To conclude, the conceptual framework as stated links dissent to social media activism as issues are conflicts over allocation of resources which are shaped by beliefs and symbols in linking frames. Social media platforms are used by individuals as a space to contest bias in the system. Through alignment of frames issues are expanded. With this, it can be identified that the impact of social media activism in representing dissent is seen as citizens voice their discontent through Facebook and Twitter due to the love and hope of the betterment of their country. This is therefore evidence that social media activism has a potential to represent dissent in various places. However, in sharp contrast, the link between issue expansion to agenda setting is undetermined. This proves that dissent through issue expansion leading to political agenda, seems to be inconclusive. As such, the expectations at the beginning of the research proved false in our case. Although issue expansion led to the media mentions with regards to the media agenda being shaped, little can be said for policy agenda. This is because, although issue expansion led to policy makers suppressing the issue, not much was done to address the issues raised by dissenters. As such, in effect without institutionalization and aligning with mass media and civic organizations such as societal groups, social movements will not be effective and successful, but nevertheless it may have contribute to a change in the overall political climate.

As such, in conclusion with the research question; Dissent through social media activism representing dissent through issue expansion leads to governmental agenda setting is seem to be unsuccessful. Although there is dissent expressed through social media activism, there is no issue expansion identified as it was undetermined. The media agenda is also shaped as issues are given attention on the media. However, even though the political agenda was shaped it was not addressing the concerns of the group but rather suppressed their concerns. The policy makers did

²⁰⁶ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

notice the efforts made by the dissidents, however, it did not end up on the policy agenda as the movement's demands were not met. The failure of the group was a result of political, cultural and economic factors of Zimbabwe. This is because the government has a culture of suppressing dissent which is evident in its laws such as Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act in 2002 and the Interception of Communication Acts in 2007, (Hove & Chenzi, 2017; Hassman, 2010; Moyo, 2011) , and the beating and arrest of violators of these laws (Kasambala, 2006) passed to limit dissent. Unlike the 1040-hr campaign, the laws passed in Zimbabwe make it difficult for issues to be addressed to change the status quo. Moreover, the disagreement on the case also led to the failure of the movement. With the counter narrative by government officials and elites, it was obvious there was a disagreement on the case. The sensitivity of the issue made it more unlikely as elites did not agree on issues put across by the movement. The demands were seen as unrealistic and elites felt more pressing issues such as teachers uniforms were to be addressed²⁰⁷. The nature of the demands such as the blockage of the Zimbabwean currency, made it hard to imagine the demands would lead to policy change. The movement also failed because of the ownership of media outlet in the country. The media reported based on its ownership as private media outlets reported on issues 'on the ground' and efforts made by the movement, whereas the public media was in denial and downplayed all efforts of the movement. As such, policy makers did not take the issue seriously as a government spokesman even referred to the movement as a "Pastor's fart"²⁰⁸. With this, it can be deduced that the issues which have expanded beyond the general public does not necessary ensure success of a movement in getting their issues met as Cobb and Elder (1983) point out to be "immediate as is its spot on governmental agenda" (p 156)

²⁰⁷ Evan Mawarire.Facebook.Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

²⁰⁸ Professor Jonathan Moyo.@ProfJNMoyo. 16/05/16.Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/ProfJNMoyo> on 1 July,2018

7. Conclusion

This research explained the impact of social media activism in shaping the political agenda of non – Western countries. It sought to fill the gap in the limited attention researchers attach to social media activism representing dissent in shaping agenda in non- Western countries. The research aimed to answer the question: What is the influence of social media activism in representing dissenting voices through issue expansion in shaping governmental agenda setting in non- Western countries? A case study of social media movement #ThisFlag in Zimbabwe was investigated. Building on theory from agenda setting, Cobb & Elder (1983) issue expansion model, The Advocacy Coalition Framework and the Narrative Policy Framework, a conceptual framework was developed. The model identified three main steps of social media activism which would lead to issues place on the governmental or policy agenda. These steps identify the rise of issue on social media, cross over from social media to the traditional media and the rise of issue on the political or governmental agenda. The framework stressed the role of issues as clash over the assigning of resources and position in a policy system which leads to bias in the system bringing individuals together to expand issues in hope of policy change. In short, this research sought to identify the impact of social media activism used by dissidents in influencing the decision of policy makers.

In relation to the main question, the conceptual framework identifies that social media activism has a potential in representing dissent. Within the #ThisFlag movement, citizens created an alternative space to contend the issues in the public sphere through social media re-echoing the theory of counter publics by Fraser (1992). The creation of an alternative space emphasizes micro- mobilization as identified by Snow et al, as a counter public is created mainly by ‘ordinary’ citizens and not the backing of any organization. However in the Western countries, an alternative space is mostly seen to be lacking as mostly started by organizations or individuals with mass following or great ‘weight’ as seen in the 1040- hour campaign started by a young man named Kevin, in the Netherlands. Issues rise on social media as issues, identified as poverty, injustice and corruption is as a result of conflict among individuals over allocation of resources, which echoes the theory of Cobb and Elder (1980) and the Advocacy Coalition Framework (Sabatier, 1988). Issues are created based on the perception of beliefs and symbols. Beliefs shape the way individuals interpret an issue. Beliefs in perception of values and the role of a character enforce the belief system individuals hold as outlined by the ACF and NPF. The #ThisFlag movement emphasizes on beliefs people hold pertaining to roles of characters as heroes, villains and victims. Majority of the citizens believed they were victims, with the President and government as villains. The leader of the movement is seen to be the hero as he initiated a common meaning through the flag in hopes of reforms in the country (Cobb & Elder, 1983). In line with the flag, beliefs are also connected to symbols as people attached meanings to symbols based on their beliefs. This is because symbols are interpreted based on the beliefs individual’s hold. The most common symbol used is the Zimbabwean flag, a symbol of historical

precedence which promoted patriotism and love for the country. This fits in the theory of Cobb and Elder' issue expansion. This became the symbol of the movement, and individuals sharing videos or pictures of themselves in a flag aligned themselves to the movement. This is frame alignment, as people with similar interpretation of beliefs and symbol link themselves to the movement. As such, the beliefs and symbols lead to frame alignment, especially with symbols of historical precedence as seen in the case. This is consistent with the theories of agenda setting of Cobb and Elder (1983) and NPF. As such, through the findings from Facebook and Twitter, it is proven that social media activism has a potential to represents dissent in various places.

The review of the media agenda showed the crossover of issues from social media to the traditional media. Initiators create frames through beliefs and symbols to represent their concerns which individuals align to. In the case, Pastor Mawarire created the frame using the flag of Zimbabwe as a point of reference to identify the issues. Social media platforms provide tools which facilitate many- to – many communications through social networks of contacts. By sharing, liking and commenting on pictures and videos, individuals mobilize their resources to achieve a common goal. This leads to the alignment of frames. Although the framework identifies issue expansion leading to media agenda, it is undetermined as data was inconclusive. However, frames aligned led to the mobilization of individuals which are picked up by the mass media using frames created by the movement, as seen in the case where media outlets used the #thisFlag frame to report on the movement. However, in the case, media outlets reported based on their ownership as public or private outlets, with public media outlets mostly in denial of the movement.

The review of the political agenda showed the rise of issue on the political agenda. The conceptual framework also identifies that more emphasis on the media agenda, would lead to an issue placed on the policy agenda. However, the findings contradict this statement as issues do not go over to the policy agenda. It is observed that little mention is made of the #ThisFlag movement on government websites even though there was attention on the media agenda. This questions the theoretical assumptions of media agenda leading to policy agenda. Although, policy makers noticed the movement and their concerns, the concerns of the movement was not addressed but rather suppressed. The government did not seem to take any concrete steps into addressing the cries of the citizens and then taking actions. As such, a movement with started off as a plea to government to hear their 'voices' proved to be unsuccessful. This is in sharp contrast to theory of agenda setting, specifically that of Cobb and Elder(1983),as media agenda in this case is seen to not have much of an impact on the attention decision makers give to issues to be discussed on the agenda. As such, the model is seen to be Western- based as it does not fit with the non- Western context, in this case, Africa. This emphasizes the point that location plays a huge role in measuring the success of such campaigns in shaping agenda, and that the theories of agenda setting should be revised as it lacks an important variable as location. It could be said that the movement failed in an effort to get their issues on the agenda. This may be as a result of the

culture in Zimbabwe, where the government suppresses dissent as seen in the laws passed and the arrest of dissenters. Again, as Cobb and Elder (1983) identify that the nature and how conflictual an issue is will determine it being on the agenda of policy makers, this statement proves the point. This may be the reason why issues were not successful as they were too conflictual and not in the interests of policy makers. With the counter narrative by government officials and elites, it was obvious there was a disagreement on the case. The sensitivity of the issue made it more unlikely as elites did not agree on issues put across by the movement. The demands were seen as unrealistic and elites felt more pressing issues in their view such as teachers uniforms were to be addressed²⁰⁹. The nature of the demands such as the blockage of the Zimbabwean currency, also made it hard to imagine the demands would lead to policy change.

With regards to the sub questions raised in the introductory chapter, several findings can be deduced. Firstly, the theoretical explanations of dissent and agenda in order to identify dissent and agenda setting within the political discourse proved fruitful. Some elements of the theories of dissent and agenda setting helped to propose a conceptual framework. From influential theories of issue expansion, ACF and NPF dissent was seen to spring from the bias of the system leading to conflict. To identify that social media activism represents dissent. The presented theories of dissent proven showed how issues spring up with individuals creating an ‘alternative space’ or ‘counter publics’, (Fraser, 1992) to voice out their dissatisfaction (Hirschman, 1970). These brought together groups found in the ACF and NPF based on their beliefs, and symbols. Movements are seen to come about through the coming together using social media as a platform of individuals with common interests to achieve a common goal.

Furthermore to identify the role of mobilization in expanding issues, mobilization is seen to come from activism through social media created by dissent of a status quo. The argument of micro- mobilization was found to be useful. Dissident groups come together to get their issues across. This is done through the alignment of frames. With this issue expansion through dissent is seen to lead to political agenda. With regards to frame alignment and expansion, the cases cannot justify this claim as it cannot be proved from the data, as such inconclusive. This largely contradicts with Snow et al (1986) theory of frame alignment leading to expansion. However, from the findings, it can be observed that as more frames are aligned, the possibility that it would get on the media agenda. However, although Cobb and Elder (1983) identify that the nature and how conflictual an issue is will determine it being on the agenda of policy makers, the findings show an important connection of frame alignment to media attention which Cobb and Elder (1983); Snow et al (1986) seem to overlook with regards to issue expansion. More so as findings for expansion are inconclusive, it can be concluded that dissent through issue expansion leading to political agenda is undetermined, and future research should focus on that.

²⁰⁹ ²⁰⁹ Evan Mawarire. Facebook. Retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/evan.mawarire/videos/vb.635497042/10153553623267043/?type=2&video_source=user_video_tab on 11th July, 2018.

Lastly, the conceptual framework concluded that, dissent through media activism leads to political agenda setting. As such media activism is seen to influence media agenda which leads to political agenda. Media and policy agenda, raise questions about the theories of agenda setting as they are not consistent with findings and as such the conceptual framework is lacking some important variables. Although the media agenda was shaped, #ThisFlag movement shows that media agenda may be influenced by ownership of newspaper as public or private. This indicates that, theory on media emphasis as coined in the issue expansion model is lacking the point of news outlet ownership in influencing media agenda. This could be the possibility that it is Western – based and lacks to fit in the non- Western context, especially Africa.

As such, from the findings it can be deduced that social media activism has a potential in representing dissent. However, although issue expansion may lead to media agenda it is undetermined. More so, social media activism may lead to media agenda as it crosses over from social media to the mass media in the attention given to the #ThisFlag movement as seen in the case. Although the movement failed in getting their issues on the political agenda, social media activism may influence the political agenda as governments may respond by suppressing failure and not in terms of meeting dissident’s needs and goals. As such these movements fail in their quest to influence policy to attain their goals. This clearly shows that the movement was a failure because it was suppressed. However, more is needed in order for change to come and as such social media may not be enough.

In conclusion, in relation to the question, what is the impact of social media activism in representing dissent through issue expansion in shaping agenda, there seems to be two main conclusions. With regards to representing dissent, social media activism is seen to bring people with similar beliefs together, through symbols in voicing their discontent. This is done through issue expansion where frames are aligned. In sharp contrast issue expansion in shaping agenda setting is inconclusive and cannot be determined. This proves that social media activism has a potential to represent dissent. However, with regards to political agenda setting, social media activism is seen to not have much on agenda as the issues of citizens were not addressed but rather made more stringent. Although the media agenda was shaped, the political agenda was geared towards suppressing the movement. Impact is only seen where government reacts by suppressing issues through bills. As such, the movement is seen to be a failure as their concerns and goals were not met. This clearly shows even though social media was successful in representing dissent, it failed in shaping the political agenda mainly due to the context within which it took place. As such, in effect without institutionalization and aligning with mass media and civic organizations such as societal groups, social movements will not be effective and successful, but nevertheless it may have contribute to a change in the overall political climate. It could also be explained that, the movement failed because the demands did not allow for that as elite saw demands as unrealistic and unreasonable. Some of the demands affected elites and as

such did not sit well with them. This includes demands such as sacking of officials and preventing the use of the bond notes currencies. Also, it could be deduced that, the way the issue was framed in light of corruption, injustice and poverty made it hard to gain support from the elite to take the issue up as most of the elite were in denial and believed there were more pressing issues such as teachers uniforms.

7.1 Recommendations

This research offers a significant number of findings and as such provides new insights for further research as well as provide recommendations to dissenting groups especially in the non-Western context.

With regards to dissenting groups, more importantly, individuals and groups especially using social media to dissent should make an effort to align themselves with civic organizations that support their causes. These may be lobbyist or union groups as seen in the Western context of the Dutch 1040- hour campaign. As seen in the #ThisFlag movement, the group did not align themselves with any civic organization as they argued it was meant for the citizens and should be operated by the ‘ordinary’ citizens.

In order for the research to have strong grounds, further research should be conducted to look at the effects of urban and rural participation of social media activism in non- Western states. This would help lay the foundation to understanding participation in social media activism based on one’s location, especially in cases like Africa.

Moreover, further research should also be undertaken to look at the influence of state and public newspapers in relation to media attention. The findings throws light on the fact that attention on issues, as well as trends in headlines may be influenced by ownership. As the research goal was not in the abovementioned, much focus was not attributed to it. As such in further research ownership of newspapers in social media activism should be analyzed.

Also, more comparative analysis of non – Western countries with Western countries should be conducted for future research. With this comparison, researchers would be able to identify the commonalities among various countries and also to test whether the conceptual framework is applicable to various contexts.

Moreso, future research could also look into the current government of Zimbabwe and how they react to occurrences of dissent. With the advent of a new government in Zimbabwe, following the overthrow of Mugabe in November, 2017 and with the new government sworn in December of the same year.²¹⁰ Researchers could see how this new government addresses issues of dissent

²¹⁰ Mhofu,S. (2017).Zimbabwe's New President Mnangagwa Swears In Cabinet. Retrieved from <https://www.voanews.com/a/zimbabwe-new-president-swears-in-cabinet/4148325.html> on 8th August, 2018.

and identify whether social media activism is still a powerful tool in Zimbabwe to hold leaders accountable.

With regards, to social platforms as Facebook and Twitter, more effort should be done to enhance research. In relation to expansion, these platforms do not allow researchers to conduct effective research. For research purposes, changes in the way data is presented should be enhance so researchers could see how things are expanded.

7.2 Limitations

This research may pose several limitations. One of such is from a methodological point of view. Firstly, as the research is mainly based on the content analysis approach, the interpretation of data makes it prone to doubt. Due to the differences of perceptions, different researchers may interpret data within different contexts and as such the model might not be applicable to other contexts.

Furthermore, this research findings questions some of the assumptions drawn by the theories of agenda setting. There seems to be a flaw in the original model. Especially in Cobb and Elder (1983) issue expansion model, mass media emphasis a media agenda is not clearly elaborated. Ownership of newspapers as seen in this research plays a significant role in the emphasis place on an issue, which the issue expansion model seeks to disregard. This influences the attention given to a particular issue.

Furthermore, this research is limited as it does not include the assumptions on counter strategies and counter narratives employed by coalitions and actors within the ACF (Sabatier, 1988) and NPF Frameworks (Shanahan et al, 2011). This might have influenced the researcher in understanding that actors contest issues by putting up counter strategies to prevent issues on reaching the policy agenda, and leading to policy change.

Moreso, with the sensitivity of the issue, the results of policy change may vary. As seen in the #ThisFlag case, the movement was unsuccessful as the culture of the government was to suppress dissent. This made it difficult for demands to be met. Unlike the Western context of the 1040-hr campaign, laws either suppressing or promoting dissent plays a significant role in the success of a dissident group, which this research lacks to identify.

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Appendix

Table 1: Twitter codes (341tweets – 19/04/16 – 6/07/16)

Concept	Indicators	Number of occurrence
Symbols	2.1. Use of image of historical precedence	71
	2.2 Use of pictogram	17
	2.3. Symbolism in text, linking to other historical events	11
	2.4 use of biblical quotes	0
Beliefs	3.1.1. Judgement	23
	3.1.2. Humiliation	9
	3.1.3. Affirmation/ assurance/ support	134
	3.1.4. Disappointment	48
	3.1.5. Hope- expectation of a positive outcome	42
	3.1.6 pride - self- image or dignity	17
	3.1.7 doubt	1
	3.2.1. Hero: one who can solve problem	9
	3.2.2. Villain: causes problem	37
	3.2.3. Victim: those affected by the problems	30
	Frame alignment	Number of affirmation codes

Table 2: 19th April, 2016. First video that initiated the #ThisFlag movement

Concept	Indicators	Number of occurrence
Symbols	2.1. Use of image of historical precedence	3
	2.2 Use of pictogram	4
	2.3. Symbolism in text, linking to other historical events	4
	2.4 use of biblical quotes	1
Beliefs	3.1.1. Judgement	3
	3.1.2. Humiliation	7
	3.1.3. Affirmation/ assurance/ support/ confirmation	52
	3.1.4. Disappointment	12
	3.1.5. Hope- expectation of a positive outcome	19
	3.1.6 pride - self- image or dignity	9
	3.1.7 doubt- disbelief	0
	3.2.1. Hero: one who can solve problem	2
	3.2.2. Villain: causes problem	3
	3.2.3. Victim: those affected by the problems	4

Table 3: 4th July 2016. Facebook codes for call for shutdown

Concept	Indicator	Number of occurrence
Symbols	2.1. Use of image of historical precedence	2
	2.2 Use of pictogram	21
	2.3. Symbolism in text, linking to other historical events	4
	2.4 use of biblical quotes	8
Beliefs	3.1.1. Judgement	9
	3.1.2. Humiliation	0
	3.1.3. Affirmation/ assurance/ support/ confirmation	176
	3.1.4. Disappointment	30
	3.1.5. Hope- expectation of a positive outcome	24
	3.1.6 pride - self- image or dignity	3
	3.1.7 doubt- disbelief	24
	3.2.1. Hero: one who can solve problem	6
	3.2.2. Villain: causes problem	26
	3.2.3. Victim: those affected by the problems	31

Weeks(2016)	News outlets (local/ Zimbabwe)				
	Herald	NewsDay	Daily news	Chronicle	Standard
19 April - 24 April	0	0	0	0	0
25th April - 1st May	0	0	0	0	0
2 May - 8 May	0	2	0	0	0
9 May - 15 May	0	0	0	0	0
16 May - 22 May	0	4	1	1	2
23 May - 29 May	2	3	1	1	0
30 May - 5 June	0	1	0	1	0
6 June - 12 June	0	0	0	1	0
13 June - 19 June	0	4	0	1	0
20 June - 26 June	0	3	0	0	2
27 June - 3rd July	1	0	0	0	1
4 July -10 July	7	12	3	1	5
11 July - 17 July	11	16	11	10	5

Table 4: Media attention (19th April - 17th July, 2016)