THE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE MEDIA IN ZAMBIAN SOCIETY: CASES OF RADIO PHOENIX, HOT FM AND Q-FM.

BY

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University of Zambia
LUSAKA

2011
DECLARATION

I Pauline Mwangala Mbangweta declare that this dissertation:
   a) Represents my own work
   b) Has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other University
      and
   c) Does not incorporate any published work or materials from another dissertation.

Signature: ______________________

Date : JANUARY, 2011
APPROVAL

This dissertation of Pauline M. Mbangweta has been approved as fulfilling for the partial requirement for the award of the degree of masters of Mass Communication by the University of Zambia.

Signed:                                        DATE

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ABSTRACT

The media industry in Zambia has been growing significantly since 1991 with the re-introduction of multi-party system. After the demise of the one party state, government liberalised the economy but instead of privatising state media, government liberalised the airwaves, allowing new entrants into the media fraternity. This culminated in the mushrooming of many broadcasting stations which saw the emergence of two types of radio broadcasting: commercial and community radio stations.

Although commercial radio stations started in Zambia 14 years ago with the first ever commercial radio station, radio Phoenix started in 1996, very little research has been done in the field of commercial broadcasting in Zambia, making it one of the areas about which the least is known. The medium has not received the level of academic attention or critical study focused on community radio and state-run broadcasters.

This study therefore seeks to be a significant step to developing a body of literature on the roles and functions of commercial radio stations in Zambian. It attempted to focus on the role commercial radio stations play in the Zambian society and their effects on the Zambian public discourse. The findings of this study by and large are that the coming into being of these radio stations has impacted positively on Zambia’s young democracy as they offer an alternative voice to that of the state-run radio stations that has been in existence since 1941.

Grave sentiments were however expressed that most commercial radio stations’ programmes are made up of excessive entertainment and politics, offering very little quality information on other important issues such as health, education, gender, environment, entrepreneurship and agriculture.

In this study, commercial radio, private radio stations and independent broadcasters are used interchangeably.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beautiful children, Ntombizine and Belemu Mudenda; to you I give my deepest expression of love and appreciation for being the light of my life. My thanks also to my sister Mwangala, my nieces, Sibeso, Mbuyu and Mwangala Stevens and my nephews, Lubasi, Ngula and Lubinda.
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Special tribute is also paid to my employers, the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) for according me the opportunity to pursue my studies. I would also like to thank all the respondents in this study for welcoming me and my research Assistants into their homes, for, without their time and cooperation; this project would not have been possible.

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## Table of Content

Title of the Dissertation .........................................................

Declaration .................................................................

Copyright .................................................................

Approval .................................................................

Abstract .................................................................v

Dedication ...............................................................vi

Acknowledgement ...................................................vii

Table of Content .........................................................viii

List of Tables ............................................................xiv

List of Figures ............................................................xvii

Appendices ..............................................................xviii

## Chapter 1

**Background of the Study**

1.0 Introduction .............................................................1

1.1 Background of the Study .............................................1

1.2 Country Profile ........................................................3

1.2.1 Colonialism ..........................................................3

1.2.2 Independence .........................................................4

1.2.3 Economy ..............................................................4

1.2.4 Population ..........................................................5

1.2.5 Diseases .............................................................6

1.2.6 Culture and Tradition .............................................6
CHAPTER 2

The role of the media in society

2.0 Introduction .......................................................... 12

2.1 The role of the Media in Society ...............................12

2.1.2 Power and Influence of the Media .........................14

2.2 Politics and Private Media in Zambia .......................16

2.3 The Media in Zambia ............................................18

2.3.1 History of Private Media in Zambia ......................18

2.3.2 The Media Landscape in Zambia .........................20

2.4 Major Newspapers in Zambia ...............................21

2.4.1 Times of Zambia .............................................21

2.4.2 Zambia Daily Mai ............................................22

2.4.3 The Post ....................................................23

2.5 Broadcasting in Zambia ....................................23

2.5.1 Brief History of Broadcasting in Zambia ..............23
3.2.3 Asia ........................................................................57
3.2.3.1 Indonesia ...............................................................57
3.2.3 Latin America ..............................................................57
3.2.3.1 Venezuela ...............................................................57
3.3 Past Research on Radio in Zambia .................................58

CHAPTER 4
Theoretical and Conceptual Framework
4.0 Introduction ..................................................................60
4.1 Agenda Setting Theory ......................................................60
4.2 The Hypodermic Needle Theory (Magic Bullet Theory) .......62
4.3 The Framing Theory .........................................................63
4.4 Functional Approach to Mass Communication .....................65
4.5 Cultivation Theory ............................................................66
4.6 Conceptual and Operational Frameworks ............................68
4.7 Definition of Concepts ......................................................68

CHAPTER 5
Research Methodology
5.0 Introduction .................................................................73
5.1 Methodology ...............................................................73
5.1.1 Quantitative Survey .....................................................73
5.1.2 Qualitative Survey .....................................................74
CHAPTER 6

Presentation of Findings

6.0 Introduction ..........................................................79
6.1 Qualitative Findings ..................................................79
6.2 Quantitative Findings ...............................................133

CHAPTER 7

Discussion and Conclusion

7.0 Introduction ..........................................................144
7.1 Discussions .............................................................144
7.1.1 Phone-in-Programmes ..........................................144
7.2 Government Media Regulations .................................145
7.2.1 The National Constitution Commission ......................146
7.3 Access, Participation and Empowerment ......................148
7.3.1 Empowerment ......................................................148
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Distribution of figures for the study Population
Table 2 Distribution of respondents by age
Table 3 Distribution of respondents by education level
Table 4 Distribution of respondents by sex
Table 5 Distribution of respondents on radio listenership
Table 6 Distribution of respondents on radio usage
Table 7 Distribution of respondents on Radio Phoenix listenership
Table 8 Distribution of respondents on where they listen to Radio Phoenix from
Table 9 Distribution of respondents on Radio Hot FM listenership
Table 10 Distribution of respondents on where they listen to Hot FM from
Table 11 Distribution of respondents on Radio Q-FM listenership
Table 12 Distribution of respondents on where they listen to Q-FM from
Table 13 Distribution of respondents on requests for input from Radio Phoenix
Table 14 Distribution of respondents on how easy it is to air views on Phoenix
Table 15 Distribution of respondents on whether Phoenix acts on their suggestions
Table 16 Distribution of respondents on requests for input from Hot FM
Table 17 Distribution of respondents on how easy it is to air views on Hot FM
Table 18 Distribution of respondents on whether Hot FM acts on their suggestions
Table 19 Distribution of respondents on requests for input from Q-FM
Table 20 Distribution of respondents on how easy it is to air views on Q-FM
Table 21 Distribution of respondents on whether Q-FM acts on their suggestions
Table 22 Distributions of respondents on the performance of Phoenix in the provision of information
Table 23 Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s performance in the provision of information
Table 24 Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance in the provision of information
Table 25 Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance in providing education
Table 26 Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s Performance in providing education
Table 27 Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance in providing education
Table 28 Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance in providing entertainment
Table 29 Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s performance in providing entertainment
Table 30 Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance in providing entertainment
Table 31 Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance in providing surveillance of the environment
Table 32 Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s surveillance of the environment
Table 33: Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s surveillance of the environment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance of mobilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s performance of mobilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance of mobilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance of correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s performance of correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance of correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Phoenix’s performance in the transmission of social heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Hot FM’s performance in the transmission of social heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents on Q-FM’s performance in the transmission of social heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Cross tabulations of listenership of radio Phoenix by age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Cross tabulations of listenership of radio Hot FM by age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Cross tabulations of listenership of radio Q-FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Cross tabulation on radio Phoenix programming by sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on radio Phoenix satisfying their democratic expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Cross tabulation on radio Hot FM programming by sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on radio Hot FM satisfying their democratic expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Cross tabulation on radio Q-FM programming by sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on radio Q-FM satisfying their democratic expectation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on government interference on Phoenix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on government interference on Hot FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on government interference on Hot FM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents perceptions on the closure of radio Phoenix by government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents perceptions on the closure of Hot FM by Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on the closure of Q-FM by government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on Phoenix reflection of cultural values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on Hot FM reflection of cultural values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Distribution of respondents’ perceptions on Q-FM reflection of cultural values and beliefs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 61          Distribution of responses on the objectivity of radio Phoenix Programming.
Table 62          Distributions of responses on Phoenix programmes adding to respondents’ knowledge and understanding of world events
Table 63          Distribution of responses on Phoenix programmes advising respondents on local issues
Table 64          Distribution of responses on Phoenix programmes Influencing respondents’ opinions?
Table 65          Distribution of responses on the objectivity of radio Hot FM Programming
Table 66          Distributions of responses on Hot FM programmes adding to respondents’ knowledge and understanding of world events
Table 67          Distribution of responses on Hot FM programmes advising respondents on local issues
Table 68          Distribution of responses on Hot FM programmes Influencing respondents’ opinions?
Table 69          Distribution of responses on the objectivity of Q-FM Programming.
Table 70          Distributions of responses on Q-FM programmes adding to respondents’ knowledge and understanding of world events
Table 71          Distribution of responses on Q-FM programmes advising respondents on local issues
Table 72          Distribution of responses on Q-FM programmes Influencing respondents’ opinions
Table 73          Distribution of figures on Lusaka having more radio stations
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Distribution of respondents by age
Figure 2: Distribution of respondents by educational level
Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by sex
Figure 4: Distribution of respondents on radio listernership
Figure 5: Distribution of respondents on radio ownership
Figure 6: Distribution of respondents on radio usage
Figure 7: Distribution of respondents’ knowledge on the location of radio Phoenix
Figure 8: Distribution of respondents’ knowledge on the location of Hot FM
Figure 9: Distribution of respondents’ knowledge on the location of Q-FM
Figure 10: Distribution of respondents on whether radio Phoenix should broadcast in vernacular language
Figure 11: Distribution of respondents on whether radio Phoenix should broadcast nationally
Figure 12: Distribution of responses on whether radio Hot FM should broadcast in vernacular
Figure 13: Distribution of response on whether radio Hot FM should broadcast nationally
Figure 14: Distribution of responses on whether radio Q-FM should broadcast nationally
Figure 15: Distribution of responses on giving feed back to radio Phoenix
Figure 16: Distribution of responses on change brought about by radio Phoenix in their areas
Figure 17: Distribution of responses on giving feed back to radio Hot FM
Figure 18: Distribution of responses on change brought about by radio Hot FM in their areas
Figure 19: Distribution of responses on giving feed back to radio Q-FM
Figure 20: Distribution of responses on change brought about by radio Q-FM in their areas
Figure 21: Distribution of responses on sharing information from these Radio Stations
Figure 22: Distribution of responses on respondents feeling part of these radio stations
## APPENDICES

1. Appendix A  Questionnaire
2. Appendix B  In-Depth Questions
3. Appendix C  Work Plan
4. Appendix D  Budget
5. Appendix E  List of Radio Stations In Zambia