**NEAR EAST UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**MASTERS’ PROGRAMME**

**MASTER’S THESIS**

**WHAT IS THE ROLE OF INTEREST GROUPS IN DEMOCRACY? CASE OF ZIMBABWE FROM 2015 TO 2016**

**CHARLES KUDAKWASHE MACHAKAIRE**

**NICOSIA**

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# ABSTRACT

*Zimbabwe was once described as the glory land with abundance of resources, rich and with good policies. Zimbabwe gained independence in 1980 with ZANU PF becoming the ruling government till today. Complains about corruption emanated, vast economic problems erupted solved with poor policies which resulted to a massive economic decline. As if it was not enough, the government became very corrupt, high inflation and high unemployment rate. In trying to squash critics, the government became violent, introducing police brutality, rape, more corruption, rigging election, human rights abuses. All these led to a rise of interest groups challenging the government and some in support. The researcher used content analysis and process tracing in trying to find the role of interest in democracy of Zimbabwe. Most of the data came from Newspapers since they stored all activities by interest groups. The researcher found out that there was a balance on the roles played by interest groups in democracy. They challenged the undemocratic tendencies by the government and more in all; they represented the minority and all people. At the same time, there were other interest groups who were biased; some were corrupting government officials to gain advantages over others and some using campaign finance to lure politicians on their side. The researcher then concluded that interest groups played a balanced role in democracy both positive and negative.*

# ÖZ

Zimbabve, bir zamanlar zengin kaynakları ve iyi politikaları olan zafer arazisi olarak tanımlandı. Zimbabve, 1980'de ZANU PF'nin bugüne dek hükümeti kurmasıyla bağımsızlığını kazandı. Yolsuzlukla ilgili şikayetler, büyük ekonomik sorunlar patlak verdi ve büyük bir ekonomik düşüşe neden olan kötü politikalarla çözüldü. Sanki yetmiyormuş gibi, hükümet çok bozuk, yüksek enflasyon ve yüksek işsizlik oranı kazandı. Eleştirileri ezmeye çalışırken, hükümet şiddet geçirerek polisin vahşeti, tecavüz, daha fazla yolsuzluk, seçime bağlı seçim ve insan hakları ihlalleri getirdi. Tüm bunlar, hükümete meydan okuyan ve bazıları destek veren çıkar gruplarının yükselmesine yol açtı. Araştırmacı, Zimbabwe'nin demokrasi alanındaki ilgi rolünü bulmaya çalışırken içerik analizi ve süreç izlemesi kullandı. Verilerin çoğu, tüm faaliyetleri ilgi grupları tarafından depolandığı için gazetelerden geldi. Araştırmacı, çıkar gruplarının demokraside oynadığı rollerde bir denge olduğunu öğrendi. Hükümet tarafından demokratik olmayan eğilimlere ve hepsinden çok meydan okudular; Azınlığı ve herkesi temsil ettiler. Aynı zamanda, önyargılı diğer çıkar grupları da vardı; Bazıları hükümet yetkililerini başkalarına karşı avantaj kazanmak için bozdular ve bazıları da politikacıları cezbetmek için kampanya finansmanı kullanıyorlardı. Araştırmacı, daha sonra, çıkar gruplarının demokraside hem pozitif hem de negatif dengeli bir rol oynadığı sonucuna vardı.

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my parents Mr and Mrs Machakaire and all my beloved family for their assistance they provided me all the time.

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# ABBREVIATIONS

AEA- Associations of Evangelism in Africa

BBC- British Broadcasting Corporations

CFU- Commercial Farmers Associations

CIO- Central Intelligence Organisation

CNN- Cable Network News

GALZ- Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe

DRC- Democratic Republic of Congo

NGO- Non Governmental Organisations

SADC- Southern African Development Community

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNFPA- United Nations Population Fund

ZANU PF- Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZCTU- Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions

ZESA- Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority

ZIMTA- Zimbabwe Teachers Associations

ZIPLA- Zimbabwe Indigenous Language Promotion Association

ZLHR- Zimbabwe Lawyers of Human Rights

# INTRODUCTION

This thesis is going to show the role of interest groups on democracy in Zimbabwe. According to Bassiouni et al, (1998), democracy is an epitome, which is, recognised by the whole world, more so goals, common morals and objectives shared universally by all people and all communities no matter of economic, political, cultural and religious differences. Democracy then becomes a basic right of all citizens practiced under circumstances of responsibility transparency, equality and freedoms, in the view of polity and variety of views.

The Universal Declaration of Human rights then declared that democracy and human rights cannot be separated, they are interdependent (UDHR, 1993). UDHR states that democracy depends on the fundamental freedoms and the free expression wills of people to define their own cultural, economic, social and political systems. It goes on to state that the protection of these fundamentals both international and national levels should be universal without any attached conditions.

Currently, Zimbabwe is on a brink of collapsing, political violence, regime change or transition from a political power to another candidate. This whole process is led by different interest groups representing citizens who are tired of corruption, enforcement of unconstitutional laws, bad governance, tyranny and ruling by an iron fist by the Zimbabwean president (Newsday, 2016).

Dating back from independence, Zimbabwe was characterised as a democratic country under President Mugabe after he won election in 1980. People perceived him as a saviour since he redeemed them from colonial masters and his government was good in the first glory days until around 1995 when corruption was noticed which paved way for other political party Movement of Democracy Change (MDC) formed in 1999 (Chikwanha, 2001). The economy and political system of Zimbabwe has been crumbling from day 1 (though on tortoise pace) since President Mugabe took over and people could not notice (Rense, 2010), but now the people are saying enough is enough since the situation has worsened.

Elections are a form of freedom (freedom of expression) carried on a 5-year period on a presidential system government of Zimbabwe to vote for the rightful president which people want. Elections were allegedly rigged in the years 2002, 2008 and 2013 (Nehanda, 2013). According to Nehanda (2013), there was also the use of political violence and police brutality to manipulate voters during the elections. According Bassiouni (1998), rigging elections is an undemocratic process which destroys the nation. During the election rigging process, individuals were not able to speak out in fear of persecution but only interest groups were able to do so on a minimum level.

Zimbabwe is also condemned of using military rule whenever people seemed to be against the ruling government. In 2008 elections, during the re-run elections between President Mugabe of Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and Tsvangirai of MDC (opposition leader), terror was unleashed on people through the ZANU PF military and thugs, there was mass murder, intimidation, rape and torture against interest group leaders, journalist, polling agents and opposition members (ICRtoP, 2010). According to Bhasikiti (2008), Mugabe deployed the Zimbabwean army to wage violence amongst the opposition members which is an undemocratic tendency. Some scholars characterised this period as traumatic, it was the reign of fear with unusual political situation whereby people were in fear of their life, according to Human Rights Watch (2008) there were cases of disappearances of more than 20 opposition members and journalists.

According to Toit (1995), in 1980 after Zimbabwe gained independence from colonial rule, ZANU PF or the ruling government managed to maintain a one party system through the use of force, violence and intimidation till 1999 when other political parties emerged. The intimidation disrupted other parties to campaign through force/ massive beating of opposition leaders, after independence from the colonial rule, the government also adopted the monopoly structures with the use of force, the legislative capacity and security executive which included the Central Intelligent Organisation (CIO). This government also adopted the legacy of disproportionate and asymmetric force when dealing with any opposition parties. The ruling government also failed to democratise the local rural and traditional structures.

In 1998 Mugabe send Zimbabwean soldiers to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) undemocratically and unconstitutionally. This move was perceived to be of self-interest by Mugabe since he used to have personal diamond mines in DRC, so he sent Zimbabwean soldiers to protect the government (diamond mines) from M23 rebels of Rwanda who wanted to take over the country (Nyathi, 2012). This undemocratic intervention resulted to the sinking of the economy, high inflation through mismanagement of funds and prices sky rocketed. All these problems gave rise to interest groups. Corruption and autocracy by the government led to the formation of an interest group called the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) which later spearhead the formation of an alternative political party ‘MDC’ in 1999 to challenge ZANU PF. ZCTU was formed in 1981 by more than 50 small unions who merged together with a mandate of representing workers.

Prior to continued abuses of human rights and undemocratic tendencies by the government, this paved way for vast interest groups representing different groups of people for democracy (Hassman, 2010). Baroni et al. (2014), Bindkrantz et al. (2015) and, Kanol, (2016), postulate that there are sectional groups which represent narrow interests such as professional associations, trade unions and law firms. More so, diffuse groups, which represent the society as a whole such as democracy with its freedoms and all tenets. In the case of Zimbabwe, there was a rise in different interest groups seeking to represent diffuse interests (Gwatipedza, 2014). Human rights watch rose representing human rights as a whole in Zimbabwe. Interest groups play a huge role in advocating, policy change and representing its members. Usually in the democratic processes, according to Nieb (2014), there are vast number interest groups representing different people than before, which means more interest groups are formed and more people are being represented. This will help the government in policymaking and democracy is met in this process, because according to Carroll (2008), more interest groups increases number of people represented and more issues are tackled at once.

Interest groups can be said they are good in their role of democracy since they are part and parcel of the society. Interest groups represent their members in a society which is a sign of democracy. They perform duties which individuals alone are not able to do I interest groups provide expertise and know-how, (Transparency International, 2009). For example in Zimbabwe there has been interest groups providing expertise on Sexual Reproductive Health Rights information.

However, some blast the role of interest groups in democracy citing that the role of interest groups does not to promote democracy since it’s all about money (Neib,2014). This is a disadvantage in the democratic process since rich interest groups or those with more resources tend to influence policy more than the others. Their role in democracy becomes biased towards rich groups which is harmful in democracy taking for example the Commercial Farmers Union in Zimbabwe being selfish towards agricultural inputs given out by the government.

Another disadvantage of interest groups is that their roles are easily manipulated by corrupt funders or corrupt members. It is clear that interest groups should represent people’s issues but however since there are big rich companies or individuals funding interest groups for representation, democracy would not be met since law makers are easily manoeuvred (Arnold, 2008).

More so there has been a burning issue in Zimbabwe about new rights, the Gays and lesbians issues. Interest groups such as Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe (GALZ) established in 1990 has been trying to influence the government to adopt gays and lesbian polices in Zimbabwe. More so, according to GALZ, there is no law which prohibits them but only Mugabe who is hostile against it saying it’s un-African according to (IRIN, 2009).

Interest groups assume important roles in democracy such as representing people (their members) in policy making process. This is vital because usually people with same agendas and perspectives are represented by a single interest group and it tries by all means to influence policy for its members. More so, even there as many interest groups, policy makers can come up with policies which are good for everyone or the majority.

Furthermore, interest groups carry an important role in providing democracy. Many interest groups available, with different views, tend to debate against each other in other words constructive criticism and balancing each other to come up with a common good (Lee, 2005). This is good for democracy because it reduces chances where minority groups will impose on majority groups and also this platform provides people with means of contributing to democracy.

Finding the role of interest groups is important, this will show readers whether the interest groups were able to influence democracy. These interest groups are doing what hasn’t been done in decades; they called for a shutdown Zimbabwe protest whereby everyone in the country stayed indoors to send a message to the government that they are tired with corruption, bad governance, police brutality etc.

Answering the question of the role of interest groups in democracy of Zimbabwe will enable a clear understanding on whether the interest groups were effective in paving way for democracy. What’s happening now in Zimbabwe last occurred during the colonial era where Zimbabwe was fighting for independence from Britain, however it’s now a repetition were people are fighting for independence against their saviour who has been ruling since 1980. So this will clearly show the interest group roles and if they were able to insight democracy.

Like stated before, president Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe since 1980, rigging elections sometimes using violence with an iron fist. However, with all that, people were sick and tired forming interest groups trying to influence the government to change policy and some campaigning for Mugabe to step down. Whichever the results this will be able to show future scholars the importance of interest groups in Africa and what they are capable of.

This study is important because there is a limited gap on the relationship between interest groups and democracy in Zimbabwe. This had not been done in Zimbabwe, scholars have not focused on this relationship before due to the political nature and other factors. The media in Zimbabwe was severely censored.

This research is also important because it will show the role of interest groups in the democratic process. Interest groups have a mandate to change policy, though democracy may be a complex issue, interest groups supposed play a huge role in influencing the democratic principles in a country. Interest groups have the capacity to influence policy, they have the knowledge, the expertise and more so, they represent members of which in the call of democracy, all citizens are represented.

More so, the researcher thought it is wise to consider the capacity of interest groups in the democratic process of Zimbabwe considering the political nature of Zimbabwe. Literally, Zimbabwe is a peaceful country since no conflicts have been occurring such as civil wars however; there has been absence of economic peace, political peace and social peace like high rates of corruption where members of the government were being implicated in. In this case, the ordinary members of the society have not been able to raise a voice due to intimidation and disappearances, however, the interest groups became the voice of the people and watchdogs of the government. So, it’s a good idea to assess the role of interest groups in democracy of Zimbabwe.

## **Thesis outline**

This thesis will comprise four more chapters which are the literature review, methodology, results and conclusion/ recommendations. The literature review will indicate the roles of interest groups in countries worldwide; the roles will be grouped into two parts positive and negative impacts of interest groups on democracy. The researcher will also propose a hypothesis based on the theories and literature given. In the methodology chapter, the researcher will mention types of methodologies he will use to obtain data. For example, the researcher will use qualitative research in both data gathering and analysis. The researcher will use content analysis to obtain his data from newspaper articles concerning the roles of interest groups on democracy of Zimbabwe.in the results section; the researcher will be showing the impact of interest groups in Zimbabwe. The final chapter (conclusion and recommendations), the researcher will conclude giving a judgement on the hypothesis given in chapter two. The research will also give recommendation on what can be made better from the results and what other researchers can focus on if they want to research on the same topic.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter is going to assess the literature on the role of interest groups on democracy. The literature will be categorised in two sides which are positive and negative roles of interest groups on democracy respectively. To make it easier and clear, since democracy is broad with many complexes, the researcher will be guided by the principles of democracy in showing their relationship and how interest groups influence democracy. These principles include representation, accountability, Transparency, Rule of law, equality and freedoms. Firstly the researcher will define Democracy and interest groups.

## **Democracy**

One of the most used term ‘Democracy’, in political vocabulary. There have been difficulties in reaching on the correct definition, because of the plurality (pluralism) nature of different concepts and theories, (Campbell, 2008). Kekic, (2007), said that, there isn’t an accord on measuring democracy, its definitions are contested and ever going. However, one can refer to the universal declaration on human rights which defines democracy as an ideal recognised worldwide, basing on common shared values regardless of economic, and political, social and cultural differences (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1998). Thus becomes a basic right of citizenship to be observed through circumstances of freedoms, accountability, transparency, responsibility and equality.

The council of Europe (2007), considered European countries as democratic if they are founded on the values of sovereign citizenship, responsibility, accountable government and transparent in decisions making. Consequently, democracy is the rule of the people, government by the people and for the people. Ralph (2016), describes democracy as a way of government were power is vested in the people. The ideal of democracy thus government’s interest and goals should be the synopsis of the interest and goals of the governed. Todaro (2004) and Schmidt (2006), defines it as the vital idea that people own the right to determine who governs them. The concept of the governed and the government leads us to representation and accountability as they are the most essential principles of democracy. As argued by Markowski (2005) that, these two are inseparable ass to claim each a *‘sine qua non’* way of understanding the other. However, some undermine democracy through inequality and corruption which cause frustrations and anger. All this fall in the bias category

## **Interest groups**

Scholars in the existing literature have been defining interests groups differently but producing same meaning. Scholars such as Greenan (2012) and Pedersen (2013) define interest groups from two angles which are theoretically and empirically. The theoretically explanation begins with a description of the importance, enjoyment, complexes, origins and difficulties on the study of interest groups. However the empirical scholars favour to show the role, a configuration of interest groups in politics.

Theoretically, Arthur (1908), claimed that,” when groups are adequately stated, everything is stated.” His book marked an era of political process for example in America, from populism to progressive mass movement. From settlement to urbanisation and industrialisation. However, after the cold war, liberalism and democracy emerged. The main actors in the liberal democracy were the groups engaged in the free action. Those people who won suffrage would form their own groups that would articulate their needs and interest. These groups became more important in political systems, hence, these groups are the core of politics and democracy.

Empirically, an interest group a social group, predominantly with a permanent organisation which recognize its interests by trying to influence policies (walker, 1991). This means that any group, associations or organisation influencing polices. Behaviour approach defines interest groups centred on their observable, activities which are policy related. Kanol (2016), argues interest groups as membership based associations seeking to influence public policy. Bentely (1908), defines interest groups as any group, tending or acting toward action. Truman (1951), variously defined interest groups as any active organisation trying to effect the distribution of political things.

## **Positive Impacts of Interest Groups**

Interest groups play a positive role of representation in democracy. Representation is a component of democracy where views and or needs of certain people or members are met on behalf by selected leaders or groups. Pitkin (1967) defines representation as acting on behalf of the represented. This is an advantage to democracy since people with or without resources are represented with groups that have niche expertise to criticise the government policy on unceasing basis (Maloney & Jordan, 2007). Representation comes with participation, members participate in advancing their issues and interest. Increased participation increases representations and responsiveness leading to heightened policy efficacy. Well representation attracts many members and policy success. Scholars such as Pitkin (1967), gave an assessment of representation depending on the political environment in which a representative acts. She further said that, in order to understand various and differing ethics within the concept of representation is to disclose the ineffectiveness of putting representatives to fixed guidelines.

Pitkin (1967), postulates that for one to understand representation, one must understand different ways in which the term is being used. She then gave a discussion on four views of the representation concept which are formalistic representation, symbolic representation, descriptive representation, and substantive representation. She describes symbolic representation as a way in which a representative ‘stands for’ the represented, that is the role of the representative towards the represented. In this case, the representative will be assessed by their degree of acceptance among the represented. Formalistic representation as institutionalised sittings that herald and initiated representation. She explained descriptive representation as the range in which the representative signifies the represented. Substantive representation as the actions and activities done by the representative on behalf of, as an agent of, as a substitute for and in the interest of the represented.

In a multi-cultural and multilingual country like Australia, interest groups have taken the role of protecting minority groups the Aboriginal against negligence. The Aboriginal were neglected, treated unfairly not receiving adequate public service they voice. These Aboriginal were not able to influence any political decision since they were the minority but however the pressure groups managed to bridge the gap by promoting political participation and amplifying their voice and ability (Australian politics, 2016).

In America, masses of people are represented by interest groups. Individuals join different groups to share their interest. It points out that representation is good for democracy because political issues require never-ending attention and expertise which groups have. This more so allows vast groups to represent many people and many different views, which is an added advantage of democracy. Drutman (2015) mentioned that the quality of interest groups had increased to overwhelm any other force against democracy. Which means more groups available is an advantage to democracy so as representation.

Loomis (2011), supports the role of interest groups in the American policy making process and the availability of democracy within the system and during the process. He asserts that, the fact that, interest groups work for the people/ their members thus therefore democracy. It is their prerequisite to represent its members or society depending on the type interest group and thus its democracy. Ciglar (2011), points out that interest groups are permanent actors in the policy making, and the availability of vast interest groups representing different people, thus enabling all people to be represented which is democracy at its best. So in this case, there is a bridge between the government and the people for example AARP have the resources, the technics and information to get peoples voices heard. It was successful in opening a pension fund for retirees and insurance in America.

Scholars like Lee (2010), argues that interest groups are good for democracy because they represent people. Interest groups represent people, and these interest groups are the ones who influence policy. One of the most tenets of democracy is government for the people by the people with the people. This becomes evidence that interest groups are vital for democracy.

Interest groups have been performing an enormous role in Indian democracy. Yadagiriirs (2014), interest and pressure groups have assumed the roles of electing their representatives into legislature, filling executive posts and involved themselves in appointing an independent judiciary in the name of promoting democracy. In India, they aid in national political events such as elections since they are deemed neutral and in times of any undemocratic tendency by the government, they hold demonstrations on behalf of their members and populace in general. However, though their roles have been vital for democracy, their public demonstrations previous resulted to a mass violence such as the Naxalite Movement of 1967 emanating from fourth general elections.

In England, the pressure groups were able to maintain a political stability; they sustained communication between government and citizens on demand raising, according to Heywood (2010) for example the Brexit.

In Germany, interest groups usually ally themselves to political parties for example if the Social Democratic party is ruling, union interest is given most priority over other groups. On contrary, if the Christian party is in power, the church and agrarian groups are more favoured, (Natali, 2016). However, in order to bring about democracy, other interests are invited to exchange their opinions and views so that the government will gain from the meeting outcomes for better policies.

Pluralist theory falls under positive impacts. According to the pluralist theory, there may be as many as possible to allow freedoms. According to Madison (1983), there are only two types of groups, political parties and interest groups which influence policy and allow people to get what they want from political parties and the government.

It also states that multitudes of groups rules and controls a country. In this case, it means that a lot of interest groups will be playing a main role for Zimbabwe to achieve democracy through representation. These interest groups will be majoring in democratic policies, representing certain groups and members advocating on behalf.

According to Madison (1983), the pluralist theory gives value to the way which interest groups are formed saying that when people with a common interest come together, it strengthens their status quo in representation. When more groups are formed, multiple points of access present themselves in addressing different views which ensures more representation. In this case, the government power should be fragmented and dispersed to avoid tyranny.

Truman (1950) postulates that the availability of many different interest and pressure groups leads to competition in representing their members to control government policies. These conflicting interest and competition will in turn leads to a balance which provide good policies and a better government for everyone. Furthermore, as supported by theories of economics which states that competition leads to a better economy and boosting of local markets leading to a higher Gross Domestic Product. Same in this case, competition within interest groups will lead to better policies and all represented members will benefit.

Interest groups plays a positive role in accountability. World Bank (2004) explains accountability as an amorphous concept, which is problematic to define in exact terms. The World Bank (2004) however said, broadly speaking, accountability occurs in a case when a body or individual and its performance or functions are subject to another’s oversight, direction or appeal that they deliver information for their actions or justification. It further explains types of accountabilities, but the researcher will focus on social accountability which is building accountability based on civic engagement. This is whereby civil society, and or citizens participate indirectly or directly in demanding accountability. In most cases this type of accountability is demand driven and from bottom-up approach. Voltmer (2010) then said, accountability could not be achieved if the citizenry is not active and attentive. She further argued that, civic engagement is not voting only, but also participating in policy making.

Scholars such as Hunt (2012), defines accountability as the preparedness or readiness to provide a justification or an explanation to relevant authorities, stakeholders for one’s judgement, acts, intentions and omissions when properly called upon to do so. He further said, it is an enthusiasm to have a person’s actions judged by others, when and where appropriate, ready to accept responsibility for errors, negligence and misjudgements and recognition for competence.

In Argentina, interest groups took the role of Checks and balances on abuse of administration discretion. This is a form of democracy performed by the interest groups. The interest groups use their reports and audits to pursue court challenges or to challenge them. The civil society is able to challenge the judiciary for an unfavourable outcome on policy according to Ackerman (2010), the consumers association tried to purse a move whereby the administration will carry out a public hearing. More so, same in Philippines, Ackerman (2010), said citizens groups are challenging the government trying to prohibit it against fundamental human rights abuse.

Roberts (1998) argued that access of information is a key to democracy. More so, under the United Nations Declaration Charter, access to information is a basic right. In this case interest groups such as Greenpeace pushed for access of government information so that the public would be informed and hold the government accountable for any discrepancy and corrupt activities. Campaigning for access of government documents favours accountability which a good for democracy when the public has access to the information.

Another major positive contribution of interest groups in democracy is campaigning for the separation of executive powers. According to Persson (1997), political constitutions have room for abuse of power because they are incomplete contracts. Elections and other fundamentals are a form of disciplining government officials; however, separation of powers with correct checks and balances prevents abuse of power. Rousseau and Montesquieu propound that separation of powers is important to avoid tyranny and usurpation. Majority of African countries are suffering today because they did not allow separation of powers, however this led interest groups campaigning for separation of powers.

According to the Carter Centre (2016), elections are the foremost political mechanism, they allow people to select their form of government and they are a pillar of any political democratic system. In this case, interest groups have the most important role of monitoring and observing elections. This role will make sure there is a legitimate and quality electoral process which is good for democracy. These interest groups contribute an important role before the elections starts like analysing elections laws, voter registration and education and assessing equality in campaigns. For example, the Carter Centre monitored 103 elections in 39 countries.

Interest groups are good for democracy because they give people the power to control the government. According to Epstein (2011), democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people. Sometimes it becomes difficult for the people since people vote between 4 years to 6 years depending on the government term. However, interest groups fill these gaps by lobbying for the people every day to the government. This will make government officials aware of people’s desires and opinions instead of election time only.

## **Negative role of interest groups**

Bias can be said to be a proclivity to present or prefer a partial perspective, mostly supplemented with the rejection of alternative perspectives. This is being one sided, preferring a single thing over the other and lacking a neutral point of view. In this case lobbyists tend to be biased towards certain perspectives whether it is the government preferring rich interest groups or it is the group being corrupt (Reynolds, 2011). Mostly interest groups with a huge socioeconomic power are the ones trying to alter policies for their own advantage. Scattschneider, (1960) and Olson challenged the pluralist perspective saying there is upper class accent, well off interest groups are represented better than the common public.

Maloney (2007) criticised the relationship that end up emerging between policy makers and certain interest groups. This type of relationships is prone to biased, for example a ‘clientelistic relationship’, when the civil service maintain a friendship with ‘their’ groups. Baumgartner and jones (1993), mentioned the bias as ‘policy monopoly’, when these lobby groups creates a set of images that supports dominant ideas from any policy making arrangements. With this relationship, they end up describing themselves as allies to some interest groups. For example, the case of interest groups defeated pure science to drive their political motives in America. Scientist proved that the emission of carbon dioxide and greenhouse gases is causing rise on the Earth’s temperature, however interest groups ignored all this leading to America’s refusal to rectify the Kyoto protocol in 1997. Brittan (1973), had earlier on portrayed the government as group appeasers. Tony Blair further said that, going against interest groups is like standing in front of a stampede.

Maloney (2007), countered the argument that group system is better because it upsurges participation, he argued that public volunteerism is crooked towards individuals with status and money. This therefore led policy makers to consider ‘who are they’ not how many people do they represent.

Scholars have blasted the role of interest groups saying it is harmful to democracy. The issue of rich interest groups influencing more to political outcome, for example, the case in America according to Mills (1959). Powerful interest groups were criticised of being undemocratic, buying off congress and politicians in the process of law making benefiting themselves.

More so, democracy is said to have been threatened by the issue of campaign finance. In America due to the political system and their economic ideologies, it seems that those rich with a huge campaign base are the ones influencing policy leading to dubious policy which favour themselves only (Berry, 1977). The government then ignores the smaller ones with small campaign finance. As noticed in America that lobbying within the corporations and government had mostly been abused to favour special interests not necessary for the people but corporations, i.e. this behaviour does no longer support democracy.

The issue of interest groups corrupts politics and democracy according to Lowenberg (2014), he mentions that candidates are no longer focused on the issues of people but they are now only pursuing happiness of big companies and big funders. Candidates are now focused on issues presented on their table by funders, which means the mass are no longer represented.

More so, according to Sinha (2012), Indian interest and pressure groups have not been vital because the pressure groups have not been observed as the fourth organ of the government such as in America. Furthermore, interest groups are mostly based on religion and caste which is deemed negative for the country as a whole since it can easily emanates to religious conflicts and biases.

Another major negative aspect in interest groups is corruption, though corruption has been described in many ways, all lacking in some phases. However corruption has been defined as the abuse of public office for private use (Blake, 1997). According to Boris (2005), corruption is the intentional non-compliance with the arm’s-length principal aimed at stemming some benefits for oneself. That is the bias must be intentional. Sometimes it involves bribery of a favour in return.

Malooney (1997), blasted the rise of professionalised interest groups in the United Kingdom that they have bureaucratic interest staffed by public relation experts, scientists, lobbyists and erudite fund raising structures. By this, these bodies provide sporadic, thin and ephemeral ill-informed engagement. These large groups are failing to involve citizens at large within the politics and public policy, (Stocker, 2008). These groups are failing to do so because they favour less internal participation. This becomes a disadvantage since many people won’t be participating, the groups sought to influence largely political outcomes without much assistance of members. The citizens viewed passive involvement as an advantage and benefit, the Royal Society for Bird Protection stated that citizens trusted us to do the job for them, same as CPRE (Campaign to protect Rural England). These interest groups perceived that they will lose members if they press for more active membership, (Zinnbauer, 2009).

More so, the fact that interest groups allow anonymity of funders and donors, there is always chances whereby donor pours a lot of money to push for their policies and never be known according to (Zevi, 2014). Even if they put limits on the amount to be donated, donors will always find loopholes within the system such as fund raising dinners, auctions etc.

American interest groups are largely criticised for their undemocratic tendencies as acclaimed by various scholars. Zevi (2104) blasted interest groups in America that they do not represent people as a whole but a few elites and rich companies. Zevi (2014) postulates that, their undemocratic tendencies derive from the American party system which place more focus on how much a candidate can run a campaign ignoring the basic and real issues on the ground. The fact that there is a price tag available on the senate seat according to Zevi, it paves way for corrupt politics, seeking to satisfy big companies and rich people. The fact that campaigns are attracted and driven by a fat pocket, interest groups will never be good for democracy but seeking to quench the need of the rich and big companies.

Morris (2011), criticises the mutual corruption between the government and special interest groups. He blasted Obama being a less socialist than a corporatist, with an objective of government management than government ownership. Which is, his intentions were to get rid of small business and small banks, in order to amalgamate all in a few corporations and banks; thus he was friends to General Motors and Goldman-Sachs (Leading global investment banking). More so, Morris criticises Obama’s job council which is comprised of CEO’s of big unions and corporations. Coincidentally, he said, the CEO’s and or their proxies are the huge campaign donors. For example, Jeffrey Immelt, chairman and CEO of Citigroup and GE, leads Obama’s jobs council and also were the funders of more than $1, 7 million (more than others). Morris (2011), blasted this disgraceful corruption that they intern receive massive political investment returns.

Capture theory also falls under bias, according to the capture theory, as propounded by ‘semi sovereign people’ like Schattschneider who showed biasedness’ of the interest groups which affects democracy, where the regulated and the regulators plus the courtiers between lose their objectivity and accede to the needs of the regulated, (Mclaughlin, 2010).

The regulatory capture theory postulates that governments may become incompetent and undemocratic when regulatory agencies fail to follow public interest but rather advances political concerns and the commercial instead of interest groups leading to an disadvantaged society suffering from a ‘captured agencies’ (Amann, 2006). Scholars such as Adams & Hayes (2007) argued that this occurs because individuals or groups with a huge interest focus their energy in attempting to produce outcomes they prefer.

Within the capture theory, there is also materialist capture, which is the financial sector (Frank, 2010). In this case, the captured regulator’s main interests are material things. This mainly results from revolving doors, political donations; bribery and the desire to continue obtain funding from the government.

Some interest groups might have much greater influence over others. Some interest groups such as business corporations might have adequate resources such as funds to hire expertise, lawyers and have enough money (power), (Sirota, 2004). It now becomes difficult for interest groups such as charities which do not have much resources and knowledge to influence the government. The assumptions of pluralist views are that influence is equal but practically those rich influence policies, which benefits them. The government may also choose to ignore interest groups, which does not support them, and its political characteristics.

Pluralist theory also faces a negative impact by estimating the aptitude of interest groups out of traditional elite spheres to essentially effect political outcomes and process (theories of power, 2005). In this case, scholars such as (Jacobs, 2005) who postulates that not all interest groups has the ability to influence political decisions oppose it but authority lies within those with resources and money. More so, according to study conducted by Gilens (2008), policy outcomes have a habit to tilt towards the wishes of corporations and professional.

Pluralist theory overly relies on power of competition to alleviate economic inequalities and social problems in society according to Gilens (2008). Interest groups have different resources, some not necessarily proportional to their level of support in society.

**Hypothesis**

H1a. Interest groups have a positive role on the quality of democracy in Zimbabwe

H1b. Interest groups have a negative role on the quality of democracy in Zimbabwe

In conclusion, interest groups influenced both positive and negative to democracy throughout the world. More so, theories played an important role in showing how they can influence to democracy. For example, pluralist influences nagetively whilst capture theory influences positively. The next chapter is Methodology which is going to talk about research strategies employed by the researcher in all process of data collection, analysing and presantation.

# METHODOLOGY

This chapter points out methodologies which are going to be used by the researcher in the data gathering processes, analysing and presentation. The methodology comprises strategies, sequence and rules which are vital for research. This thesis is focused on 2015 to 2016 because of minimum time available for the student to complete the thesis. If given must time the student would have covered the period from Zimbabwean independence in 1980.

The researcher is going to use qualitative research to conduct the study. Some may argue that its labour intensity character is negative for research whilst other scholars differs that, its labour intensity nature, and time required is important for this research to clearly find the role played by interest groups in Zimbabwe’s democracy and testing the hypothesis. With the current problems in Zimbabwe caused by the undemocratic government which becomes devious and detrimental to people’s livelihood, the roles of interest groups and pressure groups would be best shown by this methodology which eliminates forms of biasness. According to Creswell, (2009), this methodology will project a dramatic stimulus during the procedure which can be equalled to the Zimbabwean events. This methodology is more vital in the basic social process in this case like democratisation of Zimbabwe.

The researcher is going to use process-tracing and archive research in all process of data gathering, analysis and presentation.

Process tracing, a fundamental tool in qualitative research and analysis. This methodology gives description much attention as a key contributor. According to Lerne (1958) process tracing is a procedure whereby the researcher involves and includes problem-solving forms of evidence in a case that either supports or overturns a given hypothesis. The main concern becomes the sequence and mechanisms in the unfolding causal process hypothesis.

In this case, Collier (2010) said the researcher will focus on noticeable implications of the hypothesis explanations, examining at a deeper level than the theories. The main agenda here, will be the establishment of whether the process or events fits, agree, or oppose those predicted by the explanations, (Gill, Sabin & Schmid, 2005).

Process tracing has disadvantages such as that; it can lead to an infinite regress of studying/ never ending study. However, this is countered by the fact that, all data is not created equal. In process, tracing it is possible for one evidence to support one explanation or disagree with it; the most important thing is its adjudicating contribution on the researcher’s contribution Freedman (2010).

The researcher is going to use smoking gun test in evaluating data, it involves a more demanding inference. This test strongly supports a given hypothesis; more so, it does not reject the hypothesis by failing to pass a test. They provide a sufficient but not necessary criterion for confirmation and does not have implications for rival hypotheses (Mahoney, 2010). Some define ‘smoking gun’ as a reference or a fact that serves to give conclusive evidence to a test, crime and or hypothesis. Its name originally derived from finding the smoking gun (a recent fired gun) on the suspicious person wanted for shooting, which in most cases would be steadfast evidence of being guilty, (The Adventure of the Gloria Scott, 1983).

Ventresca (2001), explains Archive research as a type of a primary research that includes extracting and dig out of original records which maybe institutions, business, family or agencies. This research was viewed as time consuming and more complex since it was a prerequisite or the researcher to travel to the place of study to seek original and relevant documents. This methodology was also presumed difficult since one had to go through piles of document to find relevant information and some in foreign language during the pre-internet age. However, with the development of internet, archive research made it through to the internet. This managed to store data online making it easy for researchers to find accurate data without much time consumption. This therefore makes it easy for the researcher to find accurate and enough information on the role of interest groups since a lot activist from different interest groups were storing information some on their blogs, some in newspaper articles, institution archive and government documents.

Mayring (2000) defined qualitative content analysis as an approach of an experiential, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without quantification. The researcher will use content analysis because it permits the researcher to clearly comprehend the social reality in a subject manner. This methodology also allows the researcher to purposively select text and data which is vital for research. The researcher will use basic common principles of democracy to measure the roles of interest groups which are representation, accountability and bias a negative.

The researcher will use a deductive approach or reasoning. According to Babbie (2010), deductive approach is based on an existing theory or concerned on the development of a hypothesis and then project a research approach to test the hypothesis. Deductive research starts with an expected pattern that is tested contrary to observations; this however might lead to a new hypothesis. Results will be grouped into two positive and negative roles obtained within the principles of democracy.

The researcher will also use credible newspapers which were following the roles of interest groups in democracy. These newspapers includes, Herald, Sunday News, Daily News, NewsDay, Southern Eye, BBC, CNN etc. The researcher chose to use vast sources to improve the credibility of the results and to avoid bias. The researcher will use these newspapers because they covered the role of interest groups in Zimbabwe’s democracy; they gave an oath to be non-bias, apolitical and to report stories as they are. These newspapers were on the forefront reporting and recording the roles of interest groups, and the researcher can easily find the information required for this study since everything is stored within the newspaper archives and easily accessible on internet.

The Herald is a state owned and is the largest Zimbabwean newspaper founded in 1980 under a joint venture and it publishes nine newspaper titles, two magazines and one regional newspaper (Herald, 2016). The company publishes papers, which includes The Manica Post, The Chronicle, Sunday news, The Sunday Mail, Herald etc. This is a state owned company and the researcher will use its papers since it publishes the roles of interest groups in democracy. Some may criticize this move but within the government there are some members of parliament from opposition parties which may help in reducing the levels of biasing.

Newsday is the first independent paper founded in 2003 but started publishing in 2010 due to the harsh political environment which supressed it. It is published by Alpha Media Housing with three other papers which are The Zimbabwean Independent, a business paper and Southern Eye which are free from all political ties or any outside influence (Newsday, 2010).

BBC news channel is a 24 hour news service based in UK responsible for broadcasting breaking news worldwide. The channel has been running since 1989 BBC (2016), the researcher preferred to use it because it also covers the role of interest groups in Zimbabwe on neutral grounds.

CNN (Cable News Network) is an American satellite television founded in 1980. It has branches in Africa and all over the world, the researcher selected it because is also reported the roles of interest groups in Zimbabwe’s democracy.

Table 3.1 is an example of the coding system used by the researcher. The results chapter will be based on this coding system. The researcher will group the results part into two sections namely positive and negative roles of interest groups in democracy of Zimbabwe guided by basic fundamentals of democracy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Examples on the Impacts of interest groups on Democracy** | |
| **Positive role of interest groups** | **Negative role of interest groups** |
| ZIMLA Representing undemocratically evicted vendors (representation and accountability) | CFU was involved in corrupt actives; it represented and benefitted the rich at the expense of the poor. |
| ZIIPLA leading to recognition of minority languages (representation and accountability) | Campaign finance: GALS funding opposition party |
| Favouritism (Bias): GMB favouring farmers aligned to the ruling party |
| Human Rights Watch campaigned for Separation of powers (accountability) | Interest groups maintaining harmful a client relationship with the government such as the CFU (policy monopoly). |
| NERA pressing the government and the high court for electoral reforms |
| Politicising of interest groups |

## **Table 3.1**

On the left side, there are positive roles such as representation done by interest groups in trying to achieve democracy or securing democracy. For example, in the table, the researcher mentions that ZIMLA represented evicted vendors to ensure their safety and protection by the law (more is explained in the results chapter. ZIPLA also represented minorities during policy making for recognition of minority languages.

Another example is accountability practiced by interest groups in ensuring transparency and democracy of the government. For example, NERA is pushing for election reforms to ensure accountability during elections. Another example is separation of powers; interest groups campaigned on behalf of people for separation of powers.

Lastly, there is bias or negative roles on the right side. For example some interest groups become corrupt in trying to benefit from policy decision process. More so, Interest groups may maintain a client relationship with the government which benefits a few interest groups which may be undemocratic in some cases.

The next chapter is going to show Results (data presentation) found by the researcher. The researcher used techniques explained on this chapter. Most of the data was found in newspapers, and the information was enough since they captured and stored all information required.

# RESULTS

This chapter intend to show data presentation and analyses. It focuses on the presentation of data and analysis obtained from research techniques mentioned in the previous methodology chapter. It seeks to show the role of interest groups in democracy of Zimbabwe. Results will be grouped into two sections which are the positive roles of interest groups and negative roles of interest groups in democracy.

## **Positive roles of interest groups**

Interest groups played an important role in representing minority groups on language issues. In Zimbabwe only English, Shona and Ndebele were recognised by the constitution as official languages omitting minorities such as Tonga, Chewa, Venda, Kalanga, Ndau, Xhosa etc. Omitting these languages further increased divisions and levels of discrimination against minorities. However, lobby groups such as Zimbabwe Indigenous Languages Promotion Association (ZIPLA) was successful in representing for these languages (Ndlovu, 2015). The Chairperson of ZIPLA, Dube, confirmed the development that these languages were now recognised under the supreme Law of Zimbabwe and platforms were put in place for their development.

The Associations of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) Zimbabwean church associations, held a conference and a march against a bill which intended to suppress all human rights NGOs and church-based charities in 2015 (Pyati, 2015). This bill Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was unconstitutional crafted by the government with an intention to suppress all associations which were against it. However, church association refuted it and protested against it till it was removed in 2015.

Zimbabwe, a country with about over 80% unemployment rate (Tinhu, 2015), this however led the majority to be self-employed in the informal sector as vendors. However, recently the Zimbabwean government authorised the eviction of vendors, confiscating their wares and apprehension. With this move by the government, the Vendors Association (VA) representing all vendors opposed this move by the government. The Zimbabwean Human Rights Commission also chipped in to help the VA with investigations pointing out that this move was clear human rights abuse (Charumbira, 2015).

In 2015, Mugabe was the leader of African Union and he wanted to pull out from the International Criminal Court (ICC) according to (Zhangazha, 2016). This move was going to be detrimental to Zimbabweans since he was going to excessively abuse human rights without prosecution. According to Tshuma (2016), Mugabe escaped prosecution once after Gukurahundi (killing of about 20000 to 30000 people from opposition parties between 1983 and 1987) because there was in accurate proof of death numbers to call it a genocide. Therefore, with exiting the ICC, this gave tantamount fear to people since the International Court will not protect Zimbabweans. All these fears and concerns led interest groups to mount pressure on the African Union (AU) not to let Mugabe to exit the ICC.

Interest groups were successful in advocating and representing people against undemocratic arresting of people by the government. During the recently political discrepancies between the government and some groups’ leaders, rampant unlawful arrests were done by the government to silence opposition (Coalition Zimbabwe, 2016). A public figure Pastor Evan Mawarire was arrested on false accusations which could lead to a life imprisonment. According to an interest group called Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), this was a massive human’s rights abuse by the government, arresting individuals undemocratically. This however led over 100 lawyers from ZLWR volunteering to represent Evan Mawarire an activist, and they successfully freed him and he was granted asylum in America.

Interest groups took a major role in representing people against favouritism and nepotism by the president himself. Mugabe recently appointed his son in law (Simba Chikore) as Chief Operating Officer of Air Zimbabwe. This appointment was perceived as below board and on political bias by business organisations. Interest groups criticize this move saying he (Simba) does not have any known management track record (Daily news, 2016), the transport Minister (Gumbo) was pressed by interest groups and failed dismal to defend the son-in-law’s appointment. Mugabe was further condemned he is not willing to revive the government parastatal but only concerned with milking a few money left with the state owned company.

Zimbabwe coalition, held the government of Zimbabwe responsible for human rights abuses. Zimbabwe Teachers Association (ZIMTA) led a shutdown for all civil servants in Zimbabwe (Newsday, 2016). This is also termed as a “national shutdown”, whereby all civil servants stayed home in protest after undemocratically shifting of pay dates by the government after ZIMTA alleged the government of mismanagement of funds and corruption. The government of Zimbabwe unilaterally decided to shift civil servant salaries willy-nilly, singling out a few like the army and police departments. This move however led ZIMTA and interest groups to perform an incapacitation off their duties until the obligations were met. ZIMTA secretary general confirmed this development saying,” we have decided to call it incapacitation because the workers have taken out loans to augment their salaries that the government has since failed to pay on time”, so it’s a prerequisite to push them (Mlilo, 2016).

Interest groups known as Tajamuka and Thisflag challenged pandemic of corruption within the government which led to its leaders being arrested. They challenged corruption after the president of Zimbabwe publicly announced that the government lost about 15 billion from diamond revenue to the Chinese mine firms (Magaisa, 2016). This however did not go well with these interest groups leaders who in turn called for strikes and national shutdown. By this move the government falsely arrested them with biased accusations with a treason sentence (Matsilele, 2016). Furthermore this led to lawyers form the Zimbabwe Lawyers of Human Rights volunteering to represent interest group leaders challenging the government. More than 50 lawyers volunteered to represent them leading to their freedom. So by this move, interest groups held the government to account for their false accusations and challenged the judiciary system controlled by the government.

More so, under accountability, National electoral Reform Association (NERA) performed a huge role in Challenging the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) to level political playing field (Mushava, 2016). According to the interest group, ZEC is accused of working hand in hand with state security apparatus to exasperate the enactment of critical electoral reforms. After the first meeting, the Zimbabwean police force (controlled by the ruling party) banned their meeting saying they were illegal. However these pressure groups appealed this ruling to the Supreme Court and later on held demonstrations against the ban. Electoral reforms is changing the electoral scheme to improve how the masses wishes are expressed in election results.

Interest groups such as United Nations Population Fund (UNPFA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Zimbabwe contributes in democracy by observing, monitoring and evaluating elections. With the fast approaching elections in 2018, the interest groups are making sure that there are laws or election Act which allows transparent elections, independent voter education programs easy access to public media Chidza (2016). This role will empower citizens on information which allows a smooth election process. These interest groups are there to monitor and report any cases of intimidation, voter abuse and any riggings. They will be active in all phases of elections which are the pre-election phase, polling Day and post-election. This is important in democracy because people will be able to select a lead of their choice. These interest groups are proving ZEC with funds to make sure there are enough materials and resources for fair elections.

Activist groups such as Tajamuka, Humans Rights groups and National vendors Union held the government accountable for Mphoko’s (Vice president) stay in hotel permanently. Mphko is staying in a hotel with his since 2014; groups saying it is a wastage and misuse of government funds, which should be used for other development activities, criticized this move. The government didn’t agree with these groups which lead to clash, revolts and arresting of these interest groups leaders.

Interest groups such as the Zimbabwe Chamber of Informal Economy Associations (ZCIEA) has taken roles to challenges unfavourable government laws. According to Newsday (2016), this is a small interest group with a mandate of empowering marginalised operators, to establish, promote, organise and protect the needs of the informal sector. This group managed to fight government policies which does not protect or support the informal sector. Though the government had previously destroyed their infrastructure and properties they did not stop lobbying for policies which protects their rights. However, according to Mahove (2016), the Zimbabwean Informal Sector Organisation (ZISO) succeeded through the high to stop the army which was being used by the government to evict the informal traders.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has taken responsibility in urging the government to ensure that all residents who were evicted should not be denied their rights such as shelter, health and food as indicated in the international law (Mbanje, 2017). This year around much the first family (president and family) occupied a huge farm (Arnold’s farms), evicting families who stayed there, many of them becoming destitutes after losing their livestock and properties. However this move was largely criticised and challenged by HRW, commanding the government to compensate the former residents. The HRW director Mr Dewa also approached the courts to conduct investigations on police brutality and abuses. He further said that these a dictator tendencies to evacuate these people unlawful who stayed in the farm for 17 years.

Interest groups and most Zimbabweans were outraged by the appointment of Simba Chikore (president’s son-in law), to a top position at Air Zimbabwe (state owned Airline and the only airline in Zimbabwe) Mawarire (2016). This move had been controversial and viewed as problematic to the already struggling airline since he is said to be unqualified and inexperienced for the position. The pro-democracy groups would spoke to Newsday cried-foul saying that Zimbabwe is now like a Mugabe’s private limited company. HRW’s director Dewa challenged this move representing people that this move should be referred to the Human Rights Commission and Anti-corruption commission for in-depth investigation. On top of this drama, Air Zimbabwe flights have been recently banned from Europe due to safety concerns.

Again, recently there has been an uproar by Zimbabwean interest groups towards the appointment of Bona in the censorship board. Bona Mugabe is the daughter of Zimbabwean president, and this appointment is said to be a heads-up to a Mugabe dynast. Human rights groups, Art groups and the entertained sector castigated this appointment, firstly, because she doesn’t have any qualifications and secondly, that it’s a way of censoring and suppressing voice of the music, entertainment and arts industry who would want to speak against the government Mhako (2017). These interest groups blasted this moved saying that Mugabe is desperately placing his family on influencing positions to protect themselves against dissenting artists Silvanos (2017).

It is quite clear that these interest groups were trying to bring the aspect of democracy to life by challenging undemocratic tendencies of the government. These interest groups acted as a watchdog of the government on behalf of their members and all people. These interest groups represented people, held the government accountable for its inappropriate actions and pushed the government to upheld rule of law.

## **Negative role of interest groups in democracy**

The majority of farmer’s interest groups within the Joint Farmers Unions Council ‘which comprises all different farmers’ interest groups’ in Zimbabwe has been involved in discrepancies and conflicts towards the Commercial Farmers Union (CFU). The CFU ‘which comprises mostly rich members and some politicians’, was being accused of being corrupt and using their resources to lure for polices which from the government which are beneficiary to themselves only (Madzingira, 2015). CFU lobbed for the removal accumulating electricity bills for all farmers within the Joint Farmers Unions, but however taking a closer look, it was discovered that only Farmers from the CFU had debts which had accumulated to hundred thousand’s whilst other small farmers unions didn’t have any debt. So this was a corrupt move lobbed by the CFU.

The role of these Farmers interest groups was criticised by some individuals since it was negative to democracy and it impacted badly on Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) ‘energy sector’ and to innocent civilians which are not affiliated with any Interest group. This move of slushing electricity debt resulted to poor performance by ZESA, high load shedding, people could go for sixteen hours without electricity (DailyNews, 2015). Currently ZESA owes the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe about $180 million due to the move by CFU (Bulawayo 24news, 2016)

Some scholars blasted the activities of interest groups in democracy due to its funding. Some NGOs and Civil Society Organisations are being funded by western countries to distort Zimbabwean policies, culture and traditions. Samba (2015) argued that NGOs such as GALS and IRIN are being funded by America to push for gays and Lesbians rights. He further argued that Zimbabwean people under democratic means elected for a constitution against gay rights but however the NGOs are pushing for the rights undemocratically.

Narrower interest groups such as Bankers Associations were blasted since they represent narrower people. Recently the government introduced ‘bond notes’ to supplement money shortages. This idea was largely opposed by majority of Zimbabweans through protests, marching and public debates (Kadungure, 2016). All these efforts were not fruitful on stopping the government from introducing Bond Notes because they had a backing from the banking sector. This was a negative role of interest groups since the majority had since publicly denied these bond notes.

Some small interest groups in the informal sector have been blasted that they are a haven for corrupt politicians. According to Mkudu (2016), Illegal pesticides and medicines and various products continue to find entrance in the informal sector. Most of these traders did not have licences; they owed their survival and protection to political protection. All this was detrimental to local manufacturing sector which was battling to survive since it was corruption and they did not pay taxes. Some of the traders who refused to be named agreed that there are big officials behind them and that’s why the government was not arresting them.

The fact that Zimbabwe is in the middle of an economic downfall, it makes it difficult for smaller groups to pursue interest of their members which is a disadvantage of democracy. Many small interest groups are not able to raise funds, which helps them to pursue policy change in the democratic processes. Interest groups representing small indigenous companies are failing to influence policies, which protects local companies because they do not have many resources. This is because Zimbabwe is importing most of its products, and most companies are foreign owned and their governments that in turn effect local companies negatively which are not subsided by the government support them.

Interest groups in Zimbabwe are mostly affected by revolving door to achieve democracy. In Zimbabwe, there is ‘democratic deficit’, it is all about who do you know, who sent you and how much are you paying.

Politicisation of interest groups affect democracy largely. It becomes a tag of war between interest groups and government officials trying to maintain a status quo. In Zimbabwe, it became a norm that interest groups have one role of changing policies whilst the government are suppressing them. This is bad for democracy, mostly when elephants fight; it is the grass which suffers most. In this case, it is the people being represented which are suffering.

The World Bank Group contributed to a negative role of democracy in Zimbabwe. It further supported IMF, World Bank and America to continue with their economic sanctions against Zimbabwe (Newsday, 2015). This intern increased tensions and divisions on economic and political grounds in Zimbabwe. The opposition parties were pushing for the government to reform whilst the government wanted to maintain a status quo.

Foreign owned Business Associations contributed much to rampant corruption in Zimbabwe through bribing government officials for policies which benefits them (Herald, 2016). After the local business forum pushed for a Protectionism policy (imposing duties and quotas on imports and foreign companies to protect home industries), foreign companies felt they were threatened and they started to bribe government officials. According to the Guardian (2015), Zimbabwean officials were bribed more than 2bn by diamond mining firms and associations through funding their political rallies and donations. Therefore, this was detrimental to Zimbabwean democracy and to the role of interest groups pushing for democracy.

It is clear that whenever mining companies want to operate, there should be environmental checks, evaluations and considerations. However, it was not the case in Zimbabwe. Environmental groups were on the forefront being corrupt on behalf of the mining companies and other business. For example, Zimbabwe rectified a policy to protect and preserve all wetlands under the Ramsar Convention (Pressreader, 2016). Nevertheless, when the Chinese bribed both environmental agents and government officials, they were approved to go ahead to build their mall on wetlands with a defence that Chinese people are good at construction (Newsday, 2016).

Another major shortcoming of interest groups in Zimbabwe is they did not meet their capacity to practice and to represent its members fully. Interest group’s main purpose is to represent and to influence policy. However, in Zimbabwe, interest groups does not have enough capital, which makes them prone to corruption. Interest groups such Humans Rights Watch lacked the capacity to monitor elections which is a short come to democracy because later on, there were accusations that elections were rigged but without proof (Sogge, 2015).

Generally, interest groups in Zimbabwe suffers from politicization. It’s really hard to separate interest groups from opposition parties for example the first opposition political party MDC came for an interest group (trade union). That means they become largely dependent on these opposition parties and they will not enjoy a mean full autonomy in terms of crafting their own agendas (Richard, 2016). It is as if they are another hand/ sector of the opposition parties, which is a negative role in democracy.

The researcher managed to gather all data required for this thesis. All roles by interest groups both positive and negative where shown in this chapter. The following chapter is going to show recommendations and conclusion based on the results from this chapter.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that vast interest groups in Zimbabwe played major roles which affected democracy both positively and negatively. Interest groups have a mandate to influence policy but in doing so, their ways and actions might be detrimental to democracy. It was clear from the research that interest groups in Zimbabwe played a balanced role or mixed role in democracy (both positive and negative).

In Zimbabwe, the researcher discovered that the role of interest groups is largely affected by corruption. It is either the interest groups are being corrupt, using illegal methods to gain popularity and influence polices than others or the politicians will be using the interest groups to push for policies that benefits themselves or their circle. More so, due to Africa’s situation, some interest groups are being influenced by western countries to push for a regime change agenda. By so doing, these western countries provide excess funds to those interest groups executing policies for the removal or the current regime.

Another problems faced by interest groups is the authority of the government. The Zimbabwean president controls the parliament, the executive and the judiciary. These interest groups operates on the groups ruled and controlled by the government, and they have a mandate to observe rules and regulations enforced by the government. However this in turn prevents the interest groups to operate at their full potential capacity because the government can squash anything (any interest group) in its way. The government can insert laws which prohibits interest groups to fully represent the people, which means the interest groups are toothless bulldog.

The researcher discovered that interest groups are the major drivers of democracies and have the major capability to influence democracy positively but with Zimbabwe it is not that case. They are on the leading role in terms of corruption, biased representation and they are failing to hold the government accountable. One may say it is because of the nature of African politics which put politicians first before everyone.

The researcher managed to find that somehow it might be a tag of war between western funded interest groups trying to influence policies of a corrupt government, though there are local funded interest groups with their negative agendas also.

The researcher recommends that interest groups should focus on their mandatory agendas of representing its members and desist from being corrupt. Interest groups roles are easily manipulated since they need resources to function normally so most of them end up being corrupt and accepting bribes. So the researcher recommends those interest groups doing that to be role models of the society and become the driving force of democracy since they have the capacity to be.

The researcher also recommends for the government of Zimbabwe to decentralize the political power to locals. By decentralization, it allows vast interest groups to operate on a bottom up approach of grassroots approach where smaller interest groups are given chances to influence policies from local structures. This will enables smaller interest groups or those without a large financial base to cover policy areas of the poor, minorities and marginalised which will later grow to national organisations.

More so, the researcher feels it will be better for Zimbabwean democracy if the government and interest groups push for separation of powers. All the authority lies in the hands of the president of Zimbabwe, this can be said to be a negative impact of democracy. Interest groups are failing to influence policy because at the end, it will be the president to approve or deny the policy.

It would reduce corruption if interest groups does not donate funds to politician or campaigns. It’s clear from the above discussion that rich or even poor interest groups influences policies by donating money to politicians. The researcher would recommend registered voters to do the funding or public funding to avoid secret funding of politicians. There should also be a maximum amount which interest groups would offer in policy implementation.

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