



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN  
*Department of Administration and Organization Theory*

# **AORG351**

**Master's Thesis in Administration and Organizational Science**

**“There is a Spy on the Campus”**

**Academic Freedom Under Zimbabwe’s Watchful Government**

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## I. ABSTRACT

Historically, academic freedom has been limited at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), the country's biggest and oldest university. Taking a qualitative approach, the research sought to explore the current academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect primary data. Findings suggest that there are many limitations to academic freedom at UZ with one of the biggest ones being self-censorship which happens in the context of a widely held belief among students and faculty members that they are under state surveillance.

## II. DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Joana Ruvimbo Mamombe, a family friend and former leader in the Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), an organization that advocates for academic freedom in Zimbabwe.

### III. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks go to Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond (SAIH) and Norsk Studentorganisasjon (NSO), the student organizations which lobbied for the Students at Risk (STAR) Scholarship without which I would not have undertaken this degree or written this thesis. I would be remiss if I failed to acknowledge Tor Halvorsen, my patient supervisor who allowed me to complete my research at a moderate pace as opposed to rushing me which may have resulted in half-baked work. Finally, I thank God – through Whom all things are possible – for giving me the opportunity to embark on this academic journey which has culminated in the writing of my thesis.

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## VI. RESEACHER'S BACKGROUND

I am a former national spokesperson of Zimbabwe National Students' Union (ZINASU), Zimbabwe's biggest students' union which, among other things, advocates for academic freedom. I have contributed articles on academic freedom in Zimbabwe to the University World News, a prominent international news site on higher education. My involvement with ZINASU and contributions to University World News mean that prior to this research, I engaged with the concept of academic freedom in a way that resulted in me having pre-held views about academic freedom in Zimbabwe. Such views include the belief that academic freedom is limited in Zimbabwe and that the government plays a major role in impeding it. To ensure that these biases did not influence this research, several measures were taken. First of all, the questions used to gather data were set before field work and reviewed by peers to ensure that they were neutral. Second, a deliberate attempt was made to report all data, including data which goes against my pre-held views. Evidence of such reporting can be found in the findings chapter which contains both responses that promote my pre-held views, and those that are of a contrary nature. Furthermore, information that is contrary to my pre-held views found in the literature was discussed in the research.

## VII. LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AIPPA</b>	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act
<b>CIO</b>	Central Intelligence Organization
<b>PAC</b>	Presidential Advisory Council
<b>POLAD</b>	Political Actors Dialogue
<b>POSA</b>	Public Order and Security Act
<b>SAIH</b>	Studentenes og Akademikernes Internasjonale Hjelpfond
<b>SAR</b>	Scholars at Risk
<b>SST</b>	Student Solidarity Trust
<b>UCRN</b>	University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland
<b>UDI</b>	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
<b>UZ</b>	University of Zimbabwe
<b>ZANU-PF</b>	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
<b>ZICOSU</b>	Zimbabwe Congress of Student Unions
<b>ZIMASSET</b>	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation
<b>ZINASU</b>	Zimbabwe National Students’ Union
<b>ZRP</b>	Zimbabwe Republic Police

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.2. Research problem

There is limited academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), according to literature on the topic. This is mainly due to politicization of the university, lack of institutional autonomy, thwarting of dissent by the government and inhibitive policies among other things. The problem has been researched by numerous scholars. Nonetheless, this study takes a different approach which will be explained in the section focusing on justification of the study. In the context of Zimbabwe, academic freedom is used to criticize government performance and keep general citizens abreast of governance issues through research and informed opinions. It is therefore imperative to research and understand the dynamics around academic freedom at UZ. The topic was explored through a qualitative approach which entailed interviewing informants and seeking responses on how academic freedom is being treated at the university.

## 1.3. Study background

Background information on a study shows what is known about a topic and discusses the research problem in relation to existing literature (Labaree, 2020). The research problem is that there is limited academic freedom at UZ. According to Gukurume, the reasons for this are lack of institutional autonomy, politicization of the university and surveillance of students and faculty members (Gukurume, 2019). Cheater echoes Gukurume's sentiments on politicization of the university and goes as far as questioning whether UZ is simply a university, state university or a party university (Cheater, 1991).

Majoni conducted research on three universities including University of Zimbabwe. He found that there were challenges affecting university teaching and learning, namely, outdated books and lack of computer hardware and software among other things. He also found that poor internet connectivity affects research and that universities were under funded (Majoni, 2014).

There are some scholars, however, who maintain that academic freedom is respected in Zimbabwe. According to Mlambo and Chitando, "while the Zimbabwean State has been

demonized for suppressing the freedom of its citizens, in this article we have maintained that, surprisingly, academic freedom remains alive and well” (Chitando, 2014). Mlambo and Chitando said academics are in total control of the selection of course content and that the government does not interfere with them because they do not pose a serious threat to its power (Chitando, 2014).

All in all, these are some of the main findings and arguments contained in literature on academic freedom which applies to the University of Zimbabwe. Prior research suggests that there are a lot of factors that are negatively affecting academic freedom at UZ. Some scholars, however, like Chitando and Mlambo, argue that in general, academic freedom is respected in Zimbabwe.

#### **1.4. Justification of the study**

None of the literature on the topic explores how academic freedom is treated in different spheres of education at Zimbabwe’s universities. This research divides UZ into social science, natural science and humanities which are the three cultures of education as proposed by Kagan (Kagan, 2009). The research collects information from students and faculty members belonging to faculty of arts (representing humanities), faculty of social studies (representing social science) and numerous science faculties (representing natural science). The assumption is that academic freedom may be treated differently in these various cultures of education owing to the nature of topics students and faculty members grapple with in each sphere. In as far as academic freedom in Zimbabwe is concerned, the approach of splitting the university into different cultures of education in order to collect data pertaining to each sphere is unique to this research. Studies done so far have produced generic results that do not expose possible differences in various spheres of education. This research aims to fill this literature gap.

#### **1.5. Scope of the study**

Scope of the study pertains to what the research covers (Simon & Goes, 2013). This research explores the concept of academic freedom within the context of a public university, namely the University of Zimbabwe. It does not study academic freedom within broader society. It discusses general information relevant to the topic but it has a particular interest in barriers to

academic freedom which are based on human intention. This is because the research views academic freedom as negative liberty and as will be explained in the theory section, negative liberty mainly focuses on barriers that prevent liberty from being enjoyed. Furthermore, some negative liberty theorists concentrate on barriers based on human intention and their views were found to be in line with the research's overarching theoretical assumption.

## 1.6. Research questions

According to Cresswell, "In a qualitative study, inquirers state research questions, not objectives (i.e., specific goals for the research) or hypotheses (i.e., predictions that involve variables and statistical tests). These research questions assume two forms: (a) a central question and (b) associated sub questions" (Cresswell, 2014, p. 139). This research has one central and three sub questions.

The main research question is:

**What is the general academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe?**

In addition to this central question, the study attempts to answer three sub questions:

- In what way is institutional autonomy treated at the university?
- How are current policies relevant in the academic freedom discourse at the university?
- How does the government treat academic freedom at the university?

## 1.7. Organization of the thesis

This chapter serves as the introduction of the thesis. It will be followed by a review of the literature and discussion of theory in chapter two, reporting of methods in chapter three and presentation of findings in chapter four. The findings will be discussed in chapter five.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1. Introduction

“A literature review is the analysis, critical evaluation and synthesis of existing knowledge relevant to your research problem” (Hart, 2018, p. 3). This chapter looks at literature on academic freedom in general before zeroing in on the University of Zimbabwe which is the case study. First, various definitions of academic freedom will be interrogated. Second, major arguments on academic freedom posed by different schools of thought will be analyzed. Lastly, literature on academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe will be explored.

### 2.2. Academic freedom defined

Many definitions of academic freedom answer at least one or more of these five questions: what is academic freedom, how is it practised, where is it practised, who can enjoy it, why should it be enjoyed (it’s aim)? The ideal definition of academic freedom is one that answers most if not all of these questions. The extent to which a definition addresses these questions forms the basis for selecting the working definition of academic freedom for this thesis.

According to Downs, academic freedom “is the freedom of scholars to pursue the truth in a manner consistent with professional standards of inquiry. It applies to institutions as well as scholars, and to students as well as faculty” (Downs, 2009, p. 2). It is not clear exactly what Downs means by the truth, but the term has been understood to mean factual knowledge; “professional standards of enquiry” has been understood to mean the general rubric of scholarly conduct such as the need for reliability in research. Downs’ definition answers three of the five questions outlined in the beginning of this section: he classifies what academic freedom is by calling it “a freedom”, he presents its aim as “pursuance of the truth” and specifies who can enjoy it, namely institutions, students, scholars and faculty. His definition, however, does not answer where academic freedom can be enjoyed and how it can be practised.

Chitando and Mlambo, who quote Steven Biko in their definition, maintain that academic freedom is “the freedom to “think, teach, express and write what one likes” (Biko 1978) in an

autonomous university” (Chitando, 2014, p. 35). Just like the previous one, this definition satisfactorily answers three questions. It outlines what academic freedom is (a freedom), how it is practised (through thinking, teaching, expressing and writing) and where it is enjoyed (an autonomous university). The definition is not very specific in answering the question “who enjoys academic freedom”. Furthermore, the definition omits the aim of academic freedom which the Lima Declaration and Downs present as pursuance of truth or knowledge. Because of this omission, practices that do not seek to further pursuance of knowledge fit the bill “academic freedom” under Chitando and Mlambo’s definition. For instance, if it is occurring within an “autonomous university”, the writing of meaningless graffiti on the walls of a building can be referred to as academic freedom. Under a proper definition, however, which includes the aim of academic freedom, an individual who is not engaged in the pursuance of knowledge such as a person writing senseless graffiti cannot be said to be exercising academic freedom.

According to the Lima declaration “academic freedom means the freedom of the members of the academic community, individually or collectively, in the pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge, through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, learning and writing. Academic community covers all those persons teaching, studying, researching and working at an institution of higher learning” (WUS 1988, p. 2). The table below shows how this definition answers all of the five questions outlined in the beginning of this section by matching each question with the part of the definition that addresses it.

*Table 1: Lima Declaration Definition of Academic Freedom*

<b>What is academic freedom</b>	<b>How is academic freedom practised</b>	<b>Where is academic freedom practised</b>	<b>Who can enjoy it</b>	<b>Why should it be enjoyed (It’s aim)</b>
“Freedom”	“through research, study, discussion, documentation, production, creation, teaching, learning and writing”	“at an institution of higher learning”	“the academic community”	“pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge”



Because the Lima Declaration's definition of academic freedom answers all the five questions outlined in the beginning of this section (unlike the other definitions), it is the working definition for academic freedom for this thesis.

### **2.3. Key debates on academic freedom**

This section presents and adds a voice to some of the most prominent debates on academic freedom. The debates touch on necessity of academic freedom, how academic freedom ought to be treated by governments and whether it should apply to everyone or academics only.

#### **2.3.1. Is academic freedom necessary?**

Moodie argues that in a truly liberal society, academic freedom is not necessary since academics enjoy freedom of speech, thought, assembly and conscience (some of the rights that make up academic freedom) by mere virtue of being citizens (Moodie, 1996). Williams acknowledges that citizens and academics share common freedoms but maintains academic freedom is still necessary because scholars need additional protection due to the nature of their job which involves challenging views held by senior colleagues (Williams, 2016). This view is opposed by Ladenson who claims the advent of academic freedom occurred in a time when rights in the workplace were not recognized but since that time "the greatly enhanced expansion of employee rights afforded by collective bargaining, civil service, equal opportunity statutes and the like has enormously changed the prevailing climate of opinion" (Ladenson, 1986). In other words, Ladenson is claiming that special protection of academics in the workplace cannot be a basis for academic freedom since all workers, academics included, now have protection. Put somewhat differently, according to Ladenson, the conditions which necessitated the push for academic freedom as a means to protect scholars in the workplace are no longer present.

Moodie and Ladenson's arguments would have been good rebuttals against the necessity of academic freedom except they are context specific. Moodie's argument only applies if a country is truly liberal, Ladenson's is based on one country – the United States of America. This limits applicability of their views to other contexts. For instance, Moodie's argument that academic freedom is not necessary in truly liberal societies does not apply to authoritarian

countries because they are the opposite of liberal. Similarly, Ladenson's argument that improved workers' rights remove the necessity of academic freedom does not apply to all countries because not all countries have the same exact workers' rights as the United States of America, the country he focuses on in his arguments. Academic freedom is thus necessary in some countries because not all countries are liberal or have the type of workers' rights that make academic freedom unnecessary.

### 2.3.2. Should academic freedom apply to scholars only or everyone?

Definitions of academic freedom interrogated in previous sections present it as a right meant for scholars and other players within a university set-up. Many scholars, however, challenge this notion. Forte argues that academic freedom should not be held as the "inviolable, paramount and absolute right of a privileged few" (Forte 2009, as cited in Fish, 2014, p. 112).

Fish aptly interprets Forte's argument to mean "everyone's contribution should be taken seriously and everyone should be guaranteed the freedom to speak out without fear of retaliation" (Fish, 2014, p. 112). It is important to note that Forte does not argue against the necessity of academic freedom but argues for it to be a universal right as opposed to being a preserve of the few. A similar but perhaps more complex argument is presented by Moodie. Referring to religious and economic freedom he states: "the former nowadays is not about the freedom of priests nor the latter about the freedom of economists; both are about the freedom to carry out certain activities - for example, to worship or to buy and sell in the market - and their distinction lies, not in the people who enjoy the freedoms, who may in fact be the same individuals, but in the activities protected" (Moodie, 1996, p. 133).

Moodie's submissions bring to the fore a very important question: should academic freedom be given to individual scholars or it should be conferred to those engaging in academic activities regardless of their profession? The answer lies in giving academic freedom to both but under different frameworks. Academic freedom enjoyed by scholars should have additional job protection since academics have to challenge their superiors. Academic freedom given to everyone else, on the other hand, should solely be based on the activities they are pursuing which have to be of an academic nature.

### 2.3.3. Academic freedom versus academic justice

Perhaps one of the most interesting discussions on academic freedom in modern times is about academic justice, which some scholars say should replace academic freedom. Williams traces the term academic justice to a Harvard student who used it in a campus newspaper (Williams, 2016).

Butler argues that academic freedom ought to be disregarded in favor of basic human rights when the two are at logger heads (Butler 2006, as cited in Williams, 2016). She states: “The right to live, and freedom from subjugation and colonial rule, to name a few, must be of more import than academic freedom. If the latter contributes in any way to suppression of the former, more fundamental rights, it must give way. If the struggle to attain the former necessitates a level of restraint on the latter, then so be it”. (Butler, 2006b, as cited in Williams, 2016, p. 177). In other words, Butler argues that there is some sort of pyramid where rights are concerned, and that academic freedom is lower than what are considered basic human rights. In Butler’s view, academic freedom can thus not be allowed to prevail in cases where it contributes to suppression of basic rights “in any way.” In essence, what Butler captures in her arguments is what academic justice is all about: putting certain ethical considerations, which sometimes come in the form of basic human rights protection, before academic freedom and possibly undermining it for “ethical reasons”.

The problem with this approach is that it is unclear: in which exact instances should academic freedom be undermined and who makes this decision? It is one thing to say, as Butler does, that if academic freedom contributes to the suppression of basic rights “in any way”, it should be sidelined; putting this into practice, however, is an entirely different matter. Exactly how is contribution to the suppression of a basic right measured? Does simple discussion of, say, the advantages of colonial subjugation, amount to contribution towards suppression of a basic right even when no such subjugation is taking place? The exercise of deciding which “ethical issues” should result in the suspension of academic freedom is a very political one. Fish argues that the whole concept of academic justice turns academic freedom ‘from a doctrine insulating the academy from politics into a doctrine that demands of academics blatantly political actions’ (Fish, 2013, as cited in Williams, 2016, p. 178). While the concept of academic justice is noble, it cannot be a good replacement for academic freedom if it does not

propose universal ways in which academic freedom ought to be treated when it happens to undermine other rights.

## **2.4. Factors that influence academic freedom**

Multiple scholars present numerous factors they deem to affect academic freedom. Only three were selected for inclusion in this study; how they were selected will be explained in the theory section. In this particular section, the factors are discussed based on what various authors present on them in their literature. The three factors are: type of government in power, institutional autonomy and policy.

### **2.4.1. Type of government in power**

Suwanwela argues that academic freedom is “certainly a part of the human right(s) situation in the country, which depends upon the type of government” (Suwanwela, 2005, p. 7). Suwanwela’s proposition can be broken into two major arguments. The first one is that academic freedom is normally part of the human rights situation in a specific country. That is, if other rights are protected in a certain country, it is likely that academic freedom will also be protected. The second argument, which is connected to the first, is that the human rights situation in a country, including the state of academic freedom, depends on the type of government. By type of government, Suwanwela refers to the various ways in which governments are classified vis a vis how they treat human rights. He specifically makes reference to three types of governments, namely, a totalitarian regime, a democratic government and a hybrid of the two (Suwanwela, 2005). Suwanwela’s observations are, more or less, quite valid. In general, where other rights are abused academic freedom is most likely going to be abused and such abuse may be because a certain type of government is in power. If the type of government in power is democratic, human rights in general, and academic freedom in particular, will most likely be respected. If the type of government is autocratic, the opposite will most likely be true. Countries such as Norway, Sweden and Iceland, which rank high on the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) world democracy index, have a good

human rights and academic freedom track record, countries ranked low on the same index, like North Korea, don't.<sup>1</sup>

This, however, is not always the case. There are countries which rank high on EIU democracy index, like the United Kingdom, where academic freedom is under attack (Williams, 2016). Lack of academic freedom in such countries means Suwanwela's second argument, that respect of academic freedom, and other rights, depend on the type of government in power, is not always correct. While in general there will most likely be respect of human rights in a country headed by a democratic government and oppression in one led by a dictatorship, the example of UK proves that even governments generally held to be democratic can also infringe on academic freedom. This means that in some cases, the type of government in power has no effect on respect of academic freedom: whether a government is democratic or autocratic, academic freedom can still be suppressed. Notwithstanding all this, Suwanwela's arguments, namely the argument that respect of academic freedom in a country depends on the general human rights situation, and that it depends on the type of government in power, still stand, albeit with the observation that though the second argument applies to many countries, it does not apply to all countries.

#### 2.4.2. Institutional autonomy

A concept that is closely linked to, and has a huge bearing on, academic freedom is institutional or university autonomy. It refers to "the freedom for members of the university, acting in a representative capacity and not as individuals, to make decisions about the affairs of the university" (Altbach, 1991, p. 6). Entities that have the potential to encroach on institutional autonomy include the church, government, public or private organizations and individuals. Tight states that "...where institutional autonomy is virtually non-existent, as in centrally planned economies, academic freedom is less likely to exist or be maintained" (Tight, 1988, p. 123). His claim, put somewhat differently, and perhaps made simpler, is that institutional autonomy is a pre-requisite for academic freedom. Academic freedom is about free research and freedom of expression among other rights. If a university does not have enough autonomy to reject unwanted outside interference, it cannot protect these rights which,

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.eiu.com/Handlers/WhitepaperHandler.ashx?fi=Democracy-Index2019.pdf&mode=wp&campaignid=democracyindex2019>

often times, are violated by governments through manipulating weak administrations of universities.

While the norm is to treat academic freedom and institutional autonomy as separate concepts, some scholars conflate the two. One such scholar is Downs who maintains institutional autonomy is one of four types of academic freedom (Downs, 2009). If this approach is taken, it becomes difficult to argue that institutional autonomy is a prerequisite for academic freedom. This is because if institutional autonomy is indeed academic freedom as Downs maintains, it cannot be a prerequisite for its own existence. However, it appears widely accepted, and rightly so, that academic freedom and institutional autonomy are separate concepts with institutional autonomy pertaining to freeness in governing an institution and academic freedom relating to freedom to learn, teach and research for students and academics. One is about institutional management, the other, enjoyment of rights that are directly linked to the pursuance of knowledge.

### 2.4.3. Public policy

Public policy is “anything a government chooses to do or not to do” (Dye, 1972, p. 2). According to Suwanwela “national policies which are set by the government can limit the space for functioning of universities and have effects on academic freedom” (Suwanwela, 2005, p. 8). Examples of policies that limit academic freedom across the world are numerous. Following the rise of terrorism, the Western World – which includes countries in Europe and some parts of America – had a radical shift towards policies that negatively affect academic freedom. In the USA, the Patriot Act passed in 2001 allows federal government officials to request ‘business records’ of booksellers and librarians, thereby revealing academics’ reading material (Streb 2006, p. 9). Academic freedom includes the freedom to conduct research. If an academic’s reading material is monitored their ability to conduct research is affected; scholars become more cautious of what they read. In the United Kingdom, counter terrorism and security legislation built from a strategy called Prevent has drastic effects on academic freedom. According to Williams the Prevent strategy regulates student societies and invitations to external speakers among other things (Williams, 2016). Prevent in the UK makes it possible for the government to bar individuals whose ideas or academic work is

viewed as too radical from being invited to speak on campuses thus negatively impacting academic freedom which is about the free flow of information.

While the biggest reason for threats to academic freedom in the western world seems to be the need to maintain national security, in the global south, it appears to be the need to prop up the government in power. As such, at the policy level, the western world has policies designed to thwart terrorism which negatively affect academic freedom and in the global south governments have policies designed to thwart dissent which adversely impact free research and sharing of ideas. An example is the 1975 amendment of the University and University College Act of Malaysia which allows the government to prevent academics and students from political involvement of any sort, including affiliation to any political party or trade union (Suwanwela, 2005). This ensures that the political authority of the government remains unquestioned by the academic community.

Not all policies, however, affect academic freedom negatively, some are designed to protect it. For instance, sections one to five of the Norwegian Act relating to Universities and University Colleges are meant to protect academic freedom in Norway (Forskerforbundet, 2017). The Education Reform Act of 1988, on paper, safeguards academic freedom in the United Kingdom.<sup>2</sup> It captures some of the most vital elements of academic freedom such as the freedom to express oneself and the importance of promoting research and learning. However, legislation to promote academic freedom in the UK is cancelled out by policies that inhibit it as noted in earlier sections.

The way public policy has been defined i.e. what a government chooses to do or not to do, means that there are few instances, that is if there are any, under which academic freedom is not affected by policy. Even where a government has no policies on paper that directly have a bearing on academic freedom, all its actions that affect the concept can still be regarded as public policy. Being that as it may, it is important to note that while many policies may provide for academic freedom on paper, there may be failure to implement them as illustrated with the example of UK. Nonetheless, even such failure is public policy according to Dye's

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/40/part/II/chapter/I>

definition of the concept. Both success and failure in policy implementation result in public policy that affects academic freedom either negatively or positively.

## **2.5. Academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe**

This section explores the state of academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe. It provides a historical background before focusing on the following elements: policies, police presence on campus and surveillance, the nexus between the state presidency and university administration. The elements were selected due to their prominence in literature and the fact that they provide insight into the state of academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe.

### **2.5.1. Historical background**

Zimbabwe, formerly known as Rhodesia, was a British colony from the 1880s to 1980 (Raftopoulos, 2009). Simmering racial tensions existed between the white settlers and the black majority. It was against this background that the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (UCRN), now known as the University of Zimbabwe (UZ), was formed. It existed during two distinct periods of the colonial era: the period preceding the unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) and the post UDI period. The pre-UDI period was characterized by survival of the university in a federal environment where it was expected to cater for the educational needs of three countries, namely, Southern Rhodesia, Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. This, however, ended with UDI which saw the Rhodesian government cutting ties with the British empire under which it had previously fallen.

While what is now known as the University of Zimbabwe was formally established in 1955, the idea of the university dates as far back as World War II when a group of white businesspeople and professionals formed the Rhodesia University Association (Dhlamini, 2002). Almost a decade later, the university was formed as a multiracial college at a time when racial segregation was rampant in Rhodesia and its neighbouring countries (Young, 1957).

From the onset, the university set out to deal with issues of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Rights that fall under academic freedom such as freedom of expression and freedom of association were “encoded in the ordinances and statutes that



governed the University of Rhodesia” (Maposa, 2015, p. 37). To preserve institutional autonomy, the university was established through, and operated under, a charter as opposed to an act of Parliament (Dhlamini, 2002). According to Cheater, “Gelfand notes that the decision to apply for a Charter was a very deliberate attempt, in the context of colonial racism, to free the fledgling university from ‘the uncertainties of a popular assembly; the university would be free from political control as only the British monarch could repeal or amend it” (Cheater, 1991, p. 189). In other words, Parliament could not control the university because the college was not regulated through Parliament legislation. This, however, became a thing of the past after independence when the college started being governed by the University of Zimbabwe Act.

### 2.5.2. Policies

Three policies impede academic freedom at the university of Zimbabwe (some only on paper): the University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act, Access to information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Criminal law (Codification and Reform) Act.

The University of Zimbabwe Act can make it very difficult for students to exercise freedom of assembly which is important for academic freedom; exchange of ideas and information dissemination often require physical gathering. The law obliges students to inform authorities before holding any gatherings or political meetings (SAIH, 2012). This most likely creates a situation where students become fearful to hold meetings whose topics are considered too “political”.

On paper, AIPPA limits access to information, a critical element of the research component of academic freedom. While AIPPA guarantees the right to information, it does so with exceptions and exclusions which make access to information under the law very difficult. Section 9 (4) (c) allows public bodies to withhold information if they deem this to be in the public interest. Furthermore, non-citizens have no right to access information under section 5 of the law.<sup>3</sup> This means that academics, or students, seeking to access information from public

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/62408/122046/F-2068636523/ZWE62408.pdf>

bodies may fail to do so either because they are told it is being withheld to protect public interest or because the academics are non-citizens. There is no information on how the application of this law has affected academics or students in the literature. The absence of such information, however, does not mean the law has not been used against academics or students. At the same time, in the absence of known cases in which the law was applied against academics or students, it is not possible to make a solid argument that indeed the law has been used to curtail academic freedom.

The Criminal law (Codification and Reform) Act limits freedom of expression, one of the fundamental rights necessary for the exercise of academic freedom; without freedom of expression no free discussion or dissemination of information can take place. Section 33 of the law gives the police power to arrest people for “undermining authority of the president”. Many general citizens, and one lecturer, have been arrested using the law for “insulting the president”.<sup>4</sup> The lecturer, however, was not teaching or engaging in academic activities when he committed the “offense” that led to his arrest. He was also not from University of Zimbabwe, the case study. But an argument can be made that existence of a law that is used to arrest people for “undermining authority of the president” may result in self-censorship among academics, especially when dealing with topics that involve the president, and especially given that a fellow lecturer was once arrested using the law. Students may also tend to self-censor when discussing the president because of the law’s existence.

### 2.5.3. Police, military and CIO presence on campus and surveillance

According to the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility, the state should not send its troops, police, intelligence or other state security agencies into universities except when there is direct danger to life or property. Even in such circumstances, the state should get an invitation from the university before deploying state security agents; such invitation must be approved by a standing committee of the academic community set up for that purpose.<sup>5</sup> This framework provided by the declaration ensures academic freedom

<sup>4</sup> <https://zimlii.org/zw/legislation/act/2004/23>

<sup>5</sup> <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/africa/KAMDOK.htm>

because unnecessary presence of state security agents on campus will most likely result in intimidation and self-censorship.

The university of Zimbabwe, however, is not free from the presence of state agents. According to Gukurume, “UZ became the hub of state surveillance through the deployment of the rank and file of junior intelligence personnel, including civilian-clothed soldiers and police on campus masquerading as students and workers” (Gukurume, 2019, p. 764). Sachikonye also notes that students and teachers are objects of systematic surveillance (Sachikonye, 2011).

#### 2.5.4. The State President University Administration Complex

The state president doubles as the chancellor of the university of Zimbabwe according to the University of Zimbabwe Act of 1982 (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). Before the Act, the role of chancellor – which was occupied by the Queen of England during the colonial era – was merely a ceremonial one. Now the chancellor has powers to sit in the council as an ex-officio member, preside over any meeting held by the university and confer or withdraw degrees (Cheater, 1991). In addition to this, the chancellor appoints the vice chancellor (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). This, among all the chancellor’s powers, is probably the biggest threat to academic freedom and institutional autonomy. According to a report by SAIH, “there are no apparent checks and balances that seek to ensure that the president does not abuse these powers; this enables the appointment to be on a purely partisan basis” (SAIH, 2012). What this simply means is that instead of choosing an individual for professional reasons, the president can appoint a loyalist as vice chancellor through whom he can control the university. Some research actually points to this being the prevailing situation at the university. According to a faculty member in a research conducted by Hwami, “the Vice Chancellor is beholden to the state president; he throws away academic freedom for the convenience of keeping his post. He enjoys the benefits and those who appointed him expect patronage” (Hwami, 2013, p. 134).

The vice chancellor, who, as has been argued above, the state president can appoint “on a purely partisan basis”, is the chief academic, administrative and disciplinary officer of the university (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). Under the University of Zimbabwe Amendment

Act of 1990, the Vice Chancellor can, among other things, suspend members of staff and students (Africa Watch, 1990). This has drastic implications for academic freedom and institutional autonomy. The vice chancellor has powers to suspend students and academics who, during the course of their academic duties, sometimes criticize the state president, the vice chancellor's appointing authority to whom some faculty members say he is beholden. A practical example of how this state of affairs works against academic freedom can be found in Hwami's research. One of his respondents claimed the following:

When I applied for my tenure, whereas the department and external examiners recommended that I should be granted tenure, the vice-chancellor decided that I was not an academic and should be taught about the ethics of research. This is because I had written an article about the death of Hebert Chitepo that highlighted the different elements involved in the death and these included some presently in ZANU PF. This was seen as unacceptable. The vice-chancellor said a university where the chancellor was the president could not be seen to harbour lecturers with such minds (Hwami, 2013, p. 134).

According to these claims, the fact that the president is chancellor of the university is what resulted in the faculty member facing reprisals for exercising academic freedom in conducting research. The claims imply that the research in question presented the president or his party in a negative light and the vice chancellor was of the view that no research which presents the president in that manner was supposed to be carried out. In other words, according to the claims, the vice chancellor was arguing that because the president was the head of the university in his role as chancellor, none of those who fell under his authority at an institutional level, such as faculty members, were supposed to present him in a negative light through their research.

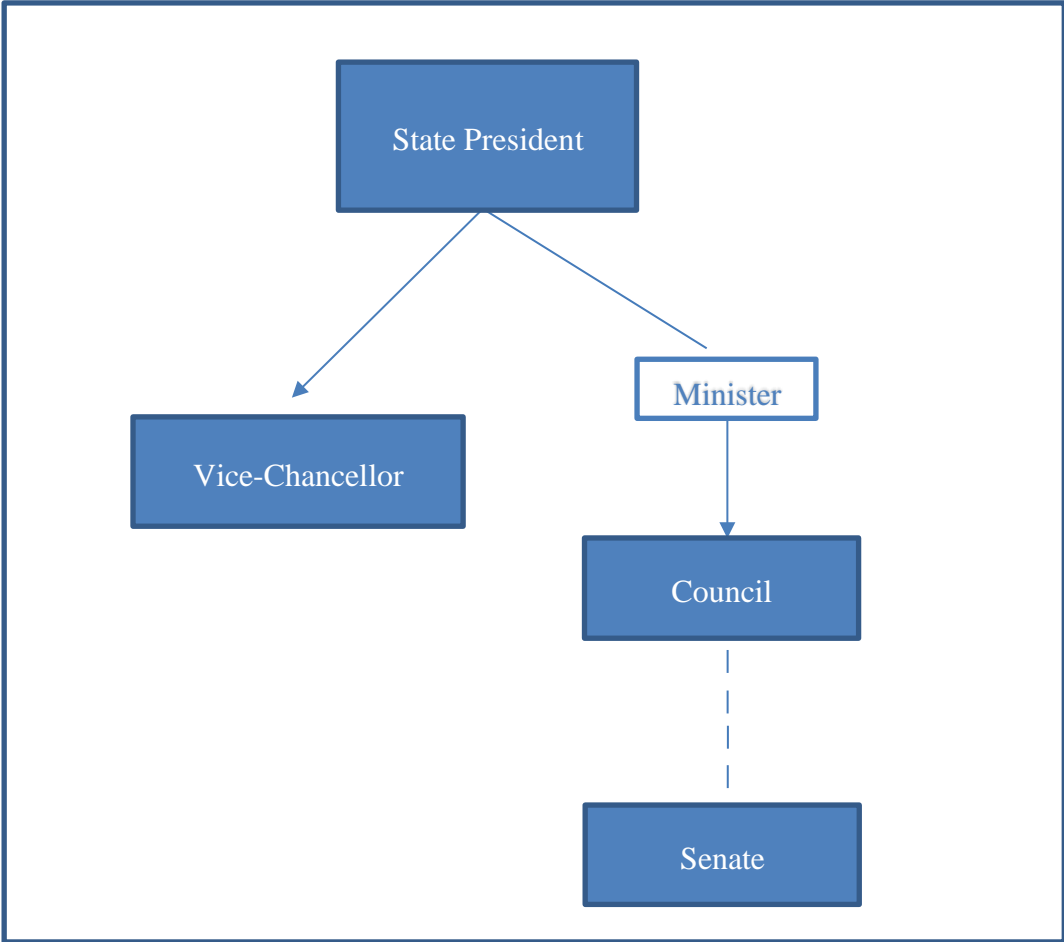
While this logic is inherently flawed given that academic freedom, which all faculty members are supposed to enjoy, allows them to criticize anyone, what is especially notable in this case is how the state presidency being linked to the office of chancellor is said to have been used as a reason to thwart academic freedom and how the office of vice chancellor, which is also linked to the state presidency through appointment, is the institution said to have been active in the exercise of actually thwarting academic freedom through a reprisal. If the claims are

anything to go by, the nexus between the state presidency and the office of the vice chancellor poses great danger to academic freedom. But academics are not the only ones threatened by it. The vice chancellor sometimes suspends students indefinitely without hearings first taking place even though suspension is actually supposed to come after such processes (SAIH, 2012). What this means is that the vice chancellor, a political appointee who is, as some have argued, beholden to the office of the president, has the power to arbitrarily suspend and expel students. Students have been very critical of the president throughout history, the vice chancellor, who is appointed by the president, possessing power to suspend them arbitrarily is a huge threat to academic freedom.

The University has four major institutions that run it, namely, the office of the chancellor, office of the vice chancellor, council and senate. So far it has been argued that the president is directly connected to two, namely, the chancellor and vice chancellor's office. The other two (council and senate) are not directly linked to the office of the president but a connection exists. The Council is controlled by government appointees who constitute 65% of its total membership; the government appointees are appointed by the minister; the minister is appointed by the president (Cheater, 1991). An indirect connection thus exists between the council, 65% of whose occupants are appointed by the minister, and the president who appoints the minister.

The council, which is the executive and governing authority of UZ, has powers to appoint most of the staff at the college and amend or repeal statutes (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). Its lack of independence, stemming from how it is controlled by government appointees selected by a minister who serves at the pleasure of the president, is a huge threat to institutional autonomy. Institutional autonomy requires a university to make its own decisions without outside interference. The senate falls under, and is subject to, decisions of the council. This automatically means it is also subject to outside influence through the council which controls it.

Figure 1: State President University Administration Complex



### 2.6. Theory

Theory can be defined as “a set of interrelated constructs (variables), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining natural phenomena” (Kerlinger, 1979:64 quoted in Creswell, 2003: 120). This section presents two theories utilized in this research, namely historical institutionalism and liberalism. In terms of liberalism, it discusses the two concepts of liberty as proposed by Isaiah Berlin. The theories were selected because historical institutionalism provides insight into human behavior within an organizational context and liberalism sheds light on liberty, a general concept which academic freedom falls under. Together, these theories were used to come up with research questions. After presenting the

theories, this section explains the exact process used to come up with research questions and presents a conceptual framework.

### 2.6.1. Historical institutionalism and academic freedom

Historical institutionalism, by and large, is about organizations, the rules or conventions they promulgate and how all of this affects individual behaviour (Hall and Taylor, 1996). There are two approaches that inform individual behaviour under historical institutionalism according to Hall and Taylor: the calculus approach and the cultural approach. The calculus approach assumes individuals are only concerned about maximizing personal interests (Vijge, 2013). According to the cultural approach, institutions provide the individual with scripts and routines that guide individual behaviour (Hall and Taylor, 1996) This does not explain the individualistic nature and self-preservation motives of actors suggested by the literature. It is for this reason the cultural approach is abandoned for the calculus approach which can be used to explain the self-preservative behaviour of violators of academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe.

An example of a violator of academic freedom, according to the literature, is the vice chancellor of the university. Viewed from a calculus approach perspective, his actions in violating academic freedom can best be explained by a need to maximize his interests which may mostly be centered around pleasing the person who appoints him, the president, so as to keep his job. This may require him to work against academic freedom from time to time so as to thwart dissent in line with the wishes of his appointing authority who scholars claim is interested in controlling the university.

The calculus approach can be linked to the logic of consequences (or consequentiality) which, according to Olsen and March, is preference based. It follows individual preferences as opposed to being guided by the issue of identity or strict adherence to what is appropriate (Olsen and March, 2004). This would explain, for instance, the vice chancellor disregarding academic freedom even though it may be appropriate for someone in his position to respect it. How victims of academic freedom act can also be explained through the calculus approach. Acting to maximize self-interest for victims may mean opting not to exercise academic freedom to avoid reprisals. This can result in self-censorship. Due to its strength in explaining

human behaviour, the calculus approach, specifically the claim that individuals are only concerned about maximizing personal interest, is the overarching theoretical assumption for this study.

### 2.6.2. Academic freedom and the two concepts of liberty

The two concepts of liberty, as proposed by Berlin, are negative and positive liberty. Negative liberty is about the absence of constraints which prevent one from enjoying liberty; positive liberty is about an individual being able to reach their full potential, often through being part of a group or society that has freedom to determine its own trajectory using “general will” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). Negative liberty is mostly about individuals and external threats to freedom, positive liberty is about collectives, or individuals viewed as members of collectives, and internal factors which affect liberty (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). Academic freedom, which is mostly about individuals who, for the most part, face external threats, is best viewed as negative liberty.

#### 2.6.2.1. *Academic freedom as negative liberty*

According to negative liberty advocates, liberty is the absence of barriers (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). It is about individuals being sovereign in their own space so long as they don't impede the rights of others (Mill, 2011). Viewed as negative liberty, academic freedom is thus the absence of barriers that can prevent one from enjoying it. Factors that affect academic freedom discussed in the literature review, namely institutional autonomy, policies and type of government, can all act as barriers to the enjoyment of academic freedom depending on their form of existence.

Viewing academic freedom as negative liberty automatically places a lot of the research's focus on barriers to academic freedom. This is because, as already noted, negative liberty is mostly concerned with barriers to liberty. In this research, barriers were derived from factors affecting academic freedom which were selected for inclusion in this study, namely institutional autonomy, policy and type of government in power. It is important to note that the factors are not inherently barriers, they can exist in some other form; for instance, they can exist as enablers. Policy, for example, can be an enabling factor which allows people to enjoy



academic freedom but it can also be a barrier that prevents its enjoyment. It is the latter aspect that the research focuses on because viewed as negative liberty, academic freedom is more about the absence of barriers that thwart it than presence of enabling interventions. Put somewhat differently, viewed as negative liberty, academic freedom is more about players that can affect it, such as government, refraining from actions that can impose barriers more than it is about the government intervening to, for instance, promote the enjoyment of academic freedom, especially where no barriers to its enjoyment exist. The factors being explored in the study (institutional autonomy, policy and type of government) take a different form when discussed as barriers as shown in the table below.

*Table 2: Barriers to academic freedom*

<i><b>Factor</b></i>	<i><b>Barrier</b></i>
<i>Institutional autonomy</i>	Lack of or limited institutional autonomy
<i>Policy</i>	Inhibitive policy
<i>Type of government in power</i>	Authoritarian or semi authoritarian government

*2.6.2.2. Barrier Categories*

There are several categories of barriers that can affect academic freedom when viewed as negative liberty. Advocates of negative liberty propose different categories that can be divided into three main types: barriers to liberty that make it physically impossible for someone to do something, barriers based on intentional human actions and barriers that someone can morally be held accountable for (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). The categories are so incompatible advocates of one category of barriers do not subscribe to the notion that other categories exist. The different categories are going to be discussed one by one to show how the factors discussed in the literature, and the barriers they pose, were selected for inclusion in this research and why other possible factors and barriers were neglected. It is important to note that the factors being explored in the study, which are first

presented in the literature review, were selected based on what is being discussed in the theory section.

#### 2.6.2.2.1. Physical barriers

Hobbes rejected the notion that anything other than a physical constraint can hinder liberty. He argued that psychological states such as fear do not limit freedom. He wrote: “fear and liberty are consistent: as when a man throweth his goods into the sea for fear the ship should sink, he doth it nevertheless very willingly, and may refuse to do it if he will’ (Pettit, 2005, p. 139). In other words, Hobbes argues that fear and liberty can co-exist, that the presence of one does not necessarily lead to absence of the other. Put somewhat differently, fear, in Hobbes’s view, does not cause lack of freedom because as is the case with the example of the man on the boat, one may choose to act out of fear but the mere existence of choice points to the presence of freedom; freedom, according to Hobbes, ceases to exist when one has no choice. As such, fear and other nonphysical elements do not take away freedom in Hobbes’ view.

According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, the defenders of this conception of liberty by Hobbes call it the pure conception to distinguish it from “ ‘impure’ negative conceptions that make at least minimal references to the agent's beliefs, desires or values” (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). This pure conception of liberty, had it been chosen as the criteria for selecting factors to explore in this study, would have limited the research to factors which present physical constraints to academic freedom. Meaning most of the factors encountered in the literature would not qualify as barriers to academic freedom because the constraints they present are of a non-physical nature. Barriers presented by policy, for instance, are often times of a nonphysical nature. An example is the law that criminalizes insulting the president in Zimbabwe. Hobbes would argue that it is not a barrier to academic freedom in as far as it does not lead to people being physically constrained or punished if they contravene the law. Meaning the law is only a barrier when it results in physical arrest, torture or even the act of being physically forced not to speak. This view does not cater for the fact that existence of such a law may breed fear which often leads to self-censorship. The Hobbesian view, as already noted, does not recognize fear as a barrier to liberty even though the literature points to it as one of the

elements that affects academic freedom. The pure conception of liberty is incongruent with the literature and provides a rather rigid view of what constitutes a barrier to liberty. It is for this reason that the pure conception of liberty was rejected as a means for selecting factors explored in this study.

#### 2.6.2.2.2. Barriers which one can be morally held accountable for

Under this classification of barriers, even if it was not someone's intention to hinder another person's liberty, as long as they can be proven to be morally responsible for the hinderance, their actions constitute a barrier to liberty. This category is not in line with the calculus approach, the overarching theoretical assumption for this study, which assumes that people mostly act deliberately to maximize personal benefit. It is more concerned with barriers that occur due to negligence but can be blamed on someone, as opposed to those that occur due to intentional human action. Because it is not in sync with the calculus approach, this category was rejected as a criterion for selection of factors to be included in this research.

#### 2.6.2.2.3. Barriers based on intentional human action

This category of barriers is caused by someone intentionally doing something which limits another person's liberty. According to this view, natural phenomenon and unintentional human action cannot be barriers to liberty (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). Meaning to say if person A is unable to exercise any form of liberty, for example freedom of speech, due to say an earthquake – or because person B muzzled their speech without intention of doing so (if ever such a thing is possible) – person A cannot be regarded as someone who experienced a barrier to liberty. Among all the categories of barriers that have been discussed, this category is most in line with the calculus approach which assumes that people act intentionally to maximize personal interest. The calculus approach is the overarching theoretical assumption for this study and because it is most in line with the calculus approach, the category of barriers in question was used to select factors affecting academic freedom considered for this research.

To be more specific, the basis for selection of factors explored in this research was whether or not the barrier that can be derived from a factor is caused by intentional human

action. Meaning many factors that did not fall within this category which were discovered in the literature, such as awareness of academic freedom, for instance, had to be disregarded because the barrier which can be derived from that factor, namely, lack of awareness, is not necessarily caused by intentional human action. Someone may be unaware of academic freedom, not because someone intentionally tried to ensure that they are unaware, but simply because they have never come across information about the concept.

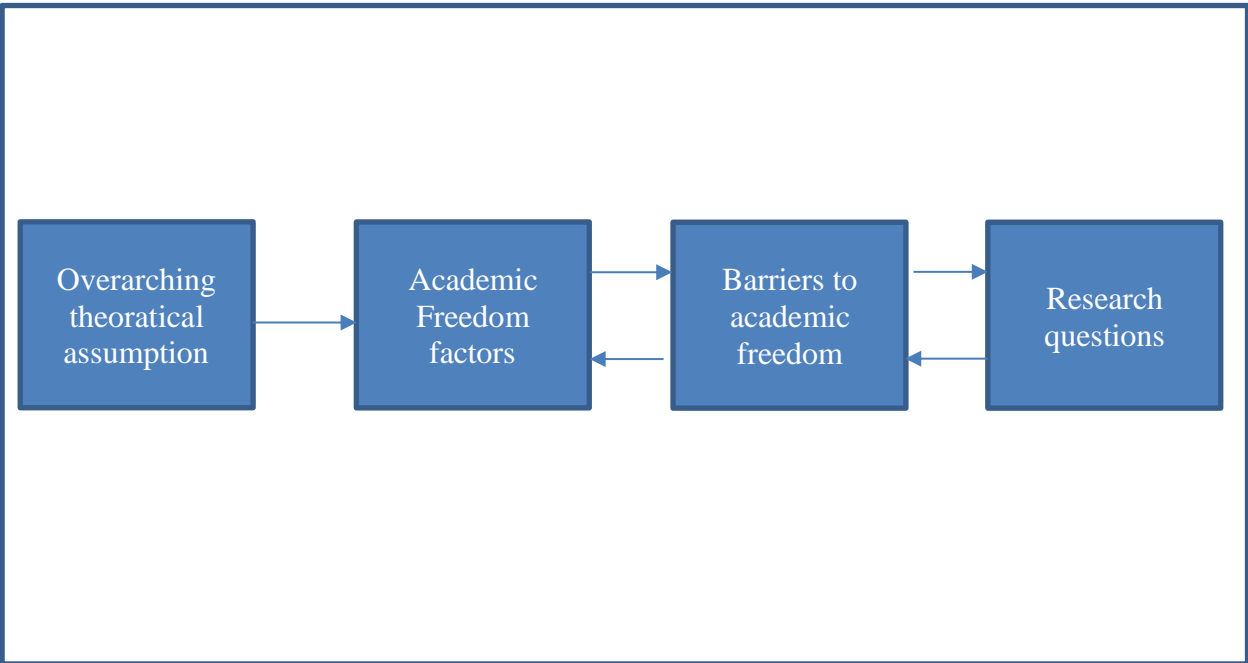
The factors which were selected based on this category of barriers, namely institutional autonomy, policy and type of government all result in barriers that are based on intentional human actions, namely lack of institutional autonomy, inhibitive policies and authoritarian and semi-authoritarian governments. Lack of institutional autonomy, as discussed in the literature, is a result of deliberate attempts to control the university, inhibitive policies are intentionally formulated by law makers and the existence of an authoritarian or semi authoritarian regime is by design, not coincidence.

### **2.6.3. Conceptual framework**

A conceptual framework can be defined as “the system of concepts, assumptions, expectations, beliefs, and theories that supports and informs your research” (Maxwell, 2005, p. 33). The conceptual framework for this study was developed through the following key steps. First, an overarching theoretical assumption to guide the study was adopted from the calculus approach which assumes that people act intentionally to maximize self-interest. Second, academic freedom was defined as negative liberty, thus shifting the focus of the study to exploring academic freedom barriers. This is because negative liberty focuses on barriers to freedom. Third, to guide the selection of factors affecting academic freedom and the barriers they impose, a negative liberty category focusing on barriers that are based on intentional human actions was selected. The selection was based on the fact that this category of barriers, out of all the others, was the most compatible with the overarching theoretical assumption of the research i.e. that people act intentionally to maximize self-interest. Fourth, the category of barriers in question was used to select factors to be explored in the research. The basis for selecting the factors was whether or not barriers that can be derived from such factors are

caused by intentional human action. The factors that were selected are institutional autonomy, policy and type of government in power. The barriers that can be derived from those factors are lack of institutional autonomy, inhibitive policy and authoritarian or semi-authoritarian governments. The factors were used to craft research questions; the research questions were used to explore the barriers and the factors they were derived from. For example, the factor institutional autonomy was used to craft the research question “in what way is institutional autonomy treated at the university?” This was done by simply making the factor the focal point of the question. By seeking to understand how institutional autonomy is being treated at the university, the question sought to explore institutional autonomy and the barrier derived from it. The diagram below shows the conceptual framework. However, it has to be noted that the framework does not imply causality. It simply highlights the steps, some of which were interactive, taken in coming up with research questions which were first presented in chapter one.

Figure 2: Conceptual Framework



### 3. METHODOLOGY

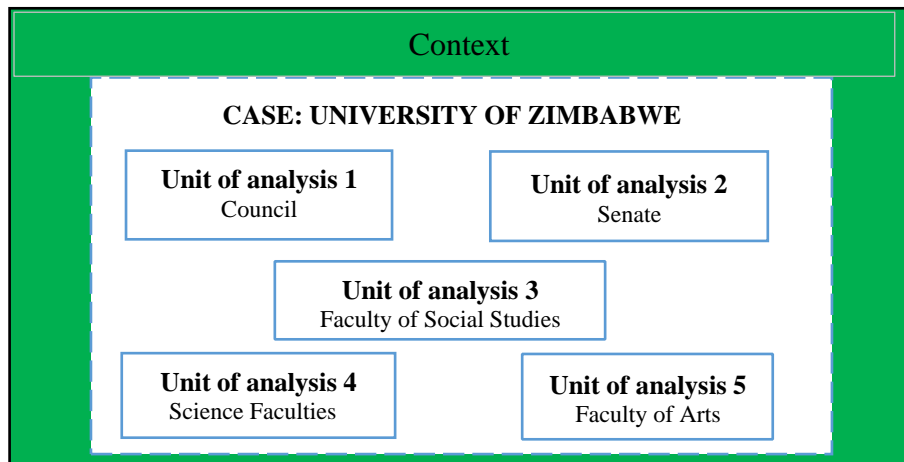
#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines key methodological elements of the research. First, it describes the case study approach used to collect data and explains why it was chosen. Second it outlines the study’s units of analysis and the reasons for their selection. Third, it discusses the various data collection tools which were used to gather information as well as their advantages. Fourth, it outlines the research’s sampling technique. Fifth it looks at how data was analyzed before discussing quality of the study, limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2. Case study approach

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-world context” (Yin 2014, p. 16). This is the approach that was used in this research. To be more specific, a single case study of a qualitative nature was undertaken. The case (University of Zimbabwe) has five embedded units of analysis as illustrated in the diagram below.

Figure 3: Units of analysis



According to Yin, one rationale for choosing a single case is when it represents a typical case (Yin, 2003). The University of Zimbabwe represents the typical case of how state universities function in relation to academic freedom. This is mostly because the legislation that governs

all other state universities in Zimbabwe was modelled along the lines of the University of Zimbabwe Act (SAIH, 2012).

Essentially, this means that all state universities have the same administrative structure as the University of Zimbabwe. The administrative structure in all state universities comprises of the Chancellor (who is the same person for all state universities), the vice chancellor (who is the administrative head), the council and the senate. The previous chapter explored how university structure may affect academic freedom.

The University of Zimbabwe thus provides a window into how other state universities treat academic freedom. However, though its legislation is similar to that of other state universities, the way academic freedom is treated at University of Zimbabwe may not be exactly the same as how it is treated in other state universities owing to operational differences that have nothing to do with the law. Such factors may include organizational culture, for example. As such, though the University of Zimbabwe may present a typical case of how academic freedom is treated at all state universities, it has to be outlined that some differences may exist between UZ and other universities.

A case study approach was utilized for this study because it allows one to “gather comprehensive, systematic, and in-depth information about each case of interest” (Patton, 2002, p. 447). In other words, it makes understanding a phenomenon easier by putting a researcher within a confined and well-defined situation in which information can be gathered. It relies upon multiple sources of evidence which enriches a study. In addition to this, a case study makes it possible to generalize a case to a theory, what Yin calls analytic generalization (Yin, 2003). This is important because it adds to the knowledge about the utility of existing theories in explaining phenomenon.

Lastly, selection of the approach is based on the fact that other researchers who have studied academic freedom have employed a case study approach. An example is Gukurume who was mostly focusing on violence and surveillance but also had academic freedom as one of the key areas of his research (Gukurume, 2019).

### 3.3. Units of analysis

Five units of analysis were chosen to better understand academic freedom within the case study (University of Zimbabwe), namely:

- Council
- Senate
- Faculty of Social Studies
- Science faculties
- Faculty of Arts.

The council is the general overseer of all aspects relating to the university and has the power to act upon reports from the senate which is the academic authority of the university (Government of Zimbabwe, 1982). How the council and senate function has a bearing on institutional autonomy (this was discussed in the last chapter) which is one of the major factors being explored in this study. As such, the council and senate were selected as units of analysis so they could be studied to explore institutional autonomy at the University of Zimbabwe.

Two faculties, namely, social studies and arts as well as science faculties were selected for the study. They all fall under the three cultures of education as proposed by Kagan, namely, social science, natural science and humanities (Kagan, 2009). The assumption is that academic freedom may be treated differently within each culture of education hence to get a more holistic picture of the situation obtaining at the University of Zimbabwe, it was necessary to study academic freedom within each of the three cultures.

Faculties in general were chosen as units of analysis because they are composed of students and lecturers who can provide great insight into how academic freedom is treated at any learning institution. Students and lecturers deal with important elements of academic freedom such as research and teaching which they can shed light on.



### 3.4. Sources of information

Information was collected from two types of sources: primary and secondary. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from primary sources; information from secondary sources was collected through reading.

#### 3.4.1. Primary sources

These are sources from which data is collected firsthand by the researcher through, among other things, self-administered surveys, interviews and field observation (Salkind, 2010). For this research, as already alluded to, only interviews were used to collect primary data, in particular, semi-structured interviews. According to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research, “the semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the researcher asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions” (Given, 2008, p. 810). The predetermined questions used for this research can be found in Appendix A. Semi-structured interviews were chosen for several reasons. First, and perhaps most important, they allow the researcher to craft questions before hand. This ensures that one does not waste time during the interview trying to come up with questions. It also means the researcher can get input on the quality of interview questions from others in the academic fraternity before the research commences. This avoids a situation whereby the researcher goes into the field with questions that are not able to effectively elicit responses that will answer the research questions.

Second, semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to ask standardized questions. This makes it easier to compare responses. Comparing responses is crucial for data analysis and aids the process of presenting findings and discussing them. Third, unlike traditional structured interviews, semi structured interviews allow one to ask follow-up questions. This is important because informants may give responses that require further clarification. Also, the ability to ask follow-up questions gives the researcher an opportunity to get in depth responses which enrich the study. Lastly, unlike other methods, such as observation, where one may have to observe other things that have nothing to do with the topic under study, in a semi structured interview, all questions are directly connected to the topic. While the researcher may also deal with obtainment of irrelevant information during a semi structured

interview, he or she has the option to steer the informant in the right direction unlike in some forms of observation in which the researcher cannot play such an intrusive role.

### 3.4.2. Secondary Sources

A secondary source, according to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research, “is any item that was created after the events it describes or is related to or is created by someone who was not directly involved in or was an eyewitness to the events” (Given, 2008, p. 397). Such sources include scholarly books, textbooks and articles, among other things (Given, 2008). Secondary sources were chosen because they enabled the researcher to understand more about the topic so as to come up with questions used in the study. Secondary sources have many advantages: they save time since they do not involve collection of primary data, a lot of secondary data already has proven validity (e.g. peer reviewed articles) and secondary data is easily accessible.

Table 3: Sources of information

<b>SOURCE OF INFORMATION</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION TOOL</b>	<b>TYPE OF DATA</b>	<b>INFORMANT DESIGNATION</b>
<b>PRIMARY</b>	Semi-structured interview	Qualitative data	Students, faculty members, members of council and senate
<b>SECONDARY</b>	Reading	Qualitative and quantitative data	Scholars

### 3.5. Sampling

Sampling is a two-step process comprising of defining the entire population from which data can be gathered and selecting a specific sample of data sources from the population (Given, 2008). The entire population of students, lecturers, members of the senate and members of the council at the University of Zimbabwe was eligible for inclusion in the study. The reasons why those various groups were eligible were explained in the section dealing with units of analysis. Within that population a specific sample was chosen using purposive sampling.

### *3.5.1. Purposive sampling*

Purposive sampling entails a researcher deliberately selecting informants based on the context in which the researcher is working and research objectives (Given, 2008). In this approach, a researcher relies on their own judgement for selecting informants hence it is a very subjective process. Purposive sampling was chosen because it allowed the researcher to evaluate which types of informants would provide the most useful information. A specific type of purposive sampling, namely, stratified purposeful sampling, was utilized. Stratified sampling is “a process that first divides the overall population into separate subgroups and then creates a sample by drawing subsamples from each of those subgroups” (Given, 2008, p. 834). The University of Zimbabwe student and academic community and governing bodies which made up the study’s population were divided into five sub-groups which also formed the units of analysis, namely, the council, senate, faculty of social science, science faculties and faculty of arts. The reason why they were selected as sub-groups of the sample is the same reason they were selected as units of analysis and that is explained in the section dealing with units of analysis.

### *3.5.2. The snowball method and convenience sampling*

Within various sub-groups, informants were selected using the snowball method and convenience sampling. The snowball method entails using informants to recruit other informants. It was chosen because it allows a researcher to find participants where they are ordinarily not easy to find and it is easy to use in addition to being time saving. The same can be said for convenience sampling which involves getting informants to participate in a study based on availability and/or the ease with which they can be accessed. The snowball method was mostly used among students who recruited other students to participate in the research. The initial contact who recruited the first batch of students was actually not a student from the University of Zimbabwe but a student leader from one of the country’s biggest national student unions. Convenience sampling during field research often took the form of knocking on doors of faculty members at the university and booking appointments or getting their cellphone numbers from department offices and calling to request an interview.

Table 4: sampling methods and sample size

<b>INFORMANT DESIGNATION</b>	<b>METHOD</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION TOOL</b>	<b>NUMBER OF INFORMANTS</b>
<b>STUDENT</b>	Snowball method	Semi-structured interview	17
<b>FACULTY MEMBER</b>	Convenience sampling	Semi-structured interview	9
<b>MEMBER OF COUNCIL</b>	Snowball method and convenience sampling	Semi-structured interview	1
<b>MEMBER OF SENATE</b>	Snowball method and convenience sampling	Semi-structured interview	3
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>26</b>

*(N.B informants in the council and senate are accounted for in the student and faculty member groups because they played double roles, they were interviewed as students and faculty members and also interviewed as members of council and senate; this is why the total is 26 instead of 30)*

### 3.6. Data analysis

Data analysis refers to arranging information amassed during the data collection process in a systematic manner so as to get a better understanding of the topic under study (Bogdan, 1982). For this research, data analysis was carried out through thematic analysis and coding.

#### 3.6.1. Thematic analysis

This refers to “a data reduction and analysis strategy by which qualitative data are segmented, categorized, summarized, and reconstructed in a way that captures the important concepts within the data set” (Given, 2008). A deductive approach was taken in creating themes for data analysis. Themes were created prior to data collection using the literature. At the data analysis stage, data was then divided into themes that were already in existence.

### *3.6.2. Coding*

Coding refers to a process in which the researcher takes steps to “identify, arrange, and systematize the ideas, concepts, and categories uncovered in the data” (Given, 2008, p. 85). The first step taken in coding was to group transcripts according to the designation of informants who fell under three groups: students, faculty members and members of council and senate. Separate computer folders for each group were created and transcripts for each particular group placed in the appropriate folder. After dividing the transcripts in this manner, in the folders for students and faculty members, three subgroups were established: faculty of social science, science faculties and faculty of arts (how these groups are arrived at is discussed in the section about units of analysis). Nodes for each sub-group, plus the group for senate and council members, were created in Nvivo 12 under which more nodes were created whose purpose was to capture responses for interview questions. Each sub-group, for example, “social studies students”, fell under a specific node in Nvivo 12 in which there were multiple sub-nodes capturing responses for interview questions given by informants in that particular group. The sub-nodes each captured responses for one specific question. Responses for each question were further broken down into prominent topics that informants spoke about.

### **3.7. Validity**

According to the Sage Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research, validity “refers broadly to the “goodness” or “soundness” of a study” (Given, 2008, p. 909). While the norm in quantitative research is to establish it through internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity, in qualitative research, validity is established through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981).

Table 5: Four Aspects of Trustworthiness

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Scientific term (Quantitative)</b>	<b>Naturalistic term (Qualitative)</b>
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity or generalizability	Transferability
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

(Guba, 1981, p. 80)

### 3.7.1. Credibility

Credibility in qualitative research includes using well recognized research methods, peer scrutiny of a project, examination of previous research to frame findings and triangulation among other things (Chowdhury, 2015). The methods used to collect data, which were explained in preceding sections, are well recognized. Furthermore, this research project was cross examined by peers at several junctures of the research design stage. This ensured that fundamental elements of the research process such as crafting of questions and selection of data collection tools were subjected to constructive criticism which improved the quality of the research. Previous research on the topic was thoroughly examined and this assisted in the process of framing findings. Triangulation (using more than one method to collect data), however, was made difficult by the circumstances under which the research was carried out. The researcher was not given permission, even though permission was rigorously sought (please see Appendix B), to conduct the study at the university of Zimbabwe by the administration. This meant methods other than interviews which had been envisaged in the research design, such as participant and none participant observation, could not be executed. This is because observing students and lecturers in class without permission was not desirable and could have been viewed as intrusive.

### *3.7.2. Transferability*

Transferability implies that the research's findings can be applied to other contexts (Given, 2008). It is increased by ensuring the reader understands the context being studied. This can be done by providing as much detail as possible about the context so the reader gets the full picture in order for them to determine if the findings are transferrable to their own context (Given, 2008). A great deal of information was provided about the context of this research in the chapter dealing with literature review. Whether or not the findings are transferable depends on the context one seeks to transfer the findings to.

### *3.7.3. Dependability*

This refers to the extent to which research procedures are outlined or documented; this has to be done in such a way that it permits a third party to audit and critique the research process (Moon, 2016). A deliberate effort has been made to document every step of the research process in order to ensure dependability.

### *3.7.8. Confirmability*

Confirmability involves, among other things, admission of a researcher's beliefs and assumptions, pointing out shortcomings in study methods and their potential effects, and use of diagrams to demonstrate "audit trail" (Chowdhury, 2015). At the beginning of this thesis, the role of the researcher's involvement with the struggle for academic freedom in Zimbabwe was outlined and so were the pre-conceived notions that came with such involvement; ways to ensure this would not result in researcher bias were also explained. A shortcoming in the research methods, specifically the fact that triangulation could not be employed, was pointed out in a preceding section. The fact that all these aspects were pointed out increases confirmability of the research and so does the use of diagrams throughout this thesis.

## **3.8. Limitations of the study**

Limitations of the study are aspects that may affect the research which are out of the researcher's control (Theofanidis, 2019). The biggest limitation this researcher encountered was not being given permission to conduct research at the University of Zimbabwe (the case

study) by the institution's administration. This is despite the fact that permission to conduct the research was sought in a process that included a lot of follow ups. The University first requested further information for the study but stopped responding to emails after the information was given (please see Appendix B). Due to lack of cooperation from the university, the researcher later opted to conduct the research without the permission or knowledge of the university administration. This however meant that important data gathering tools such as participant and non-participant observation, which would involve the researcher attending some of the university's academic activities, such as lectures and tutorials, had to be abandoned. Furthermore, not all the lecturers that were approached for interviews were willing to take part without the researcher showing a letter from the administration communicating that the researcher had been given permission to conduct the research within the institution. Nonetheless, most of the academics who were approached never asked to be shown such a letter neither did any of the students, some of whom were interviewed off campus.

### **3.9. Ethical considerations**

The following ethical values were respected: informed consent, anonymity of informants, protection of informants from harm and the respect of their privacy. Informants were informed about the study and the role the researcher wished them to play before consent was requested.



## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Introduction

This study set out to answer one main research question: what is the general academic freedom situation at the university? In addition to this, it sought to answer three sub-questions, namely, in what way is institutional autonomy treated at the university? How are current policies relevant in the academic freedom discourse at the university? How does the government treat academic freedom at the university? The findings are presented in three main segments. The first one focuses on responses from students, the second, responses from faculty members, the third, responses from members of council and senate. In the various segments, data is presented under three different themes, namely academic freedom, type of government and institutional autonomy. The themes did not emerge from the data but were derived from the literature. At the research design stage, the interview guide was designed in such a way that each question fell under a specific theme. Questions purely about academic freedom fell under the theme academic freedom, questions about type of government fell under the theme type of government and questions about institutional autonomy fell under the theme institutional autonomy. The same themes questions fell under at the research design stage or in the interview guide are the same themes they fall under in this section. Findings are presented first by segment then by theme then by interview question. Under each interview question, data is further divided into various topics that informants spoke about.

### 4.2. Students

This section presents findings from the students' segment. Students, in general, only answered interview questions that fall under two themes: academic freedom and type of government. This is because questions under the third theme, namely institutional autonomy, required responses from people in the governing bodies of the university, council and senate. Only one of the informants was both a student and a member of council. The data for this segment is organized by theme, question and topic as shown in the table below.

Table 6: Data structure (students segment)

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Topic</b>
Academic Freedom	How would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the university?	Abductions
		Freedom of expression/speech and freedom to publish
		Surveillance
		Labelling
		Inhibitive policies
		Learning environment
		Academic freedom and completion of studies
	Do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?	We have adequate academic freedom
We do not have adequate academic freedom		
Type of government	How would you describe the government in power?	Internet shutdown
		Authoritarian legislation
		Police gear
		Abduction and torture
	How is academic freedom being treated by the government?	Government interference
		Victimization of students on graduation day
		Research limitations
	If Zimbabwe had another type of government, do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?	Academic freedom under a democratic government

Before students answered the main interview questions, they were asked to answer a preliminary question to get a grasp of their understanding of academic freedom.

#### *4.2.1. Preliminary question (Question 1): when you hear the term academic freedom, what comes to your mind?*

One major view of academic freedom given by informants was that it entails students and lecturers being free to express themselves without government control or restriction from the university. A science student defined academic freedom as:

The freedom of students and lecturers to express their ideas. It is the ability of scholars to discuss their knowledge, research, and publish without any control from the government or the institution itself. It helps Lecturers and Students to express their ideas without political or institutional restrictions.

Another prominent view was that academic freedom means the absence of reprisals such as arrest against those who express themselves, especially those who criticize the government. According to a computer science student, academic freedom is “being able to express one’s views and ideas at the faculty without being targeted for oppression or imprisonment. It’s when anyone at an academic institute has the freedom and right to express views even though they can be inconvenient to any external political parties”.

One student said academic freedom was about engaging university authorities. He said academic freedom is “having a platform in which you as students are able to engage authorities especially when it comes to decision making”.

#### **4.2.2. Theme 1: Academic freedom**

Under this theme students answered two interview questions:

- Question 2: how would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the university?
- Question 3: do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?

#### 4.2.2.1. Question 2: how would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the university?

Several topics came up when students were answering this question, namely, abductions, freedom of expression/speech and freedom to publish, surveillance, labelling, inhibitive policies, learning environment and academic freedom and completion of studies.

##### 4.2.2.1.1. Abductions

Five out of seventeen students brought up the issue of abductions. Two types of responses were given on this topic: responses without reference to actual victims and one response that included a name of the alleged victim. A student from the faculty of arts said:

.....we have heard cases of students that have been abducted because of their political activism or because of purported affiliation to some opposition parties. You would expect the university to say something in trying to protect the students but nothing happens when a student is abducted, it's solely on their capabilities of redeeming themselves out of the situation.

Only one informant, a student from the faculty of science, gave a name of an alleged abduction victim. He said a student by the name Fanuel Kaseke was once abducted. A follow up was made on the informant's claim and it was established that several news stories were written on Kaseke's abduction. He is said to have been taken by suspected state agents for being involved in a protest about tuition fees.<sup>6</sup>

##### 4.2.2.1.2. Freedom of expression/speech and freedom to publish

These freedoms, according to informants, are only enjoyed at the university if the person who wishes to exercise them is pro-government or pro-ruling party. The reasons given for lack of freedom of expression/speech and freedom to publish are fear of abduction, possibility of being called in by campus security to be given warnings and fear of arrest. Three entities were singled out as most dangerous to speak against, namely, the president, the ruling party and the government. A computer science student said:

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20170715062906873>

As long as you say anything against the ruling party you will be in hot soup. There are many cases of abduction that we have heard of. Most students are scared. They fear the ZANU-PF party, that they could find you if you say anything that doesn't support it.

The same student went on to explain how saying something that is deemed to insult the president could result in some form of backlash. He said:

You should not say anything that insults or is deemed to insult the President of the country who is also the Chancellor of the University. It's regarded as a crime. You may be imprisoned for a long time. In terms of freedom to publish or freedom of speech, these rights are not considered at all especially if what you are publishing or what you want to say is directly attacking the ruling party and/or the chancellor of the university. But if you are publishing something that doesn't have anything to do with ZANU-PF then it's okay.

A different student, from the faculty of social science, said students have been called in by campus security because of their political views. He said: "we have had different encounters where students who have expressed political views have been called to the security office and received stern warnings. There is no freedom of speech".

#### 4.2.2.1.3. Surveillance

The university is monitored according to informants. They identified fellow students and state agents as the ones doing the monitoring. Students linked monitoring to abductions, being called in by campus security and the stifling of freedom of expression. A student studying social work said: "in institutions of higher learning there are state agents that maybe there. We have had cases of students who have disappeared or been taken by state apparatus". A public administration student brought in the dimensions of students monitoring other students and how monitoring also takes place on social media platforms. Referring to students from an organization called ZICOSU, he said:

... even when you are discussing issues on social media they can report you and you can be taken. One student was recently reported to the authorities by a ZICOSU student. People can be punished and taken to the security where they will be detained.

The Zimbabwe Congress of Student Unions (ZICOSU) is a national student body that is linked to the ruling party, ZANU-PF (Kurebwa, 2019).

#### 4.2.2.1.4. Labelling

The government labels students and academics who criticize it according to informants, labelling them regime change agents, puppets of erstwhile colonial masters or opposition. A public administration student said: “there is no space for academics. It’s limited with our government as everything is seen as regime change”. A media studies student said the government “sees everyone that opposes it as an enemy, as an agent of erstwhile colonizers”. One student, from the faculty of science, focused more on labels given to those who belong to student unions. He said: “generally academic freedom is not respected because if you are viewed as a student unionist you are most likely to be labelled as the opposition”.

#### 4.2.2.1.5. Inhibitive policies

Two types of policies that students said were inimical to academic freedom were highlighted by informants. The first kind relates to policies that apply nationwide and the second, those that only apply at the university. In terms of national policies, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) was said to affect academic freedom. Only one informant gave an explanation of exactly how he thought it affected academic freedom. He said: “There are restrictions like POSA. They affect academic freedom. We are not to touch on certain subjects”. A follow up was made to verify whether indeed the law does bar people from “touching on certain subjects”. The claim appears to be false, the law, which is available online, has no clauses that specifically inhibit freedom of expression.<sup>7</sup>

One policy that applies only to the university, namely ordinance 30, was highlighted by a political science student. He said:

UZ is guided by an old law called ordinance 30 from 1984. We have made several attempts that it be amended but they are reluctant. Policy is the reason why there is no academic freedom because of ordinance 30. There is no separation between government

<sup>7</sup> <https://zimlil.org/zw/legislation/act/2002/1>

and institution because the president is the chancellor. Once you have a political opinion against the president it means you have an issue against the chancellor. All the cases that go to the disciplinary hearing they quote one section -- 3.1 of ordinance 30 which is an umbrella for all crimes, anything that puts the name of the institution into disrepute whether on or off campus.

A follow up of the informant's response showed his quoting of ordinance 30 and its sections was accurate.

#### 4.2.2.1.6. Learning environment

The learning environment was said to be more conducive for science students because they do not deal with political topics. A media studies student said:

Recently we were trying to setup a campus radio just to have the media experience at our school, it was very tough to pursue because of the political side of it. People were asking who is funding you, what are you trying to achieve. So you find out that even those initiatives that are coming from the students who are studying a particular degree, they are questioned in terms of the political motive. When science students come up with their initiatives, they are not questioned much because they are trying to do something scientific but because we are doing something that might cause political awareness, the license will not even come, you will take forever to get approval.

This view, i.e. the view that the learning environment was more conducive for science students, was echoed by several students, including those from science faculties such as engineering.

#### 4.2.2.1.7. Academic freedom and completion of studies

There were two major opinions expressed about academic freedom and completion of studies. One was that opting to exercise academic freedom could result in a situation whereby one fails to graduate from school. The other was that academic freedom did not matter much to students because their main objective was to get their degrees and leave the university. A media studies student said: "the teachers are in control; students are there to learn and get

their degree. If you breach what they say (teachers) you might not even get your degree”. A social work student, whose response captured the second opinion, said: “most students go to tertiary education to get knowledge (their degrees). Academic freedom is not their main purpose. Most of them are not aware of what academic freedom is and how it can benefit them”.

#### 4.2.2.2. Question 3: do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?

Using the type of response they gave to this question, informants can be broken into two groups: those who said “we have adequate academic freedom” and those who said “we do not have adequate academic freedom”.

##### 4.2.2.2.1. We have adequate academic freedom

This group was mainly composed of science students and one post graduate student from the arts faculty. Reasons they gave as to why they enjoy adequate academic freedom have to do with either the faculty they belong to or their level of education. One science student said:

In my area of study, I feel I have adequate academic freedom to carry on with my academic and research activities because in engineering we mainly focus on designing and solving problems that have to do with machines. We do not dig much in the political fields, so we have no interference at all.

One student from faculty of arts said the level of academic freedom she enjoyed had to do with the fact that she is a master’s student. She said: “I am a postgrad. They treat us differently. I had less freedom as an undergrad but now I have more freedom”.

##### 4.2.2.2.2. We don’t have adequate academic freedom

Informants from the faculty of arts and faculty of social science formed the majority of students in the group that said it does not have adequate academic freedom. Reasons they gave for inadequate academic freedom are censoring of student research and fear of reprisal. Talking about censoring of student research, a political science student said:



A typical example: my dissertation was on the military coup, my supervisor told me that if I wanted to pass there was information I was supposed to remove, that's an infringement of my freedom as an academic. You cannot express yourself without someone watching you and in terms of criticizing the government, you can't do it without getting warnings.

A media studies student said one of the biggest reasons his academic freedom was limited was because of fear of reprisal. He said: "Fear of reprisals limits me. There are a lot of tales attributed to people who don't want to conform. There are charges that tend to be instigated towards people that are acting in ways that the administration does not want".

#### 4.2.3. Theme 2: Type of government

Under this theme, students answered three interview questions:

- Question 4: How would you describe the government in power?
- Question 5: How is academic freedom being treated by the government?
- Question 6: If Zimbabwe had another type of government do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?

##### 4.2.3.1. Question 4: How would you characterize the government in power?

Most students described the government as despotic. The most frequent words used to describe it were authoritarian, brutal and autocratic. The reasons given for this description were that the government had recently shut down the internet, was on the verge of introducing authoritarian legislation, had recently bought new police gear to suppress uprisings, and that it censors, tortures and kills people.

###### 4.2.3.1.1. Internet shutdown

The government shutdown the internet for the whole country sometime in January 2019 according to informants. One political science student said:

What happened in January is that the internet was blocked and as a student you cannot operate without that; you can't operate without internet. Even though the University was closed at that time it does not close fully. Internet is important for freedom of expression.

Several other students mentioned the internet shutdown in passing. The information was cross checked with the country's mainstream news. Many news outlets, including international ones, reported on the internet shutdown which is said to have taken place for a couple of days.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4.2.3.1.1. Authoritarian legislation

Informants said the government was introducing new authoritarian legislations. A media studies student said: "the government is restrictive and it's trying by all means to ensure that nothing happens that might raise awareness. They are crafting laws like the cyber bill". According to Tikk and Kerthunen, the cyber bill, which is still to be passed in Zimbabwe, has been criticized by the country's civil society as oppressive (Tikk, 2020).

#### 4.2.3.1.2. Police gear

The government recently purchased new gear for anti-riot police officers which was said to be for suppression of possible uprisings. A rural and urban planning student said: "The government acquired new riot gear to suppress uprisings. They are trying to squash freedom of expression". The information was cross checked against media reports; it was established that a few months before the interview with the student, the government purchased new gear for anti-riot police. Cross checking was done to establish whether it was a fact that the government had recently bought new gear for anti-riot police; it was not carried out to verify the opinion that the gear is for use to suppress uprisings. That being as it may, several scholars have linked the activities of the police in Zimbabwe to suppression of rights such as freedom of expression among others (Sachikonye, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-zimbabwe-politics/zimbabwe-court-says-internet-shutdown-during-protests-was-illegal-idUSKCN1PF11M>

#### 4.2.3.1.3. Abduction and torture

Some informants said the government is authoritarian because it abducts and tortures people. Referring to the government, one computer science student said:

It is so autocratic that even comedians are being ambushed in their homes. A comedian called Gonyeti was abducted and forced to drink sewage just because she made comedy skits relating to ZANU-PF corruption. They use the rule of guns.

Numerous news reports were made about the abduction of the Zimbabwean comedian.<sup>9</sup> Some of those reports however, said the government denied any involvement in the abduction.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, some Zimbabwean scholars have argued that the state uses abduction and torture to thwart dissent (Sachikonye, 2011).

#### 4.2.3.2. Question 5: How is academic freedom being treated by the government?

Most informants said academic freedom was being disregarded by the government because there was government interference, victimization of students on graduation day and limitation of areas in which students can conduct research on or write about. Referring to academic freedom, a computer science student said: “It is not treated well by the government at the university because the government has direct links to the university since the president is the chancellor. Rulers of Zimbabwe are also the rulers of university”.

A student from the faculty of arts said there was a system in place to scare students from engaging in dissent. He said: “The system is that they now target those who were vocal during graduations and they are excluded from the graduation and constrained at the Pavilion like Treasure Basopo. People are scared because of those stories”.

Many informants said that they were not free to conduct research in, or write about, some of the areas they desired. A media studies student said: “I can’t write something bad about the government. I am restricted to writing things in favor of or part of the government. As a student of media that affects me a lot because I can’t do checks on the government”.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/samantha-kureya-gonyeti-zimbabwe-satirist-abducted-gonyeti-harare-a9076256.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-49433387>

#### 4.2.3.3. Question 6: If Zimbabwe had another type of government do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?

This question was connected to question 4 which asked students to describe the government in power. Most students described the government as autocratic and when answering question 6, the majority of informants said if the government was democratic, academic freedom would be treated differently. A student from the faculty of social science said: “Academic freedom would survive in an open environment with a government willing to listen”. A science student said, “academic freedom would be treated different because a government different from this one would be one that respects human rights”.

### 4.3. Faculty members

This section presents findings from the faculty members’ segment. It follows the same format used to present findings in the students’ segment. Findings from a preliminary question will be presented first followed by findings from other interview questions. Findings from other interview questions will be presented under two themes: academic freedom and type of government. Under those themes data will be presented first by question then by topic as shown in the table below.

Table 7: Data structure (Faculty members)

Theme	Question	Topic
Academic Freedom	How would you describe the general academic freedom situation?	Censorship
		Freedom of expression
		Freedom to publish
		Inexperienced lecturers and academic freedom
		Inhibitive policies
		Lack of resources
		Politicization of the university
		Unsafe topics
		Surveillance
	Do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic	We have adequate academic freedom
We do not have adequate academic freedom		

	activities?	
Type of government	How would you characterize the government in power?	Autocratic regime
		Hybrid regime
	How is the government treating academic freedom?	The government promotes and respects academic freedom
		The government limits academic freedom
If Zimbabwe had another type of government do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?	Academic freedom under a democratic government	

*4.3.1. Preliminary question: when you hear the term academic freedom, what comes to your mind?*

A central theme in definitions given by faculty members was that academic freedom entails academics being free to criticize the government. A public administration lecturer said: “Academic freedom means all academics should be free to say whatever they want, even to criticize the government.... we should be objective. If the academic space is closed such that I cannot air views, there is no freedom”. A sociology lecturer aired similar sentiments but brought in the element that academic freedom has to be linked to some broader goal. Referring to academic freedom, she said:

From my experience, it’s about being able to express my ideas without any form of censorship as long as what I am communicating is reaching the audience it is intended to and it is being communicated the way it is supposed to be communicated. As long as it is contributing to the broader goal of the course or institutional growth. It’s about allowing disciplines to do whatever they are supposed to do.

Definitions from all the other faculty members said more or less the same things as the ones quoted above.

### 4.3.2. Theme 1: Academic freedom

Responses for the following questions were captured under this theme:

- Question 2: How would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the university of Zimbabwe?
- Question 3: Do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?

#### 4.3.2.1. Question 2: How would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe?

Faculty members spoke about several topics when they responded to this question, namely, censorship, freedom of expression, freedom to publish, inexperienced lecturers and academic freedom, policy, lack of resources, politicization of the university, unsafe topics and surveillance.

##### 4.3.2.1.1. Censorship

The government controls which research is consumed at the university according to informants. A lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

Government determines which types of researches are consumed. It came to a point where it had to infringe academic freedom. We have a colleague who wrote on diamonds in Chiadzwa, his issue was facets of power, there is a time when he had to launch the book at the UZ, they let him apply for permission and he sent a copy but they said no, the book is politically motivated so we won't allow you to launch it here because we don't have blood diamonds.

The informant was not forthcoming with information on the identity of the author but further research on the matter revealed that the book, titled *Facets of Power*, was edited by Richard Saunders and Tinashe Nyamunda and has several contributors. It is unclear which of the editors or contributors the informant was referring to (Saunders, 2016).

#### 4.3.2.1.2. Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression at the university was said to be hindered by the banning of social media use and expulsion of vocal academics. A public administration lecturer said:

At UZ starting point is communication. All lecturers and students are barred from using WhatsApp or social media to communicate. If you are caught there will be serious disciplinary measures. There was a memo! I should freely communicate via WhatsApp, twitter etc. but we are not allowed. We are afraid they can ask intelligence to track our numbers on social media so we don't say anything. But these are the instruments we should use for freedom of expression.

The memo referred to by the informant could not be obtained even though several attempts were made to get it. Many faculty members, however, confirmed that a memo was sent to them by the university administration barring them from using social media to communicate for academic purposes.

A lecturer from the faculty of arts said people at the university were not so free to air their views. He said:

People are not free to say what they want when we gather as academics but they speak when they gather in twos and threes. One academic was expelled for speaking against the code of conduct.. they cooked up a story.

The informant, however, did not name the academic they were referring to after a follow up question.

#### 4.3.2.1.3. Freedom to publish

The general sentiment was that in many instances, freedom to publish is respected but faculty members still faced many challenges. An engineering lecturer said:

Freedom to publish is OK but the problem we have been facing is the administration comes up with lists of journals that they say these are the ones we want. But sometimes

they are not the ones you expect to use as accessibility is sometimes difficult. Someone is setting those standards without consultation.

A lecturer from the faculty of arts brought up a case of a lecturer who was victimized after publication of his research. He said:

Looking at publications done by people there is a degree of some freedom..... but at some point this guy Obadiah Dodo had written about the youth and connected them to CIO and he was arrested but it later emerged that he was a former member of the CIO so they were saying he was using classified information.

A follow up on the case highlighted by the informant revealed that Obadiah Dodo was indeed arrested following publication of an academic article; it was reported in the national press.<sup>11</sup>

#### 4.3.2.1.4. Inexperienced lecturers and academic freedom

Some informants were of the view that the way academic freedom is treated by young and inexperienced lecturers at the university is different from how it is treated by more seasoned ones. A young lecturer from the faculty of social studies blamed the differences on the economy. He was of the notion that young academics were willing to forgo academic freedom in order to stay employed while more experienced lecturers could simply leave if their academic freedom was stifled. He said:

The staff are aware of their rights and freedoms but they are also cognizant of limitations especially these days you are either here or there. Why it's like that is because there are now very youthful and inexperienced lecturers, seasoned ones who don't care about getting fired have left. Inexperienced ones don't criticize, they keep quiet because they have not yet made names so they don't want to get fired. They might even support the establishment if asked questions by journalists because of the politics of the stomach. We have no assets we can touch or projects so if I get fired I become a destitute so there is no freedom.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/03/ex-cio-agent-gets-reprieve/>



A much older and more seasoned lecturer from the same faculty had a different reason for the difference between how young and more experienced lecturers treat academic freedom. He felt the difference was mainly due to fear of the government among young lecturers which, in his view, led to self-censorship. He said:

I have blamed the macro political system, but in addition, because of the system in which they grew up they (young academics) self-censor even when they may not realize that they are self-censoring. The syllabus they teach and the way they teach, the things they put in their syllabus and what they exclude... you see that its self-censorship, and what they allow to be discussed or not to be discussed in tutorials, even in their research and how they write... they think subconsciously if I write this way what will the intelligence people think... and ZANU-PF. This is what young academics subject themselves to... their understanding of academic freedom is warped.

The notion that there is a difference between how young and more experienced academics treat academic freedom was only prevalent in the faculty of social science.

#### 4.3.2.1.5. Policy

Informants talked about three ways in which policy affects academic freedom. They said academic activities have to conform to national policy. Furthermore, they said policy determines what types of research are supported financially and that it also determines the types of programs offered by departments. A lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

On the part of the authorities you find that generally the researchers are told they have freedom to think, carry out research etc. but then they become confined by policies that are operational at any time e.g. looking at the macro environment within higher education, new ministers come up with blue prints such as education 5.0. Ministers have their vision on what higher education should be like and this cascades down to universities and university authorities feed these policies down the throats of researchers and what they are doing has to conform to the policies. So people are only allowed to think within the purview of those polices. Much as you might think outside that you have no facilities to enable you outside that framework.

A lecturer from the faculty of social studies shared similar sentiments but also highlighted that historically, this had become the norm. She said:

Right now we are in this mode that we have to be an upper middle income country by 20130 and all sorts of other rhetoric... what has happened at UZ is that we then came up with a new strategic plan to align university activities and work to vision 2030. At some point when we had ZIMASSET we also came with a strategic plan to align things to ZIMASSET.

ZIMASSET was the overall policy of a previous government in Zimbabwe (Bonga, 2014). The current government is implementing Vision 2030 (Duri, 2019).

Focusing on the issue of research funding, a lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

Policy affects academic freedom more significantly than anything else especially where it concerns research that requires lots of financial resources because the policies then shape what kind of researches will be supported financially. Otherwise for those other researches which do not really require funding e.g. people just writing papers especially qualitative research, it (policy) may not impact much because people can publish wherever they like if they have resources to do so.

The same lecturer also said national policy determines what sort of programs are offered at the university. He said:

But also, it does shape the kind of programs that are then offered by departments... sometimes you find certain programs may fall under threat because they are not really auguring well with new policies so everyone is being forced to shape up to the policy framework.

An example of how programs offered by departments are determined by policy or the main thrust of the government was given by a sociology lecturer who highlighted that her entire department had recently been erased. Speaking of a context characterized by government control, she said:

In that context emerges a minister who has some distorted understanding of science and thinks something that is scientific is a thing so the university has to be taken towards that direction. Other disciplines then don't really matter now like sociology and programs in the faculty of arts because they are not scientific in the manner the minister defines as science. They have erased sociology and came up with a new department.

A follow up on the matter revealed that there were some news reports about how the university administration resolved to scrap several programs including sociology.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4.3.2.1.6. Lack of resources

Unavailability of resources and how this affects academic freedom was a recurrent topic among informants. A lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

Overarching sentiment is to encourage (research) but the environment may not be promoting that in terms of funding and time wise. So as much as people may be willing, they may not have adequate time and resources to do so.

The reason given for lack of time is a heavy workload among lecturers. That reason was captured under a different question and will be presented in one of the following sections.

An engineering lecturer talked about lack of basic resources required for access to information. He said:

When you talk of freedom for lecturers it means I have equipment and access to information but we don't have that much... the computer I have is more than forty years old, it belongs to the archives. Where is the freedom, it's not there. What we have simply done is we have gone into our shells for fear of the unknown because of the environment, both political and economic.

Several other faculty members talked about lack of resources and how it encumbers their academic duties.

<sup>12</sup> <https://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-national-byo-182995.html>

#### 4.3.2.1.7. Politicization of the university

Informants believed that the university had been turned into some sort of extension of the ruling party and government. They identified two ways in which they believed the university was being politicized: appointment of government loyalists to positions in the university administration and control of the curriculum by government. One lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

Degree of politicization has gone to other levels. Our first Chancellor resigned because of political pressure... other people who came were pure political appointments. Successive people who came did not have guts but were satisfied with positions and benefiting, they were just answerable to political appointers, they also appointed people politically aligned as their juniors from the dean down to the chair.

After a follow up question, the informant highlighted that the chancellor he was referring to was Walter Kamba. Kamba resigned from the position of chancellor at the University of Zimbabwe in the early 1990s citing political interference. (Human Rights Watch, 1991) Another lecturer, from the faculty of social studies, aired similar sentiments. He was of the notion that universities are politicized firstly through the president being chancellor of all universities and through political appointments to posts in the university administration. However, he highlighted that there was a time when the situation was different. He said:

Institutional erosion of academic freedom started with the politicization of higher education through the chancellorship of universities. And the appointments... Vice Chancellor is a political post... it became a political post after University of Zimbabwe Amendment Act. Before the act deans were elected by faculty members; you would be elected by your peers on the basis of academic merit, then this changed. Dean Rudo Gaidzanwa was fired while she was away, that would not have happened if she had been elected.

A faculty of arts lecturer spoke about how control of the curriculum by the government was part of the politicization process. He said:

We have a situation where politics controls the curriculum, they meet in parliament and say the president and speaker has said university should do ABC, I don't know whether they are academics or know what we should be doing; the moment we resist they show you your place, that is an aspect of academic freedom being breached. It shall come to a point where we are just muzzled and don't think. People in the corridors right now are not happy about programming coming from politicians.

The issue of the curriculum was a hot topic talked about by many other informants. This is mainly because a new curriculum was in the process of being implemented during the time the research was conducted. All the informants expressed displeasure in the way the government was handling the process, maintaining that there was insufficient consultation with faculty members.

#### 4.3.2.1.8. Safe and unsafe topics

There are general and specific topics that were said to be either safe or unsafe to discuss or pursue through research. A public administration lecturer highlighted that topics that support the government are, in general, safe. He said: "You are only allowed to be free when saying something supportive of the regime and they will publicize that. But this does not represent the climate within the university".

A specific topic that was said to be unsafe was Zimbabwe's land reform. One arts lecturer who has done research on the topic said:

We interrogated land reform and we found that it destroyed the coffee industry. When I presented my findings, the questions I was asked were political: they were asking are you saying land reform failed? It led me to be very cautious in the way I do my research – I'm no longer free to express.

A sociology lecturer, who said the land reform was one of her key areas of interest, shared similar sentiments. She said:

Even among students there are certain topics they don't pick. Last time I was speaking to other colleagues on land governance in Africa, I realized in our department there is

no student who has done research on land. Land is regarded as something that is political. And it's a university where you are not supposed to get into politics. So even where there is a knowledge gap you just don't get into that. It's one of my areas of interest..... it then becomes hard to tell my students there are a lot of issues around land when suggesting a topic because the general view is that it's a no-go area.

Zimbabwe's land reform, which commenced in 2000 is mired in controversy, with some scholars saying it was chaotic while others claim it was successful (Scoones, 2011).

#### 4.3.2.1.9. Surveillance

Just like students, faculty members also expressed fears of surveillance. A lecturer from the faculty of arts said: "We have the feeling that we are always under watch, that whatever we say in class is vetted". Another lecturer, also from the faculty of arts, said: "There are fears that within university there are people working on behalf of the state".

#### 4.3.2.2. Question 3: Do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?

Faculty members who answered this question can be divided into two groups: those who said "we have adequate academic freedom" and those who said "we do not have adequate academic freedom".

##### 4.3.2.2.1. "We have adequate academic freedom"

This group is only composed of faculty members from the faculty of science. They all said they had adequate academic freedom to carry on with their research and academic activities. Responding to whether he had adequate academic freedom, a dentistry lecturer said: "Yes, there has never been any restriction". While giving the reason why he felt he enjoyed adequate academic freedom, a crop science lecturer said: "I deal with plants... normally we want to improve yields".

#### 4.3.2.2.2. “We don’t have adequate academic freedom”

All lecturers from the faculty of arts and social science said they did not have adequate academic freedom. They said they had no freedom to research and constantly engaged in self-censorship. A public administration lecturer said:

There is now thorough vetting in Zimbabwe for research. To get clearance is a nightmare if you want to study a public institution.<sup>13</sup> They will not clear you unless you are known to be sympathetic. They will frustrate you; the clearance is too much: police, intelligence and research council are involved. You have to visit ZRP for fingerprints, CIO to be profiled etc. Sometimes they may say go ahead, I did but I was told this file and that file is classified. I said can I have interviews, the people were saying I’m busy, come tomorrow. Unless if you do desk research... then you will be OK, but interviews involving government officials are not easy.

Another reason that was given for lack of freedom of research, besides a stringent vetting process, was the issue of a heavy workload resulting in time constraints. A lecturer from the faculty of arts said:

You find that personal space is invaded by the working environment. For instance, there is a policy that no new staff members should be recruited due to the economic environment. There is a lot of workload that you become encumbered with. As a researcher, you become bogged down with all the work as a result you are not really free to research. Freedom should come with space and time. I feel I could do more if it were not for circumstances.

Two lecturers from the faculty of social science talked about their experience with self-censorship. The first one, a public administration lecturer, said:

At a personal level when we teach students you should be very mindful of examples you use. I can use some that I think are not politically sensitive. Zimbabwe is now a police state so you don’t know if some of the students... some are spies... so I tend to be

<sup>13</sup> Please see Appendix B

selective with examples, I fear victimization. Sometimes I explain concepts and say go and look for examples by yourselves. Sometimes the government says lecturers are inciting students because some of the examples we give are viewed as inciting students. This is different from the late Prof Makumbe, he had a name, the government could not fire him.

The second lecturer, who teaches sociology, gave a specific example about a time when she felt she had to censor herself. She said:

The context shapes a lot in how far you can go when it comes to academic freedom. There are a lot of things that I want to say but I have to censor myself: what is the Vice Chancellor or minister going to say if I say or write this?! Around October last year I presented a paper on the auditor general's report which was highlighting lots of leakages and the social impact on different sections of society. The report was clear in terms of stating which sector, how much, who was responsible etc. I was presenting information already in the public domain but I remember there were certain aspects I couldn't mention because I knew at the end of the day the information would get to the minister and VC, and you will be summoned and called for disciplinary hearings.

The issue of self-censorship was talked about by most of the academics from the faculty of arts and faculty of social science.

#### 4.3.3. Theme 2: Type of government

Informants answered three questions under this theme:

- Question 4: How would you characterize the government in power?
- Question 5: How is academic freedom being treated by the government?
- Question 6: If Zimbabwe had another type of government, do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?



#### 4.3.3.1. Question 4: How would you characterize the government in power?

Three main characterizations of the government were made by faculty members. One faculty member described it as liberal, six, as autocratic and one as a hybrid regime. Two lecturers from science faculties opted not to answer the question. The faculty member who described the government as liberal, an engineering lecturer, gave no reasons for this characterization.

##### 4.3.3.1.1. Autocratic regime

Those who described the government as autocratic said it was authoritarian because it killed civilians in 2018, does not permit free research and uses common authoritarian tactics such as co-optation. A public administration lecturer said:

From 24 Nov 2017, Mnangagwa was sworn in. He promised to deepen democracy. We believed and trusted him. But the events from 1 August 2018 demonstrated who ED (Emmerson Mnangagwa) is, the inner. He is now extremely oppressive, otherwise Robert Mugabe was better.

On 1 August 2018 the Zimbabwean army opened fire on unarmed civilians and killed at least six people (Mungwari, 2019). A lecturer from the faculty of arts said faculty members were not free to do research because the government was authoritarian. He said:

We are yet to see real deliverables in terms of affording researchers the space to do research even if it means it will expose government. So far one wouldn't feel safe doing something viewed to be contrary to government. If you notice I wasn't articulate in responding to this question in comparison to others because one begins to feel uneasy because they don't know what to expect.

A lecturer from the faculty of social studies talked about a strategy used by the government which is also commonly used by autocracies. He said: "He (Mnangagwa) managed to come up with the cooptation strategy, key opponents, or critics are being roped into the system e.g. PAC (Presidential Advisory Council), Trevor Ncube and POLAD (Political Actors Dialogue)". Trevor Ncube is one of the country's most prominent media moguls.

#### 4.3.3.1.2. Hybrid regime

There were some sentiments that the government did not fall in the authoritarian or liberal categories but was a hybrid regime. One political science lecturer said:

It's a hybrid regime that has been hardening except for episodes. During ED's (Emmerson Mnangagwa) first nine months up to elections we were a benign authoritarianism. We have institutions that look like they are democratic that do not act in a democratic way. There is an implementation gap in terms of good laws... we have a constitution reputed to be one of the best... the constitution is being eviscerated. In the period before it was amended, it was not being fully implemented. That's why we still have vicious laws like POSA (Public Order and Security Act) which is worse than LOMA (Law Order and Maintenance Act); laws that are ultra vires the constitution. Having good institutions that do not operate empirically... that's a hallmark of a hybrid regime.

He further went on to say that hybrid regimes occupy a grey area between complete democracy and outright authoritarianism. Referring to Zimbabwe's regime, he said the most important question is "in which direction is it moving?!"

#### 4.3.3.4. Question 5: How is academic freedom being treated by the government?

Two major views emerged in response to this question. The first one was that the government does not only respect academic freedom, but it also promotes it. The second view was that the government limits academic freedom.

#### 4.3.3.4.5. The government respects and promotes academic freedom

This view was only held by academics from science faculties. They said the government does not interfere with academic freedom whatsoever. An academic from the faculty of engineering said: "So far I haven't heard of any interference into institutions. They (academics) are free to do whatever they are supposed to do within their mandate". One crop science lecturer said the government actually promotes academic freedom. He said:

I think now the government wants products from the university to assist in industrialization. I think they are sort of promoting or encouraging research. On that note there is some sort of freedom. We have an innovation center, if a student has done some research, if we identify that a useful product is going to come from their research, we put them in the building so they develop the product. We retain them when they finish school. We have a student who has developed a pesticide which can be used to control some plant diseases. The student has been sent to the innovation hub to further develop. The university has identified quite a number of innovations.

All in all, every academic from science faculties said the government was not interfering with academic freedom.

#### 4.3.3.4.6. The government limits academic freedom

All academics from the faculties of arts and social science were of the view that the government limits academic freedom. Some said this was mostly because the university was run by a minister who was part of an authoritarian government and that the university was a microcosm of political dynamics in the entire country (which they described as authoritarian). A sociology lecturer said: “The problem comes in when a minister is part of an authoritarian government and they are responsible for higher education. Whatever policy decisions he makes are influenced by his positionality within an authoritarian state”. A political science lecturer said the university was a microcosm of broader society. He said:

UZ is a microcosm of the macro political system. If you want to change UZ it's too late to institute internal changes at UZ without changing the outside. If you have a democratic system, then all the other institutions will follow. So, you have to change that in order to change the micro.

One academic from the faculty of arts said the government interferes with student politics and this had a bearing on academic freedom.

#### 4.3.3.5. Question 6: If Zimbabwe had another type of government, do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?

Most informants, except those from science faculties who either chose not to answer or gave an answer that was in no way addressing the question, said that academic freedom would be treated differently under a democratic government. One public administration lecturer said: “If we can have a democratic government which subscribes to democratic ideals, it means such a government welcomes constructive criticism. But if a government is authoritarian, dissent in such a system is not allowed”. A sociology lecturer aired similar sentiments. She said:

It will be treated differently because if you are going to have a different type of government that will respect constitutionalism and the origin of academic freedom, and that it’s a right – and respect all other rights – I am sure the notion of academic freedom would be treated differently and also how institutions are governed.

There are informants that expressed reservations that academic freedom would be treated differently under a different type of government. One said: “it depends on who would be in that other government”.

### **4.4. Members of Council and Senate**

This section presents findings from members of council and senate who only answered one question.

#### 4.4.1. Theme 3: Institutional autonomy

##### 4.4.1.1. Question 7: what are the reasons for the prevailing levels of autonomy at the university?

Informants raised three topics in their responses, namely, government control of the university, name dropping and creation of an intimidating atmosphere.

The general view was that the government seeks to micromanage the university. A member of council said: “One of the reasons we have one chancellor of all universities is to maintain control of all universities. The state wants to continue to have control over all the institutions”. One member of the Senate gave a possible reason as to why the government wants to maintain control over the university. He said:

The government is very fearful, afraid that universities can mobilize the people and make sure that it is removed from power, especially lecturers and students. As a result, the government has to closely monitor and supervise. That is the whole idea. If you go on leave at UZ they want to know exactly where you are during vacation... if you change address they want to know, which means there is hundred percent surveillance; the whole idea is about power. Especially UZ, government is very particular, some universities have reasonable autonomy but here it's serious, it's really serious. Maybe it's about proximity of UZ to their offices. All international organizations, embassies... their offices are in Harare so if there is a demonstration in Harare it attracts more attention. Because of that, international organizations can see first-hand, they can say “I saw it” so I think that's why they closely monitor.

The same senate member talked about name dropping, another way through which government is believed to maintain control. He said:

Senate works on behalf of the UZ council, so we implement policies made by council. If a policy is made “up there” we have to implement. What we simply do is make suggestions that can be adopted or thrown away. And we can't question because the chairperson of the council reports to the minister and he was appointed by the minister; at the end, their policies carry the day. When the vice-chancellor comes to the senate, he says I am coming from the minister's office... name dropping, meaning you don't need to question this, who are you to question the minister?!

Informants also talked about appointments to administration posts which they said were made on the basis of loyalty to the government. In addition to this, the environment in the senate was said to be very intimidating. One member of the senate said:

Once upon a time the senate was a very robust and vibrant body. The chairman of the senate who is the Vice Chancellor would go there trembling, lots of debate in the meetings. Now that has changed. Now the senate meeting, which used to drag for three hours, is just one hour. Now you are just told that this is what should be done and there is fear, the chairman just says things he wants and there is little opposition, maybe just from people like Madhuku. The atmosphere is so intimidating and no one dares to raise his or her voice. The directives that the vice-chancellor brings are not coming from his office but from the minister or the chancellor, or from outside structures.

Some informants also said appointments were used to control the university but that aspect was well captured in responses for different questions which have already been presented.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings and concludes the study. First, it presents a summary of the findings, second it discusses implications of the findings and ends with a conclusion. The findings answer the central research question: what is the general academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe? They do this by outlining how various rights that go into academic freedom, such as freedom of expression, are believed to be treated at the university. They also highlight how certain factors, such as surveillance, among others, are said to affect academic freedom. All these elements, when put together, provide an insight into the general academic freedom situation at the university of Zimbabwe. The findings also answer the study's three sub-questions, namely, in what way is institutional autonomy treated at the university, how are current policies relevant in the academic freedom discourse at the university and how does the government treat academic freedom at the university?

### 5.2. Summary of findings

This section, through the table below, presents a summary of the findings by theme, interview question and brief answer. The brief answer presents a succinct version of findings for each interview question.

*Table 8: Summary of findings*

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Interview question</b>	<b>Brief answer</b>
Academic freedom	When you hear the term academic freedom, what comes to your mind?	Informants said academic freedom was, among other things, about freedom to learn and freedom of expression.
	How would you describe the academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe?	Students said there were abductions but only one specific case was mentioned. According to both students and faculty members, freedom of expression and freedom to publish are only enjoyed by those who are pro-government. Students said they don't enjoy freedom of expression because of fear of abduction and arrest. Faculty members said their freedom of expression was hindered by barring of social media use and fear of

		<p>expulsion. Both students and faculty members said they felt they were under surveillances by student informers and state agents. Students said surveillance led to abductions, students being taken in by campus security and stifling of freedom of expression. They also said the government labels those who speak against it “regime change agents”, “puppets of erstwhile colonizers” and “opposition”. They named two policies they believe to affect academic freedom: Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and Ordinance 30. Faculty members highlighted three ways in which policy affects academic freedom. They said it determines what type of research is funded, the type of programs offered by departments and affects academic activities. Students said the environment was not conducive for learning because they were barred from carrying out activities that are crucial for education. Faculty members felt the way academic freedom is treated by young and inexperienced lecturers is not the same way it is treated by more seasoned ones. The reasons given for this were prevalence of economic hardships and fear of reprisal from the government among young lecturers. Faculty members said lack of resources, namely time and equipment, affected their academic freedom. They identified ways in which they believe the university is being politicized, including, but not limited to, appointment of government loyalists in the administration and control of the curriculum by the government.</p>
	<p>Do you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your research and academic activities?</p>	<p>Science students and faculty members said they have adequate academic freedom because they don’t delve into political matters while students and academics from the faculty of social science and arts said they had inadequate academic freedom. Students said this was because their research was censored and they feared reprisal, faculty members said this was due to self-censorship and lack of freedom to research. One student said she had adequate academic freedom because she was post grad and was treated differently from undergrad students.</p>
<p>Type of government</p>	<p>How would you characterize the government in power?</p>	<p>Most faculty members and students characterized the government as authoritarian. They said this was because it had recently shut down the internet, bought anti-riot gear to suppress a possible uprising, was on the verge of introducing authoritarian legislation, does not permit free research, uses methods common in dictatorships such as co-optation and censors, kills and tortures people. Some faculty members said it was a hybrid regime because it has good institutions that do not operate empirically.</p>



	How is the government treating academic freedom?	Most students and faculty members said academic freedom was being disregarded by the government. Students said this was because there was government interference, victimization of students on graduation day and limitations in areas in which students can conduct research; faculty members said this was because the university was run by a minister who is part of an authoritarian regime and that the university was a microcosm of political dynamics in the entire country. There were some academics, however, from science faculties who said the government respects and promotes academic freedom because it does not interfere, and it funds research.
	If Zimbabwe had another type of government would academic freedom at the university be treated differently?	Most informants, except lecturers from science faculties, said if the government was democratic, academic freedom would be treated differently. Lecturers from science faculties either gave answers that were not responding to the question or chose not to answer the question altogether.
Institutional autonomy	What are the reasons for the prevailing levels of institutional autonomy	All informants said there was no institutional autonomy because of government control, name dropping and creation of an intimidating atmosphere in senate.

### 5.3. Implications of the findings

This section discusses the implications of findings. It is divided into the following key areas: comprehension of the topic by informants, abduction, self-censorship, labelling, policy, experience of lecturers and academic freedom, lack of resources, politicization of the university and institutional autonomy.

#### 5.3.1. Comprehension of the topic by informants

Informants showed a general understanding of what academic freedom entails. This assertion is based on how they answered a preliminary interview question that required them to define the concept. Their definitions were more or less in line with general scholarly definitions of academic freedom, that is except for that of one student who said academic freedom is about students engaging authorities on decision making. His definition is not consistent with scholarly definitions of academic freedom, including the one used as the working definition

for this thesis. That informants, except for one student, were generally knowledgeable on the topic is especially important given that academic freedom is misunderstood. Having informants that understood the topic means responses they gave produced rich findings, granted the right research questions were asked and data analysis was optimal.

### 5.3.2. Self-censorship

Findings imply that one of the biggest barriers to academic freedom at the university of Zimbabwe is self-censorship caused by fear of reprisal. The source of this fear, according to informants, is awareness of past cases of victimization of students, faculty members and general citizens who offer dissenting views. The calculus approach offers a possible explanation of how awareness of past cases of reprisal can lead to self-censorship. According to the calculus approach, as already noted in the theory section, people are mostly concerned with maximizing self-interest. It would appear avoiding bodily harm and preserving one's physical freedom by refraining, through self-censorship, from offering dissenting views in a country – or at a university – where such views are believed to have resulted in past arrests, torture or abductions, are acts of maximizing self-interest.

However, in as much as an assumption can be made that awareness of past cases of reprisal can lead one to self-censor out of fear of being the next victim, such an assumption is devoid of a link that explains how one may come to reasonably believe that if they offer dissenting views, those responsible for reprisals will be aware of it and act upon that information to carry out reprisals. According to the findings, the belief, which many students and faculty members hold, that they are under surveillance, is a possible reason why many students and faculty members at the university may be convinced whatever they say will reach the ears of those responsible for reprisals.

According to informants, the government is the entity responsible for reprisals. This notion was well expressed when informants characterized the government in power and discussed how it treats academic freedom. They said it, among other things, tortures and abducts people (which are all forms of reprisals). Those believed to be responsible for surveillance (state agents) work for, and report to, the government (the entity believed to be responsible for reprisals). As such, it is quite possible some students and faculty members at the university

self-censor not only because they are aware of past cases of reprisals, but also because they believe those responsible for the reprisals are watching them, hence if they offer dissenting views they will easily be discovered and become the next victim.

### 5.3.3. Abductions

It is unclear whether student abductions are rampant in Zimbabwe or if they are linked to academic freedom as suggested by many informants. Historically, there have been many cases of student abduction in Zimbabwe according to an organization called Student Solidarity Trust (SST). From 2006 to 2010 alone, it says it recorded 211 cases of abduction and torture of students (SAIH, 2012). While many informants from the student community spoke with conviction about the prevalence of student abductions, only one specific student was said to have been abducted in recent times. This points to two major possibilities. Either student abductions have decreased or they haven't but informants were not knowledgeable about recent specific cases. The Student Solidarity Trust (SST) which was involved in past documentation of student abductions, among other things, is now defunct. Scholars At Risk (SAR), which reports regularly on student rights and academic freedom in many countries, including Zimbabwe, has only reported one case (the same case mentioned by informants) of student abduction in the last eight years.<sup>14</sup> It is highly likely the reason only one recent case was made reference to by both informants and SAR is because that is the only case of student abduction that is said to have occurred in the last eight years. That being said, while there may have been student abductions related to academic freedom in the past, the specific case mentioned by informants does not appear to be a violation of academic freedom. This is because Fanuel Kaseke, the student informants said was abducted, was said to have been abducted for his involvement in a demonstration about tuition fees.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of this research, parameters were set for what constitutes academic freedom through a working definition of the concept. According to that definition the main goal of academic freedom is pursuance of knowledge, as in knowledge creation; anything that does not seek to fulfill this goal cannot be defined as an exercise of academic freedom. Involvement in a protest about

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.scholarsatrisk.org/report/2017-06-28-university-zimbabwe/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.universityworldnews.com/post.php?story=20170715062906873>

fees has nothing to do with creation of knowledge and can thus not be classified as an exercise of academic freedom. This means though informants thought that particular case of student abduction was relevant in the academic freedom discourse, it is not.

#### 5.3.4. Type of government and academic freedom

Two important propositions about academic freedom and type of government made by Suwanwela, which were discussed in the literature review, are supported by findings. The first one is that academic freedom is normally part of the human rights situation in a specific country. That is, if other rights are disregarded in a certain country, it is likely that academic freedom will also be disregarded, and vice versa. The second argument, which is connected to the first, is that the human rights situation in a country, including the state of academic freedom, depends on the type of government. The findings seem to support both assertions. When informants were asked to give a characterization of the government in power, they gave the impression that general rights of citizens, especially those to do with liberty, were being disregarded in Zimbabwe. Most of them also went on to say that academic freedom in particular was also being disregarded. Meaning both academic freedom and general human rights, according to informants, are not guaranteed in Zimbabwe in general and at the University of Zimbabwe in particular. This is very much in line with Suwanwela's assertion that the academic freedom situation in a specific country is a reflection of the general human rights situation. Suwanwela's second assertion, that academic freedom depends on the type of government, is also supported by the findings. Most informants either characterized the type of government in Zimbabwe as authoritarian or hybrid. The fact that they also said if Zimbabwe had another type of government, specifically a democratic one, academic freedom would be treated differently, means they believe the type of government in place has a bearing on how academic freedom is treated.

#### 5.3.5. Labelling

Findings point to use of labels such as opposition, puppets of erstwhile colonizers and agents of regime change by the government against those who criticize it in the academic community. The labels appear to be tools for attacking academic freedom through removing the academic tag from students and faculty members. This appears to be done so that the

government can attack them without the condemnation that comes with attacking people that are regarded to be part of the academic fraternity. A careful analysis reveals that, in as far as public perception is concerned, the tags attempt to change how academics and students are viewed regarding the agenda they champion at a learning institution. Normally, the agenda of academics and students is regarded to be the pursuance of knowledge. The tags in question, however, give students and academics a new agenda in the public eye. Each tag has underlying connotations that are meant to do away with the notion that the agenda of academics is to pursue knowledge. The opposition tag implies academics and students are not interested in pursuing knowledge but rather, are interested in furthering opposition politics. Similarly, the tag “regime change agents” gives the impression that academics and students are more interested in toppling the government than teaching and learning. Lastly, the tag “puppets of erstwhile colonizers” implies students and academics are foreign agents of some sort with an agenda that is divorced from pursuing knowledge. Academic freedom, it can be argued, is specifically given to academics because of the important role they play in pursuing knowledge. When this role, through labeling, is removed from academics and students, it means students and academics who have been labelled cannot claim protection under academic freedom. Tags imply students and academics are not pursuing the objective for which academic freedom is given, they imply that students and faculty members are not academics but elements that cannot claim academic freedom because their task is not pursuance of knowledge. Put somewhat differently, removal of the academic tag from students and academics and its replacement by the labels in question paves way for the attack of academics who may be genuinely involved in academic work that the government may consider inimical to its interests, hence the strategy of using labels to discredit and victimize them.

#### 5.3.6. Policy

The research suggests that policy determines the kind of research that is conducted at the university. The government of Zimbabwe periodically comes up with an overarching policy that guides all ministries and the entire government. Previously, it was a policy called ZIMASSET, currently, it’s a blueprint called Vision 2030. A widely held view among faculty members was that for one’s research to be funded, it had to fall within the framework of the

current overarching policy of the country. It appears this is not altogether a new phenomenon as one informant highlighted that this is not only the case under the current government, but it was also the case under the previous one. In addition to being aligned to the government's overarching policy, informants said research also has to be in line with policies being championed by the parent ministry for tertiary institutions, the ministry of higher education, science and technology. Currently, that ministry is spearheading a policy dubbed education 5.0. It appears that for researchers to easily get funding or support from the government, their research has to be in line with either Vision 2030 or Education 5.0, or both. This most likely confines the work of researchers in a way that is inimical to academic freedom.

### 5.3.7. Academic freedom under different faculties

One major finding of the research is that opinions regarding how academic freedom is treated at the university differ considerably depending on the faculty one belongs to, with students and academics in science faculties saying they have adequate academic freedom while those from faculty of arts and faculty of social science claimed the opposite. Students and academics in science faculties said the government promotes academic freedom and an example was given of how it supports innovation hubs in crop science. This seems to suggest that in as far as science faculties are concerned, the government promotes research which is a crucial element of academic freedom. No examples of such support were given by students and academics in the faculties of social science and arts. Students and academics from those faculties were of the opinion that they did not have adequate academic freedom because of censorship and fear of reprisals. It seems the government seeks to heavily control the faculties of social science and arts because they deal with controversial topics, such as the land reform for instance, which can be used to shape opinion on government performance. Using the calculus approach, it can be argued that individuals that make up the government are concerned with maximizing self interest. It can be further argued that such individuals most likely view criticism of the government that often comes from the faculties of social science and arts as a threat to their self-interest. It is thus possible that there is a real difference in how academic freedom is treated in various faculties and that the reason for this is that the government interferes more with faculties of social science and arts to control dissent but has

no need to exercise such control in science faculties because they do not normally engage in topics that involve government criticism.

#### 5.3.8. Experience of lecturers and academic freedom

There appears to be a difference between less experienced lecturers and seasoned academics when it comes to how the two groups treat academic freedom. Informants said unlike seasoned lecturers who can get jobs anywhere, less experienced academics do not have the same market value and exercise academic freedom with caution because they fear losing their jobs. Informants said less experienced lecturers feel like they can easily be replaced and tend to self-censor in order to keep their jobs. This kind of behavior can be explained by the calculus approach. Young academics most likely feel that it is in their best interests to disregard academic freedom in order to keep their jobs and the pay that comes with it.

#### 5.3.9. Lack of resources

Lack of resources, specifically time and equipment, is one of the issues affecting academic freedom at the university of Zimbabwe according to the findings. This is most likely because of Zimbabwe's pro-longed economic crisis which has seen minimal resources being allocated to public tertiary institutions by the government. Due to limited financial resources, the university is most likely not in a position to purchase adequate technology which is up to date. Furthermore, limited resources likely mean the university is unable to hire a sufficient number of lecturers resulting in heavy work loads that leaves faculty members with little time to conduct research.

#### 5.3.10. Politicization of the university

The findings show that the general opinion among students and academics is that the University of Zimbabwe has been politicized. One of the biggest reasons given to support this view has to do with the fact that the President of Zimbabwe is, by law, the chancellor of all universities.

The chancellor appoints the vice-chancellor who makes key appointments in the administration. The fact that the vice chancellor serves at the pleasure of the president means

he will most likely do whatever is asked of him by his appointing authority. Similarly, the fact that the vice chancellor appoints many of the lower posts such as deans and chairpersons of departments also means those who hold those posts will act in a way that is consistent with the wishes and aspirations of their appointing authority.

The reason for that sort of compliant behavior can be explained by the calculus approach which argues that people will do anything to maximize their personal interest. It is in the best interests of the vice chancellor to do what he is told by the president in order to keep his job. Likewise, it is in the best interests of those appointed by the vice chancellor to comply with his directives in order to keep their jobs.

All of this would not have a negative effect on academic freedom if the president and his government were interested in upholding academic freedom. However, according to informants, the government is interested in limiting academic freedom, especially within the faculties of social science and arts which means the connection between the president and the university administration, which is mostly through appointment, is likely to be exploited to thwart academic freedom.

In the literature review, a specific example was given of an informant in a study by Hwami who claimed that the vice chancellor had censored him in a bid to shield the president from criticism (Hwami, 2013). This has to be viewed within the context of the state president university administration complex which was explained in the literature review. The state president university administration complex more or less explains how the president's role as chancellor and his powers to appoint the vice chancellor, among other things, most likely result in a situation whereby academic freedom is curtailed in a bit to shield the president and his/her government from criticism at the university.

#### 5.3.11. Institutional autonomy and academic freedom

The findings support a claim made by Tight that absence of institutional autonomy most likely results in limited academic freedom. A huge number of informants highlighted that both institutional autonomy and academic freedom are limited at the university of Zimbabwe. This supports Tight's assertion that "...where institutional autonomy is virtually non-existent,



as in centrally planned economies, academic freedom is less likely to exist or be maintained” (Tight, 1988, p. 123). A possible reason why lack of institutional autonomy may lead to limited academic freedom at the university of Zimbabwe has to do with the state president university administration complex. Institutional autonomy, simply put, means a university should be able to make its own decisions without undue outside interference. Yet due to the state president university administration complex, some actors within the university, such as the vice chancellor, do the bidding of outside forces in the form of the president and government.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

The aim of this study was to explore the current academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe as is reflected by the main research question. The findings suggest that many limitations to academic freedom exist at the University of Zimbabwe. They include but are not limited to lack of freedom of expression and research, lack of institutional autonomy as well as self-censorship. The research, however, shows that not all students and faculty members believe they are facing these limitations. Students and faculty members from science faculties are of the view that they have adequate academic freedom to carry on with their research and academic activities. This is in sharp contrast to the views of students and academics from the faculty of arts and faculty of social studies.

The significance of findings cannot be understood without comprehending why academic freedom is important. This is because what the findings suggest, i.e. that academic freedom is limited at the University of Zimbabwe, can only be significant if what is being limited, namely academic freedom, is important. While the importance of academic freedom, in general, has to do with the prospects it offers for advancement of knowledge in all spheres, it appears that in the specific context of Zimbabwe, academic freedom is important because it is an avenue through which the performance of the government is criticized. In fact, attempts to thwart academic freedom by the government recorded in the literature and implied by the research suggest academic freedom is very instrumental in providing critical analysis of government performance. If it were not, the government would see no need to curtail it. More often than not, in Zimbabwe, critical analysis from the academia points to bad governance and

abuse of power. It seems this results in a desire to silence academics by the government, and those who run it, so as to protect or maximize self-interest in an exhibition of human behavior that is predicted by the calculus approach.

A major contribution made by this research to the topic is exploring how academic freedom is treated within the three cultures of education as proposed by Kagan, namely social science, natural science and humanities (Kagan, 2009). No other research in Zimbabwe has taken this approach. Findings suggest that students and faculty members in science faculties believe they have more academic freedom than those from the faculties of arts and social studies. This can be the basis for further research, perhaps research of a more quantitative nature that seeks to establish causal relations.

Findings suggest that while many limitations to academic freedom seem to be prevalent at the University of Zimbabwe, the biggest one is self-censorship. This is because many hinderances discussed by informants are somehow linked to it. For instance, fear of reprisals, existence of certain policies (such as the one used to arrest people for “undermining authority of the president”), and the belief that students and academics are being surveilled, seem to all lead to self-censorship.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### **Preliminary Question**

1. When you hear the term academic freedom what comes to your mind?

### **Theme 1: Academic Freedom**

2. How would you describe the general academic freedom situation at the University of Zimbabwe?
3. Do you feel you have adequate academic freedom to carry on with your academic and research activities?

### **Theme 2: Type of Government**

4. How would you characterize the government in power?
5. How is academic freedom being treated by the government?
6. If Zimbabwe had another type of government, do you think academic freedom would be treated differently?

### **Theme 3: Institutional Autonomy**

7. What are the reasons for the prevailing levels of autonomy at the university?

## APPENDIX B: CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN RESEARCHER AND UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

### **Description**

This correspondence shows that the University of Zimbabwe administration did not grant permission for the researcher to conduct research at the university even though such permission was sought. It supports claims made by one of the informants that getting permission or clearance to study a public institution is difficult in Zimbabwe which impedes research and affects academic freedom. Furthermore, it is evidence of the biggest research limitation faced by the researcher. The correspondence started with a letter that was physically dropped off at the office of the University of Zimbabwe registrar where the researcher left his email for further correspondence. The letter requested permission to conduct research at the university and was accompanied by a recommendation letter from the researcher's supervisor. Both letters can be found below. Via email, the university requested further information on the research which the researcher sent and the university acknowledged receipt. This is all contained in the email thread below. The university stopped communicating with the researcher after further information was sent and did not respond to a follow up email. The last email in the thread was to Obey Shava, a lawyer with Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), who requested to be forwarded information on the case to see if he could legally assist the researcher to gain formal access to the university. The legal approach, however, was not pursued due to unavailability of the lawyer and the researcher ended up conducting the research without the university's knowledge or permission.

## Letter from researcher: electronic copy

Zachariah Mushawatu

44 Glengarry Ave

Highlands

Harare

Registrar

University of Zimbabwe

P.O. Box MP 167

Mt. Pleasant

Harare

04 December 2018

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE**

I write this letter to request permission to conduct qualitative research on academic freedom at your university in the form of in-depth interviews and observation. My name is Zachariah Mushawatu, I am a University of Bergen master's in public administration student.

I intend to interview students, academic staff, Senate and Council members.

Yours sincerely,

Zachariah Mushawatu

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Letter of recommendation

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UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

*Department of Administration and Organization Theory*

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### LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

#### To Whom It May Concern

This is to introduce Zechariah Mushawatu, who is a student of mine. He is pursuing his Master degree in Public Administration at the Department of Administration and Organisation Theory, University of Bergen, Norway.

The subject of his research: "Academic Freedom in Zimbabwe: myth or reality? "

He is conducting the research on this topic in his home country Zimbabwe.

As an important part of this exercise, he has to interview various persons and collect relevant documents. I hope you may assist him in the research.

The information provided to him is for academic purposes only.

Any assistance given to him is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Tor Halvorsen  
Associate Professor  
Supervisor

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Postaddress: Christiesgt. 17    Officeaddress: Christiesgt. 17  
[www.svf.uib.no/admorg/welcome.html](http://www.svf.uib.no/admorg/welcome.html)  
N-5007 Bergen                      5007 Bergen

Phone: 47 55 58 2190

Telefax: 47 55 58 9890

e-mail: [post@aorg.uib.no](mailto:post@aorg.uib.no)

## Email thread

30/06/2020

Gmail - Request for Permission to Conduct Research at UZ



Zechariah Mushawatu <zackmusha@gmail.com>

---

### Request for Permission to Conduct Research at UZ

5 messages

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**UZ Registrar** <registrar@admin.uz.ac.zw>  
To: zackmusha@gmail.com

11 December 2018 at 08:16

Dear Sir

Please find attached.

Mrs Tshuma

---

 **Mushawatu.pdf**  
1265K

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**Zechariah Mushawatu** <zackmusha@gmail.com>  
To: registrar@admin.uz.ac.zw

13 December 2018 at 14:17

Dear Mrs Tshuma

Kindly find background information for my research attached to this email.

Warm regards,

Zack  
[Quoted text hidden]

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 **Background Info on Proposed Research.pdf**  
307K

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**UZ Registrar** <registrar@admin.uz.ac.zw>  
To: Zechariah Mushawatu <zackmusha@gmail.com>

13 December 2018 at 14:32

Received.

[Quoted text hidden]

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**Zechariah Mushawatu** <zackmusha@gmail.com>  
To: UZ Registrar <registrar@admin.uz.ac.zw>

4 January 2019 at 07:04

Dear Mrs Tshuma

This is a gentle reminder that I await a response from the University. Kindly note that I am supposed to conduct my research as soon as possible in order to complete the writing of my thesis. I noted that you referred to me as Dr Mushawatu in a letter attached to this thread of emails; this is not correct. I am a masters student as highlighted in the letters I submitted when requesting for permission to research. I look forward to your response.

Warm regards,

Zachariah Mushawatu  
[Quoted text hidden]

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<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ik=0e9bb4cc72&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A1619539328535586166&simpl=msg-f%3A1619539328535586...> 1/2

## Email thread: continued

30/06/2020

Gmail - Request for Permission to Conduct Research at UZ

**Zechariah Mushawatu** <zackmusha@gmail.com>  
To: obeyshava@gmail.com

8 January 2019 at 08:02

[Quoted text hidden]

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 **Mushawatu.pdf**  
1265K

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1?ik=0e9bb4cc72&view=pt&search=all&permthid=thread-f%3A1619539328535586166&simpl=msg-f%3A1619539328535586...> 2/2

Attachment from first email in thread

P O Box MP 167  
Mount Pleasant  
Harare, Zimbabwe  
General Line: +263-4-303211 Ext 11105  
Direct Line: +263-4-303284  
Fax: +263-4- 308941  
e-mail: registrar@admin.uz.ac.zw  
website: www.uz.ac.zw

From the Registrar  
DR N A MUTONGORENI



UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

10 December 2018

Mr Zachariah Mushawatu  
44 Glengarry Avenue  
Highlands  
**HARARE**

Email: [zackmusha@gmail.com](mailto:zackmusha@gmail.com)

Dear Dr Mushawatu

**RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE**

Reference is made to your letter dated 4 December 2018 in which you requested for permission to conduct qualitative research on academic freedom at the University of Zimbabwe.

Please provide a detailed background of your proposed research to enable the Acting Vice Chancellor to consider your request.

Yours sincerely

**DR N A MUTONGORENI**  
Registrar

SN/vz