Big Bob is Watching You

Perceptions of the risk of state harassments and state surveillance by human rights defenders and their room for navigation in the context of the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe.

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"The fact that crisis becomes routinized implies that anthropology is obliged to remain 'tireless, awake, when others have fallen asleep'" (Das 2006:79 in Vigh 2008:2*)*

This thesis is dedicated to Itai Dzamara, a human rights defender who led peaceful protests against the deteriorating political and economic environment in Zimbabwe, petitioned President Mugabe of Zimbabwe to step down and called for reforms to the electoral system, and was abducted on March 10, 2015.

#BringItaiHome

Artwork on the front page is specially made for the purpose of this thesis and provided by Zimbabwean artist Kombo Chapfika.

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Abbreviations

AU	African Union
CIO	Central Intelligence Organization
EU	European Union
GPA	Global Political Agreement
HRDs	Human Rights Defenders
IG	Inclusive Government
ICA	Interception of Communication Act
JOC	Joint Operations Command
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDT-T	Movement for Democratic Change – Tsvangirai
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African Peoples Union
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defence Forces

Introduction

"Amongst every five people in a room, there is one person working for the CIO". It is a common saying in Zimbabwe, through which the image of the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) becomes clear. The CIO, responsible for state security, is a department in the President's Office that only answers to the president and in practice appears to function as an agency of ZANU-PF, the main party of Zimbabwe that has been in power since independence (HRW 2013:28). Although no official information is public about the CIO, every Zimbabwean is very aware of its existence. Through glimpses, the CIO becomes a much-feared institution that lives in every level of Zimbabwean society. For human rights defenders in Zimbabwe living and working under constant attack of the regime, the risks of state harassment and being targeted by the CIO are imagined on a daily basis, and regardless if what is imagined is true, the effects are very real.

Research Question and Significance of the Research

Surveillance studies have been a rapidly developing field of analysis and theory since the start of the twenty-first century. Diverse practices and processes for dealing with personal data are multiplying, and old top-heavy bureaucracies of the earlier twentieth century are increasingly being replaced with computerized and digital systems (Lyon 2002:1). The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 accelerated this increase in surveillance following international concern for security in the face of terrorism, and subsequently surveillance studies gained relevance. These developments of increasing use of technology and a focus on terrorism related surveillance have marked surveillance studies. The panopticon penitentiary, generally acknowledged as the foundation of surveillance studies, was a unique architectural form, which sought to maximize the visibility of inmates. The inmates would be in isolated, individual cells that circled around a central observation tower. This way, guards could monitor the inmates, while the inmates were not able to see the guards. An important aspect of the panopticon is that inmates were aware of the possibility that someone was watching them, it was however not clear when they were being watched. This, Bentham argued, constitutes the disciplinary component of the panopticon. Foucault later proposed that the prison diagram could serve as a model to understand the operation of power in contemporary society (Haggerty 2006: 25). As Norris explained, the panopticon is more than an architectural form of visualization; it is the architecture "that renders visualization meaningful for the basis of disciplinary social control". The collection of information can provide for the subsequent authoritative intervention (2003: 251). Slowly, this classic understanding of the panopticon is losing ground; surveillance scholars argue they must move beyond the Foucauldian understanding of surveillance (Lyon 2006:12). For example, questions arise about the capability of the panoptical theories of incorporating the increasing use of technology in their analysis. Furthermore, some scholars argue that the classic panoptical theories reject the possibility of resistance against surveillance (Fernandez & Huey 2009; Lyon 2006). The result is a considerably new academic field that is

divided into a stream of proliferating 'opticons', such as 'superpanopticon', 'electric panopticon', post-panopticon', 'omnicon', 'ban-opticon', 'global panopticon', 'fractal panopticon', 'industrial panopticon', 'urban panopticon', 'polyopticon' and 'neo-panopticon' (Haggerty 2006), and scholars who try to fit the global, technological or political dynamics of surveillance in new theoretical frames, such as the 'surveillance assemblage' (Haggerty and Ericson 2000) and 'surveillance as social sorting' (Lyon 2003). However, characteristic for all those theories within surveillance studies is that they are Western-focused, analysing how people respond to every day surveillance such as CCTV systems, webcams, and camera systems in shopping malls; or, when more state security focused, arguing from Western-centred democratic environments and legal frameworks.

Surveillance is a growing danger for journalists, bloggers and human rights defenders. The 'Spyfiles' that WikiLeaks released in 2012 showed the extent of the surveillance market and the increasing sophistication of its products. Although traditional surveillance has not completely disappeared, high-tech surveillance is expanding the range of possibilities for government to control dissidents and prevent dissemination of sensitive information (Reporters Without Borders 2013:3). The industry of international surveillance companies selling surveillance technologies to governments is unregulated, and allows those companies to "sell to dictators" (WikiLeaks 2012). With rumours and reports of the Zimbabwean regime receiving help from Iran and China in ratcheting up their surveillance capabilities, Zimbabwe is a very relevant case to analyse.

When trying to analyse surveillance, state surveillance in particular, or its effects in non-Western settings, different factors need to be taken into account. In Zimbabwe, an authoritarian and conflict affected environment, the possible repressive aim of conducting state surveillance should count heavily. This specific environment most likely also affects the possibilities of resisting surveillance. Moreover, questions of technological advancement of surveillance and the relation between subject and technology need to be reassessed in a developing repressive context. By addressing those theoretical deficiencies, this thesis aims to develop surveillance studies further. Furthermore, in the field of conflict studies and human rights, there is little attention to surveillance or surveillance resistance; studies concerning responses to technological advancements, invisibility and remoteness are at all rare in the field. Therefore this thesis aims to simultaneously strengthen surveillance studies and conflict studies by combining the relevant questions for both theoretical fields.

To address all those factors, this thesis sheds light on the differentiating aspects of the Zimbabwean case. The Zimbabwean state is notorious for its ruthless actions against any perceived opponent of the state – in their perception human rights defenders (HRDs)[1], especially during election times, constantly challenge the state. The role of a history of violent state interventions, such as harassments, unlawful arrests, abductions and raids, is evidently important in analysing state surveillance

[1] The United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, defines a human rights defender as anyone working for the promotion and protection of human rights. Further specification of the concept in the Zimbabwean case can be found in Chapter 2.

and people's perceptions of and responses to it. The Zimbabwean case therefore fits the anthropological concept of 'cultures of fear'. Using Vigh (2011)'s theoretical framework of how people shape their lives in such cultures of fear, with the concepts negative potentiality and invisibility it becomes possible to analyse those perceptions. Because state surveillance tends to be most active during times of political activity, this thesis will focus on the elections that took place in Zimbabwe in 2013.
The research question that will be answered in this thesis is:

How does the negative potentiality resulting from a history of violent state interventions, and a high risk of state surveillance shape Human Rights Defenders' perceptions of their room for navigation in the context of the run-up and aftermath of the contested 2013 elections in Zimbabwe?

Methodology

When aiming to research a phenomenon like surveillance, and even more so state surveillance, questions arise about the feasibility of such a research project. Since national intelligence services are likely to work in a highly secretive manner, making claims about their work and strategies becomes extremely hard – if not impossible. The same could be said about researching the effects of state surveillance on its subjects: how can a certain effect be ascribed to a phenomenon that is impossible to know, i.e. how would this effect of the unknown become measurable?

However as stated before, since it is highly important to focus academic efforts on the social realities of people living under state surveillance, and even more so in a repressive environment such as Zimbabwe, this research is grounded in three epistemological principles. These principles concern the question of how this research is shaped in its broadest sense (Curtis and Curtis 2011:11-13). First, this research claims state surveillance is indeed a phenomenon that is not 'knowable'; therefore the focus lies on the perception of state surveillance instead of a focus on describing the intelligence apparatus itself. Second, while focussing on perceptions of that phenomenon, one must be aware that perceptions are never consistent. The fact that the self constructs its own reality, leads to a variety of perceptions. Third, while acknowledging there must be certain goals or agendas of a state to conduct state surveillance, however not knowable, for this research those motivations are unimportant: how the state intends its state surveillance program has nothing to do with how their agenda and the apparatus itself is perceived by its subjects. From these epistemological principles, it becomes clear that this research is grounded in a post-structuralism position, as the social academic representation of social life (Bryman 2008:19).

In social sciences, the idea that social action as being meaningful to actors and therefore needing to be interpreted from their point of view, coupled with the rejection of positivism and found in traditions of Weber's verstehen – approach, contributed to a stream of thought often referred to as interpretivism (idem:15-16). To grasp the meaning of social life, researchers need to focus on verstehen of the subjective meaning of social actions. It is the way of seeing the phenomenon by people that will be researched in this thesis. In this thesis, I aim to understand how people

perceive their own reality as a result of those perceptions - how people perceive their own reality and how people act upon their interpretations of reality.

Since knowledge arises through a process of active construction, the researcher's task is to interpret the acquisition of knowledge and construct an interpretation of the information that is presented to her. In interpretivism knowledge is believed to be acquired through involvement with content. Ethnographic research is the research approach that in this case fits this conviction best. To research perceptions of realities of Zimbabwean HRDs, a case-centric approach is chosen. By way of case-study design, it is possible to give a detailed and intensive analysis of the case. This research is based on 4,5 months of ethnographic research, conducted in combination of desk-based research and collection of data in the field. The research was combined with an internship at the regional office of the Dutch NGO Hivos, where I was working at the department that focuses on human rights, good governance, freedom of expression and media. Most of the time was spent in the capital Harare, with one human rights related work trip to Bulawayo, the second biggest city in Zimbabwe. The research has been an interactive process of collecting data, interpreting this data, adjusting conceptual and theoretical work and in the end led to a tighter specification of the research question. This process reflects an inductive view of the relationship between theory and research, whereby the former is generated out of the latter (idem:366).

To account for the social actions and perceptions by reference to movement in an encompassing social structure, the first chapter of this thesis describes the structure Zimbabwean HRDs live in. In order to produce knowledge about the organization of society, or the rules and regulations that tell people 'how to do social life', following Demmers' definition of structures (Demmers 2012:63) the data collection method is based on literature research of academic literature on authoritarianism in Zimbabwe and the party's relationship with the security services.

For the remaining chapters, because of the multitude of perceptions that are at the basis of research through a post-structuralism-lens, the data collection strategy was to acquire as many perceptions as possible. This is done firstly by participant observation. I conducted fieldwork and worked and socialized intensively with HRDs in Zimbabwe, to understand the context HRDs live in and to observe certain actions and statements HRDs make in informal conversations. The role of the observer was participant-as-observer, where the researcher is a functioning member of the social setting, where members of the social setting are aware of the researcher's status as a researcher so that the researcher can engage in regular interaction with people and participate in their daily lives (Bryman 2008:410). Through these observations, I gained an understanding of the environment – and HRDs got to know me. Secondly, ten in-depth interviews were conducted with HRDs. I decided that these interviews should be semi-structured, to ensure specific issues could be addressed, but to leave room for ideas and perceptions that could naturally come up during interviews (idem:438). The interviews took between 30 and 60 minutes per interview. Triangulation, the use of more than one method or source of data in a study so that findings may be checked (idem:700) is used to some degree to compare the ways people said they acted in interviews with the way they acted in practice, for example in the description of safety measures. However in the research of this subject

regarding events that happened in the past, triangulation of observation and interviews was not possible on all aspects of the research. On some degree, desk research on civil society reports and academic literature was compared and checked through interviews.

While bringing relevance to the case, ethnographic research in a repressive environment also brings considerable limitations. Researching state harassments and state surveillance is a very sensitive undertaking. As this research was combined with an internship at Hivos, a Dutch humanist nongovernmental organisation, I gained more knowledge on the case and connections to participants – but also the label of being a donor. The HRDs that were interviewed all know Hivos and some have collaborated with the organisation, which might motivate them to paint the picture more positive - not misusing funds - or more negative – trying to get more funds. This can be seen as a limitation to this research – but more importantly it secured access and a trust situation. Besides, I had a gatekeeper who was himself a HRD and maintained good contact with the participants of the research, which added to the trust relationship.

To enhance this trust relationship, I decided to conduct the interviews in a later state of the research period. This way, most interviewees were familiar with me and I could illustrate more knowledge about the case. Besides, I decided not to record the interviews. This way participants could feel free to talk. Since state surveillance, especially combined with a repressive state that has shown in the past no aversion to harassing HRDs personally or on an organizational level, is a highly sensitive topic, I considered ethics abundantly. In the context of minimizing the risk of harm, the negative personal experience a participant may experience as a result of the research, several steps have been taken. As a result of not recording any interviews, I did not have any specific proof of the undertaken interview in possession, to avoid possible loss or theft of data. Furthermore, aside from adding societal relevance to this study with the chosen timeframe, by choosing to analyse events that took place two years ago, I also aimed to avoid as much as possible ethical problems that might arise in uncovering surveillance resistance practices of HRDs. This also explains the way interviews are referenced in this thesis. To protect the HRDs that were interviewed, there is no reference to dates, times or locations the interviews were conducted, except for the month, since all interviews were conducted in the same month. Interviewees are therefore referred to with numbers. Because transcripts of the interviews might reveal the identity of the participants, these are not included in this thesis. Not least, the measures described above also insured more safety for myself. Although few researchers have attempted to address the issue of researcher safety as methodological concern (Sluka 1990; Nordstrom and Robben 1995), I have aimed to take all necessary steps to prevent and avoid dangerous incidents and encounters with state and intelligence agents in the course of this research.

As argued by Curtis & Curtis (2011:15) the most important aspect of ethically appropriate research is voluntary informed consent of participants. All participants have received a participant information sheet (Annex 1). Since this information sheet was provided at the level of recruitment, participants had enough time to read it and consider if they wanted to participate in an interview. The information sheet provides information on the research itself, the goal, the conditions of anonymity and

publicness of the research after finalisation. When the participant agreed on the general conditions at the beginning of the interview, I asked the participant to sign a consent form (Annex 2). For safety reasons, the consent forms are left with the participant, and I just kept a digital copy of the signed form. Participants have had time to withdraw their statements for the whole time of the studies until handing in of this thesis.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. The first chapter reflects on the rules of the game created by the Zimbabwean regime, in particular its authoritarian character and politicized security sector. The second chapter will elaborate on the 2013 elections as perceived by HRDs; the concepts 'culture of fear' and 'negative potentiality' will be introduced. The third chapter will, using the concept 'invisibility', reflect on HRDs' perceptions of the state intelligence apparatus and how they give meaning to glimpses of state surveillance. The fourth chapter will elaborate on this meaning and see how HRDs respond to risks, analysing both how they act upon their interpretation of the risks of the negative potential and how they perceive their room for navigation within that context. The conclusion will then answer the research question and explain how the negative potentiality of state interventions and the risk of state surveillance shaped HRDs perceptions of their room for navigation in the context of the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 1
ZANU-PF's iron fist

There is very little debate about the authoritarian nature of the Zimbabwean state based on empirics. There however is a huge debate in the literature around why the Zimbabwean state took this authoritarian turn, with some scholars arguing colonial legacy while others arguing leadership failure in terms of democratic pursuits despite pretentions of being democratic. For Ndlovu-Gatsheni the colonial state excluded Africans from the political process by denying them franchise and ushered in an undemocratic tradition based on white settlers that was violent, patriarchal and authoritarian (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). This system of authoritarianism is the nature of the state that became independent Zimbabwe, with a legacy of authoritarianism and impediments to democracy being ingrained in the post-colonial state (Mamdani 1996). For other scholars, outside of colonial legacies of authoritarianism, the Zimbabwean state found itself taking the authoritarian turn because of the hypocritical nature of the leaders of the liberation movement, who they argue were never intent on freedom of the people but wanted to join the ranks of the white elites and thus found themselves using the same weapons as them to protect their elite interests (Mandaza 1986; Zamponi 2005).

While scholars debate the origins and cause of the current state of play in Zimbabwe, what is arguably common is that they link authoritarianism to the highly militarized environment, in terms of both actual violent interventions from the military and in the more subtle use of the security apparatus. This link is itself not without historical context, which will be explored in this chapter.

The Rhodesian Bush War and military integration

After neighbouring countries of Zimbabwe, which were in colonial times also part of the Federation of Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) started decolonizing and ultimately gained independence in 1964, the white settler regime in Southern Rhodesia tried to tighten its grip. Under the 'Rhodesian Front', legitimized by itself by the issuing of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI), the white minority Rhodesian state created a formidable military regime aimed at destroying liberation movements (Jackson 2011:375). The Rhodesian Bush War that resulted lasted from 1965 until 1980, and is characterized by liberation movements fighting the state machinery. The liberation movements however were significantly split both ideologically and ethnically. Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and its armed wing Zimbabwe African National Army (ZANLA) were predominantly supported by people from the Shona tribe, whereas Joshua Nkomo's Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) and its armed wing Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) was mostly characterized by supporters from the Ndebele tribe. This rivalry led to significant fighting between ZANLA and ZIPRA, and led them to meet in the battlefields as enemies rather than allies (idem:375-376). Although the Rhodesian Front seemed to have the strongest military force, in the end white flight, failing South African support

from the apartheid-regime and the increasing inability to protect the civilian population meant that the Rhodesians had to acknowledge the war was unwinnable. Besides, many of the paramilitaries they hired were increasingly at least passively supporting the guerrillas. In 1977 peace talks started and in 1979 Britain received a mandate to mediate, leading to the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference which was held in London. The Conference, attended by all nationalist leaders, reached agreement on the constitution and a cease-fire. In 1980, elections were held, which were won by Mugabe's ZANU who then became Prime Minister (idem:377-380).

From that moment, the government started making provisions for the integration between ZIPRA, ZAPU and some elements of the Rhodesian Front. By integrating the different military elements, the government aimed to provide internal security and provide employment prospects for the former combatants (idem:380). However, politically the military integration was not going well. Personal rivalry between Nkomo and Mugabe intensified, and eventually led in 1983 to Nkomo fleeing the country. Virtually all of the senior military leadership of ZIPRA was arrested, and all of the senior leadership of ZAPU decided to go into exile. This led to unrelenting harassment and widespread violence against ZIPRA cadres, coupled with segregation, disarmament and disappearances. Because only ZANLA officers remained, the way was now cleared for the creation of a ZANU-led politicised security policy that emphasised the political role of the military (idem:385).

In the following years tensions increased and violence between the two groups continued. In the end, Mugabe needed to end the war to ensure security but also to encourage economic development, and ZAPU had an interest in ending the war to prevent further alienation of former ZIPRA combatants. A Unity Accord was reached between ZANU and ZAPU in 1987, which merged ZAPU into ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front. Arguably, eliminating the main black opposition to Mugabe consolidated his regime and greatly contributed to the creation of a one-party state in Zimbabwe. Mugabe first isolated, then destroyed political rivals in the security services and then proceeded to politicise senior military figures. Throughout the 1980's, following years of fighting in the liberation struggle and the conflicts that followed, the foundations were laid for the politicisation of the military and the conflation of national security with regime security (idem:386-387).

It is a fairly well established fact that the white-settler colonialism has had enduring effects on the structural foundations of the post-colonial order. As argued before, postcolonial states were shaped by colonial legacy into all powerful and arbitrary political formations, which continued the colonial legacy of turning against democracy. As such, African nationalism itself was deeply influenced by colonialism, reproducing colonial violence and authoritarianism, leading to it being inherited by postcolonial Africa as a mode of governance (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2012). The structural pillars of this, especially in the security sector including military, police and intelligence, were inherited by the incoming new leaders, who proceeded to systematically reinforce those authoritarian pillars (Masunungure 2011:50) following almost directly from colonial political culture (Mbembe 2001:42). The origin of current authoritarianism in Zimbabwe in which ZANU-PF and the military allied to isolate political opposition can thus be traced back to the colonial history, the liberation war

and the highly politicized integration and disintegration of the paramilitary forces that followed.

Two decades of crisis

Economically, Zimbabwe was doing well in the early post-colonial years, growing at 12 per cent for the first two years, becoming the third largest industrial economy in the world, measured as a percentage of GDP (Bond and Sharife 2012). There seemed little point for scholars to engage in the 'weak states' debates concerning African post-colonialism when analysing Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe's powerful state bureaucracies, a substantial formal sector and the strong history of service provision have all seemed to mark Zimbabwe out as different from the so called failed states. However, the costs of structural adjustment began to bite in the early 1990s. As unemployment rose, salaries started stagnating and rural livelihoods were undercut, the ZANU-PF government began to be described as unable to meet expectations over welfare and services, and losing its connection with its popular base, seeking explanations amongst others in the consequences of patronage and corruption (Alexander & McGregor 2013:751). Hyperinflation, deindustrialisation, collapsing services and mass impoverishment that followed characterize the recent years of Zimbabwe (idem:749).

In the late 1990s, the regime became increasingly contested politically. Civil society organizations expanded in quantitative and qualitative terms, including labour unions, human rights and women's organizations, journalists' and student unions. Besides contestation within the civic spheres, an opposition party was formed in 1999, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which came up as a broad and major movement whose immediate objective was to dislodge ZANU-PF from power. Led by former trade unionist Morgan Tsvangirai, the robust MDC became a real threat of opposition (Sachikonye 2002:14-17). With the emergence of MDC, the military's involvement in political life became increasingly open, which makes that the year 2000 is seen as a turning point in civil-military relations (Masunungure 2009: 82). The increased authoritarianism and militarization of politics in the run-up to the 2000 parliamentary elections were characterized by widespread violence, and the elections were pronounced as less than 'free and fair' by international observers. In the run-up to the presidential elections of 2002, Mugabe's administration developed a notorious reputation for intimidation and torture of opposition supporters. Repressive tactics were amongst others the set-up of roadblocks to demand party membership cards and the harassment of those reading independent newspapers. Furthermore, the appointment of military figures to head the Electoral Supervisory Commission and the makeup of war veterans and civil servants of the biggest number of election observers can be seen as signs of the increasing militarisation of the contest (Sachikonye 2002:14-17). Moreover, high-ranking military officials were appointed to all sorts of lucrative commercial and government positions; key Ministries of state including Energy, Transport, Trade, Construction, Information, Foreign Affairs, Prisons, Railways and the Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe, are currently all headed by senior military figures (Jackson 2011: 388; Makumbe 2006; Masunungure 2009:82). The environment for opposition and civic organizations got further repressed by the enactment of repressive legislation such as the Public Order and Security Acts and the Access to

Information and Privacy Act (Sachikonye 2002:18). Again, Mugabe's regime won, although controversially, the fiercely contested elections in 2002, and following the parliamentary elections in 2005.

The 2008 reign of terror

However, on 29 March 2008 a series of contentious electoral victories ended, when ZANU-PF lost the presidential, parliamentary and civic elections. The results of the first round of the presidential elections showed that Tsvangirai, leading MDC-T, a split off of the original MDC, had won more votes than Mugabe, with Tsvangirai having 47,9 per cent of the votes and Mugabe 43,2 per cent. According to the Zimbabwe Electoral Act however, a candidate required 50 per cent plus one vote to be president (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 2013:3). Therefore, a constitutionally mandated runoff election was planned for 27 June 2008. The period in between the March and June elections can be seen as one of the most politically violent episodes in Zimbabwe's recent history and is labelled the 2008 'reign of terror' (Masunungure 2011:54). Furthermore, it was another showcase of the symbiotic, reciprocal relationship between ZANU-PF and the security establishment, who regard ZANU-PF as its own party, which it must defend if under threat (idem:55). The 'securocrats' – Mugabe's allies in the security apparatus – put in a 'menu of manipulation' to ensure Tsvangirai – who's MDC-T was constantly portrayed as a 'puppet of the West' - would not win the run-off. These tags and propaganda were used in a powerful authoritarian populist discourse that sought to portray Zimbabwe as a country at war with imperialism. It promoted the notion of the political contest in Zimbabwe as a war between nationalism and sovereignty versus imperial recapture of the Zimbabwean state by Britain with the opposition and civil society as proxies (Raftopoulos 2006; Bratton and Masunungure 2008).

The military and security allies were fully in charge of ZANU-PF's election campaign and started a 'battle between the bullet and the ballot'. The Joint Operations Command (JOC), comprised of security chiefs from the army, air force, intelligence, police and prison services played a central and strategic role in the drama. The framework for the campaign of intense violence and intimidation was called 'Operation Makavhotera Papi', meaning 'Operation who did you vote for' [2](Masunungure 2011:56). The Operation involved military-style operations by the ZDF (Zimbabwe Defence Forces) and the CIO (Central Intelligence Organization) in former ZANU-PF regions such as Masvingo, Mashonaland and Manicaland provinces, which turned out to have voted favourably for the MCD-T. Villagers were forced to attend indoctrination sessions in the established camps, and those who had not shown loyalty to ZANU-PF were humiliated and tortured (Jackson 2011:388). Countrywide violence in the form of intimidation, kidnapping, torture, arson and murder of opposition or suspected opposition leaders, activists and supporters took place (Masunungure 2009:87). In his analysis of Zimbabwe's authoritarianism, Masunungure characterizes Mugabe's post-independence regime as 'a militarized form of electoral authoritarianism', which in times of political activity such as election times rests on the interpenetration of the two

[2] Literally, it means 'where did you vote', but considering how you mark boxes on a ballot, what is meant is 'who did you vote for'.

key organs of authority: the ruling party and the security forces (Masunungure 2009:82).

Five days before the run-off, Tsvangirai held a press conference at which he announced his withdrawal from the run-off, giving the intense and widespread violence and intimidation as a reason for pulling out. However, the electoral body refused to accept Tsvangirai's withdrawal and kept his name on the ballot paper. The result of the weeks leading up to the election was clear: Mugabe won a pyrrhic victory with 86 per cent of the vote (Masunungure 2009:93-94). However, allegations of rigging elections and the systemic political violence carried out by the ruling party were fierce; with international pressure increasing, ZANU-PF was forced into a Global Political Agreement (GPA). Under the facilitation of former South African President Thabo Mbeki, the agreement ended months of political violence and gave way to a government of national unity in early 2009, which brought MDC parties into government alongside ZANU-PF. Hard-line ZANU-PF elements viewed the power-sharing arrangement as an interlude after which they would recapture power, by whatever means, and re-establish the old order (Masunungure 2011:61). As argued by several scholars, rather than providing a basis for political transition, in retrospect the Inclusive Government (IG) created space for ZANU-PF to rebuild its power in the wake of what had seemed in 2008 to be irreversible decline, which became clear in the 2013 parliamentary and presidential elections (Alexander & McGregor 2013:750; Moore 2014:104-105).

The result of this violent past, as argued by Masunungure, is that Zimbabweans have come to view themselves as subjects, not as citizens, which has major implications for political behaviour. In the face of the state's massive display of repression, the masses have grown fearful of the state, a tendency that reinforces the subject orientation toward state authority. In his discussion about the endurance of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe, and in particular electoral authoritarianism, his main argument is that the subject-minded political culture is the breeding ground of this. Dictators, in this case Mugabe, can sleep soundly in the knowledge that his subjects are too timid to challenge him (Masunungure 2011:51). However, the Zimbabwean question continues to spurn debate, with some scholars arguing that ZANU-PF's continued hold on power is not just due to its authoritarian tendencies, especially the use of violence and intimidation. For Moyo and Yeros (2005) Zimbabwe signified a radicalised state, suffering the pangs of a nationalist redistributive project carried out as the historical task of taking the independence struggle to a higher level of economic redress, against neo-colonialism. To them, the continued success of ZANU-PF can be explained by people's realisation of this struggle and their ability to be able to identify with it as part of a national democratic revolution that was unfinished at independence. This is also supported by Ncube (2010) and Tendi (2008) who see the Zimbabwean question as both the story of an oppressive regime on the one hand, and on the other hand, the story of a regime pursuing social justice, and waging an incessant war against neo-imperialism. While not dismissing the occurrence and power of violence and intimidation in Zimbabwe, to these scholars, this explanation undermines the power of authoritarian populism and propaganda and how these have been critical nodes to ZANU PF's power retention scheme, as opposition and critical public intellectuals were rendered impotent in terms of countering this discourse (Tendi 2008:379).

Chapter 2
The 2013 elections for HRDs

In light of the past decade of political violence, the run-up to the 2013 parliamentary and presidential elections was a politically sensitive and insecure time. After the regionally negotiated GPA and the subsequent establishment of the IG resulting from the 2008 defeat, the stakes were high for ZANU-PF. In retrospect of the 2013 elections, scholars describe the IG as a factor that gave ZANU-PF space to rebuild its power. ZANU-PF won an overwhelming, if still controversial victory over its opponent MDC-T (Alexander & McGregor 2013:750). MDC-T supporters were caught by surprise and alleged ZANU-PF to have rigged the elections, but afterwards the reality became clear that there might have been rigging on some scale, but that the victory was so enormous, that people must have actually voted ZANU-PF in large numbers.

The explanation for a country's masses to vote for the party that has oppressed them intensely for at least a decade can be found in the concept 'harvest of fear'. Scholars refer to the party's use of memories of past violence to intimidate the electorate to support it (Zamchiya 2013; Miles-Tendi 2013). Used subtly, in memory of the violent episode in the 2008 run-off, ZANU-PF is said to have been 'harvesting fear votes' in Zimbabwe's rural districts where people are still traumatised by memories of the violent backlash. As one interviewee stated: "We live in a culture of fear, because of 2008. It has colonized our country".[3] The culture of fear as an academic concept finds its origins in anthropology, and describes the way people shape their lives in a continuous situation of crisis. It places the experience of prolonged decline and uncertainty as its focal point of study. This does however not mean cultures of fear have no political grounding: negative emotions such as fear of terror can be produced and sustained to govern populations within the spaces of militarized societies, referring to a 'politics of fear'. It makes people believe that the same horrors can happen any moment and that they are surrounded by constant danger (Aly & Green 2010:270). This makes cultures of fear not solely by-products of violence, but actual artefacts of history, society and politics, becoming effective tools of government that come into being as a "modus of population management deployed by military, political and administrative actors" (Linke and Smith 2009:4-5). Following this logic of a certain 'production' of social rules, norms and meaning in a culture of fear, Taussig coined the concept a 'state of ordered disorder' (Taussig 1992). The creation of a culture of fear by ZANU-PF turned out to be very effective in the rural areas during the 2013 election times.

HRDs as opposition

Placing Zimbabwe in this political context, however, explains that not only supporters of opposition parties are routinely targeted by the ZANU-PF. Since the party has been in

[3] Author's interview with HRD 2, Harare, June 2015

control since independence, all those promoting improvements in human rights situations are perceived as opposing the status quo and thus the government. The HRDs interviewed, all imagine to be targeted by the state because they are seen as aligned with the opposition party. As one interviewee explained, the MDC-T originates from civil society, and many civil society organizations had difficulties reporting neutrally on the opposition party, because it was so close to their hearts [4]. As another interviewee that reports on political violence stated:

> "Reporting on political violence is very sensitive. Exposing who did what, and who is the perpetrator; ZANU-PF is the major perpetrator, although there are also some incidences of MDC-led violence, so they don't want this information to come out. This also has the effect that I am seen as protecting the MDC or other opposition parties, because in the majority of the cases they are the victims of political violence."[5]

Especially when HRDs are operating in rural areas, specifically the rural areas that are supposed to be ZANU-PF strongholds such as Mashonaland Central, it becomes hard for HRDs to execute their work. Moreover, numerous activities, far from limited to political dissent, are considered disruptive and therefore attract attention from security forces (The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2013:16). Because the government views a broad range of activities as threats, the definition of human rights defenders (HRDs) must be flexible enough to accommodate a range of actors. Besides, in Zimbabwe many people are involved in human rights work around the elections that are not necessarily professionals, such as electoral observers or polling agents. Following the classification made by Front Line Defenders, the categorization HRDs contains protestors, rural and small-town activists, human rights lawyers, trade unionists, journalists and students (Easton 2010:41-43).

As noted by Zimbabwean HRDs pressure tends to increase, especially during periods of high political activity (The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2013:12). Given the country's history, in particular the ruling ZANU-PF's history of instigating political violence resulting in wide spread human rights violations, but also the party's reputation of rigging elections, it becomes particularly difficult for HRDs to report human rights violations or promote human rights in these times of political activity (Easton 2010:47). In the period of the 2013 presidential and parliamentary elections, spanning from the year before to a year after the elections, pressure on HRDs was thus high. One theoretical route to understanding this increased focus on HRDs from the regime is to deploy Agamben's concept of 'a state of exception', coupled with the metaphor of bare life, or 'homo sacer'. It points to a bio politics in which subjects are to some extent abandoned by the law and exposed to violence as a constitutive condition of political existence (Linke and Smith 2009:308). The notion of state of exception refers to a state of emergency allowing the government to act beyond the rule of law – applied to an authoritarian context this implies that there are no limits to these acts. If applied with a repressive aim, those deemed 'abnormal' – or, detrimental in the case of HRDs reporting in times of elections – can be exposed to increasingly organized state

[4] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[5] Author's interview with HRD 5, June 2015

violence. HRDs can then become victims of state violence without hope of legal or ethical protection (Lyon 2006: 264).

Negative potentiality

In this state of exception, HRDs in Zimbabwe are structurally violated. Although threats increase during times of political activity, the risk of harassment from the state becomes a 'state of emergency' that is not an exception but the rule. Seeing crisis not only *in* context, but analysing crisis *as* context, Vigh (2008) coins this state as a terrain of action and meaning rather than an aberration. Crisis and trauma are not momentary and particularised phenomena, but should be seen as pervasive contexts rather than singular events (Vigh 2008:7-8). Within the literature of cultures of fear, Vigh concentrates on the way people cope in crisis, and in doing so provides valuable insights into this largely implicit anthropological enquiry. He does so by focusing on the social environment from an empirical point of departure, and demonstrates the theoretical value of these concepts by drawing on comparative fieldwork in areas of long-term conflict: Belfast and Bissau. Vigh's theoretical concepts are helpful in articulating the way people understand their situations – as seen from within, focusing on local narratives. In this case, Vigh becomes helpful in analysing how the risk of becoming a target of state harassment becomes context, and how this is shaping HRDs perceptions of the regime, i.e. how they give meaning to it.

Although there might not have been any violent interventions from the state around the 2013 elections against HRDs, the potential harassments are seen as an underlying constant that can easily re-emerge (Vigh 2011:93-95). This is coined potentiality (Agamben 2000): "a constant prospect waiting on the other side of the horizon, which even when absent is omnipresent; as a possibility ingrained in the conflict prone social environment" (Vigh 2008:6). Simply conceptualized as the possible actualization of a hidden capacity, when this potentiality is anticipated as being 'negative', it causes people to be extra cautious toward its being and effects, with the result that imagined detrimental future manifestations can gain an almost material presence. The future, in this case future state interventions, is thus experienced by HRDs not as an undifferentiated 'plane of virtuality' but as a very specific configuration of potentiality (Vigh 2011:93-95).

The HRDs interviewed for this thesis all experienced harassments from the state in the past. Many have been arrested or detained, often accompanied by intimidating questioning methods and uncomfortable circumstances; some have been imprisoned for long periods of time; some have not been able to finish their university studies or to enrol their children; all have received visits from the police at their offices, where offices were raided and threats were made; some have lost colleagues to abduction, torture, and even murder; and all have observed the massive number of HRDs that were displaced, raped or murdered in 2008, and who's houses had been burned. A culture of fear can make the world HRDs live in seem small: it makes people believe that what happened to others in the same 'culture room', can happen to anyone (Aly and Green 2010:270). It leads HRDs to believe that although they might not have experienced some of those harassments themselves, the concerns that they might in the future become very real.

Civil society organisations predicted that the state would not undermine its legitimacy by international powers such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU) and the European Union (EU) during the 2013 elections, and that physical violence would not be as blatant in 2013 as it had been in previous elections (Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition 2013). As one interviewee said: "The state could not be violent, they knew that because of the many eyes on them internationally". However, she said: "But the system of violence was still there, so violence wasn't necessary" [6]. Another interviewee imagined: "The brutality of the state changed over the years, there are less beatings, but it is more a system of fear and abductions, which works as a wakeup call" [7]. The fact that there was less overt violence expected leading up to the 2013 election, did thus not diminish the negative potential of state harassments against HRDs: being harassed by the state was a very real fear. The imagined underlying existence of foul politics, as Vigh argues, entails that people's awareness is centred on omens of imminent violence. Moreover, the legal environment that the regime created is perceived by HRDs as giving the regime freedom to harass HRDs whenever they want, creating a state of exemption. Even when state harassments are immaterialized, they are seen as always about to be; whether or not present, it is always a future possibility as a passive directness that is continuously on the verge of materializing itself (Vigh 2011: 97).

[6] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[7] Author's interview with HRD 9, June 2015

Chapter 3
State surveillance: invisible agents and forces

The underlying possibility of the imagined oncoming event, in this case the by HRDs perceived negative potentiality of harassment from the state during political turbulent times, does not come out of thin air. A vital part of Vigh's argumentation reflects on how people perceive, co-exist and interact with the hidden and intangible forces: the socially invisible. There are shadow worlds of actors and factors that might be out of sight and beyond our immediate senses, but that should be imagined, expected or perceived in a glimpse for the negative potentially to be perceived as such. In the enumeration of examples of invisible forces, such as hidden motives in interactions, conspiracies, corruption, propaganda and enemies within, the example of spies and secret services is also mentioned (Vigh 2011:94). In the context of the Zimbabwean state, which has strong ties in the security forces and is known for using it for the ruling party's political gain, and which is known for harassing HRDs, I argue the negative potential of being harassed in the future can be caused by the invisible force called state surveillance. Lyon's definition of surveillance, "any collection and processing of personal data, whether identifiable or not, for the purposes of influencing or managing those whose data have been garnered" (2006:297), is helpful in this sense because of its incorporation of the purpose of influencing and managing.

The invisible security apparatus

Little is known about the Zimbabwean state surveillance. Intelligence, together with army, air force, police and prison services are part of the JOC, and organized under the CIO. What is known, is that the CIO is under control of the Minister of State for National Security in the President's Office, and that the CIO can arrest suspects and is responsible for internal and external security. The CIO's work as national intelligence agency or secret police, is inherently classified and therefore statements about their mandate, structure and size are not available. Within Zimbabwe's security forces, the CIO alone has no legislative framework guiding its institutional set up and operations (HRW 2013:14). However, as argued in Chapter 1, the CIO can be characterized as a 'Mugabe-ally' and openly supports ZANU-PF. As Human Rights Watch argues in its 2013 report, the CIO has operated more as a ZANU-PF intelligence agency and has been implicated with serious human rights abuses against ZANU-PF political opponents and civil society activists. Allegations include torture, beatings, harassment and enforced disappearances (idem). Besides their mandate of conducting state surveillance, the CIO is thus also implicated in conducting actual state harassments.

As there is no official or reliable public information about what the CIO can do in terms of surveillance, the invisible factor becomes evident. But how does the invisible become a force that can affect how a potential negative interference is perceived? Or, how is certain 'knowledge' produced? Invisible forces that have this effect do not refer to that which we do not know about and cannot see; it does not refer to an entity that is located outside our consciousness. Rather, the invisible agents and forces capable of producing the awareness of a negative potentiality, are things we

know are there, but about which we are uncertain; that which is hidden most of the time, but that we can sometimes see in glimpses (Vigh 2011:102,106). How state surveillance is perceived by Zimbabwean HRDs, depends highly on the glimpses they get.

Imaginations on the scale, level of advancement and professionalism of state surveillance vary enormously amongst the HRDs that were interviewed. Most HRDs picture the surveillance system as not advanced enough to track every HRD in the highest capacity; in the current economic state of Zimbabwe, interviewees think that would be too expensive and time-consuming. Since the CIO is not expected to have the capacity to follow everyone, HRDs assume the intelligence focuses on a few targets. The HRDs then create a ranking for themselves, and imagine to what degree they are targeted. Working with human rights, and therefore being seen as aligned with opposition party politics is in itself seen as a reason to be targeted, but as argued in the previous chapter, working in rural areas or working with political violence increases the degree HRDs perceive themselves to be targeted, and in the case for surveillance a perception of increasingly advanced resources used. One interviewee said:

> "Someone told me that the CIO works with coloured folders. The red one is the one for the very suspicious organizations that are being followed. For the organizations in the red folder there needs to be extra attention."[8]

A related observation concerns how advanced the CIO is perceived to be. Low-tech surveillance describes mostly person-to-person or physical surveillance, including following of people and cars, infiltration and visits to homes and offices. High-tech surveillance, on the other hand, includes more technologically advanced and distant means of extracting information, including the use of bugs, cameras, spy-ware and cyber-attacks, such as hacking emails and websites. What most HRDs agree on, is that the state predominantly uses of low-tech surveillance. Arguably these forms of surveillance are also the easiest to catch a glimpse of. Many HRDs noted cars following them or being parked outside their offices. Interestingly, HRDs have very different perspectives on how technologically advanced the state's surveillance systems are. One HRD said:

> "I believe the CIO is very high-tech. The CIO has taps in every telecom provider and can get recordings of phone calls and all text messages from the people they are following. The recordings pick words, like those systems the CIA uses to catch terrorists, where sensitive words are picked up. For us, those words are mostly political, such as 'Mugabe' or 'Tsvangirai'." [9]

Contrarily, another HRD described an event during one of the office raids carried out by the intelligence services, which made her imagine a very low level of technological sophistication:

> "I don't think they have cameras, bugs and hacking in our office. Because if they raid our office, they scream: "quickly, take all the files"! And they take all our

[8] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[9] Author's interview with HRD 2, June 2015

paper files. If they had taps, and hacked our system, then why would they need to carry those files?" [10]

Similarly, another HRD argued:

> "I think the security services have very limited IT knowledge. During one raid, they actually needed our help to get into our computers and into our databases [laughs]. They didn't even ask IT-related questions!"[11]

Glimpses of the invisible

What becomes clear from those examples is that how HRDs perceive surveillance, the invisible force, is very much dependent on how they give meaning to the glimpses of the invisible. The perceptions of those glimpses, coming in different forms and manifestations, determine the imagination of the persistence of the state's surveillance system. So, how does the invisible force show its face, be it low- or high-tech?

Mentioned by several HRDs, the most 'visible' glimpse is when the regime publishes information gathered by surveillance. State propaganda newspapers, such as 'The Herald' and 'The Patriot' published information regarding the work of the HRDs and entailing private communication on several occasions. HRDs feel that this information could not have been public otherwise. For example, one HRD explains how the newspapers reported on information about the funders of the organization, information that could not have been public other than accessing bank accounts[12]. In other instances, two HRDs were personally named and shamed in the newspaper, being accused of being a traitor aiming regime change, a 'puppet of the West', insinuating their affiliation with the opposition party[13]. In some of the cases, personal information about the HRD was added to the news article, including names of colleagues and even licence plate numbers. Similarly, one HRD noted how in court she found information used that was not public and to her understanding must have been gathered by surveillance[14].

Although cultures of fear exist on local levels and in societies, they can to some extent be created and shaped globally. Global power relations impact different societies and countries in an economically and politically connected and intertwined world (Linke and Smith 2009:4). In a very anti-Western state narrative, the Zimbabwean regime has found its allies in politically and human rights - related 'like-minded' countries such as China and Iran. Several reports by civil society organizations reported on the suspicion of the state using external assistance in the form of Iranian and Chinese military assistance in an attempt to ratchet up their surveillance capabilities (Human Rights NGO Forum 2013; Ngwenya 2014). What is known is that in 2007, the Chinese built the Robert Mugabe National School of Intelligence, a sophisticated military base in Mazowe Valley, which is hailed as the largest military expenditure in

[10] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[11] Author's interview with HRD 9, June 2015

[12] Author's interview with HRD 8, June 2015

[13] Author's interview with HRD 6 and HRD 7, June 2015

[14] Author's interview with HRD 5, June 2015

Zimbabwe in decades and to be operated by the Chinese and its foreign intelligence service along with Zimbabwe's CIO and military intelligence. Obviously it is unclear what services the CIO exactly acquired in the establishment of the school. More recent rumours focus on Iranian assistance, which are assumed to have offered the ZANU-PF regime several cyber surveillance technologies, intended to stifle political opposition, civil society organizations and individuals deemed to be a threat to national security. In an email which was circulated amongst Zimbabwean HRDs that the researcher received, all kinds of technologies the state might have received are summed up, such as spy-phone software (enables stealing data from smartphones, listening in on calls, turning on a mobile device's microphone and camera without the user's knowledge), IMSI catchers (International Mobile Subscriber Identity, a telephone eavesdropping device used for intercepting mobile phone traffic and tracking movements of mobile phone users) and other programs to monitor personal computers. The email, intended as a warning, started with:

> "MUGABE SCHOOL OF INTELLIGENCE (CHITAMBA FARM IN MAZOE) RECEIVES SOPHISTICATED SPY TECHNOLOGY FROM IRAN, TO BEEF UP COVERT OPERATIONS OVER OPPOSITION, NGOs, DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, INCLUDING MONITORING AND BLOCKING COMMUNICATION & SOCIAL MEDIA .....ZIMBABWEANS BE AFRAID,..BE VERY VERY AFRAID!" [15]

Several HRDs reflected on those rumours that are not unknown to the civil society community. As one HRD argued, it is public information that China and Iran offered military assistance, but the government has not made anything public about that relationship[16]. This gives HRDs the impression that something 'obscure' happened, which although the glimpse is known, adds to the invisibility and opaqueness of surveillance.

Besides the publications of information gathered by surveillance and rumours about external assistance to the CIO, there have been legislative developments in the context of surveillance that in the eyes of HRDs suggests that the state is legally permitted to conduct surveillance – however capable or advanced they might be. For example, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) of 2002 relates to the authorisation and policing of public gatherings. HRDs interviewed mentioned the state using this act. Examples of private meetings that were interrupted are profuse, where people from the CIO or the police would either sit down and take notes, or present themselves, ask questions and write down names. Moreover, it leaves HRDs wondering how the security services were aware about the details of private meetings in the first place, which information is assumed to be gathered by surveillance. Providing a legal basis for communications surveillance, in 2007 the 'Interception of Communication Act' (ICA) was enacted, providing for the lawful interception and monitoring of communication through telecommunication, postal and other related systems or services in Zimbabwe (Ngwenya 2014:280). This way it becomes possible specifically to intercept post and wiretap telecommunications, without people's consent or notification. However, the ICA can also be used to intercept communications sent on "any other related service or

[15] Author's personal e-mail communication, February 2015

[16] Author's interview with HRD 2, June 2015

system". The wording of the Act does not give clear definitions of the systems and services, which leaves the impression that in drafting the ICA the Government intended for it to cover, as much as possible, any modern technological developments and newer means of communications, such as email, text messages, web calling and website usage (The Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2013:33). Additionally, in 2013 the government entrenched the surveillance law through the 'Statutory Instrument 142 on Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations', providing for the establishment of a central database of information about all mobile phone users in order to assist emergency services and law enforcement agencies and to protect national security, recently replaced by the Statutory Instrument 95. The import of the new regulations largely remains similar to the old instrument (Ngwenya 2014:280-282). Besides these legislative developments the Zimbabwean government is increasing its computer forensic investigation capabilities through a proposed cyber-crime bill, which is at this moment at draft bill stage (Gwagwa 2014:1). Although most HRDs imagine this proposed cyber bill to be only legitimizing what the state is already doing, one HRD said: "The legislative developments such as the Statutory Instrument make clear that they are allowed to do it, which makes the possibility higher that they *are* doing it."[17]

Many of the HRDs interviewed have experienced office raids and break-ins from the intelligence services. Although this at first sight might look like simple harassment, it definitely creates imaginaries and triggers speculations about the state's surveillance capabilities. First, there is the timing: often office raids take place at times when an organization is working on highly sensitive work. One interviewee said that after the 2013 elections, 400 search warrants were issued for civil society organizations and its staff members. It leaves HRDs wondering if the CIO was already aware before the raid what the organization was working on[18]. Second, there is the way office raids are executed. As explained before, what files the CIO takes with them and what they leave behind, create a picture in HRDs' minds about what the CIO already has knowledge about and what information they do not have yet. Some HRDs gave examples of break-ins, where their offices were broken into, but where nothing of monetary value was taken, and only documents were missing. In these instances it is expected that the CIO is responsible for the break-in, although there is no physical evidence.

Often, state agents intimidate HRDs by using personal information during raids, arrests, phone calls, and on many other occasions. One HRD explains how after a work trip related to the elections with colleagues at the airport, when getting in a taxi, the taxi driver said: "Tell your colleague to stop lying. I know everything. I know where she lives, and what work her husband does."[19] Another HRD explains what happened at the police station when he was arrested after being accused of illegal work concerning the elections: "At the police station, they started asking questions, like: "So, you have three children, right?" and: "What is your wife's phone number again? And your girlfriend's?" They also told me the information they had, so they told me exactly who my friends

[17] Author's interview with HRD 5, June 2015

[18] Author's interview with HRD 6, June 2015

[19] Author's interview with HRD 7, June 2015

are".[20] HRDs reflect on the ways CIO agents make clear they have been watching you. When asked by an agent during one of the raids how the construction of his house was going, the interviewee was aware the agent was showing off what he knew about him.[21]

A state of vigilance

As research on the topic of state surveillance in other repressive Sub-Saharan African countries with violent histories such as Rwanda and Eritrea has shown, surveillance contributes to various beliefs and expectations that in turn create uncertainties and fears (Purdekova 2011; Bozzini 2011). As argued in the case of Rwanda, the increasing penetration of surveillance in local realities amounts to 'dispatching of control', making central power more effective (Purdekova 2011:475). Control, as conceptualized in the case of Eritrea, "refers to the one possible outcome of surveillance, i.e. 'to influence or direct [regulate] people's behaviour". This control becomes effective because of the representations, fears and uncertainties that are not only related to the apparatus of surveillance, but are related to broader perceptions and experiences of the violence, arbitrariness, unpredictability and unaccountability of political authorities (Bozzini 2011:94). Taking this primary intention of the state as an assumption, Bozzini focused mainly on the practices, strategies and representations of the subjects of the system - similarly to this research which focuses on perceptions of the state and how people deal with the uncertainties that they encounter with state authorities.

Similar to Bozzini's, this research shows that the surveillance apparatus, argued as being an invisible force that only shows itself in glimpses, plays a central role in contributing to and actualizing certain representations about the state as a source of risk (idem:101). Surveillance as an invisible force, is seen as capable of producing this risk, conceptualized by Vigh's concept of negative potentiality. It leads to a state of fear: HRDs describe that the surveillance apparatus and what the state is able to do with that information, is seen as intimidating and described as a "state of mind"[22] and a "culture of fear".[23] Fears are mentioned on the organizational level, such as clampdowns of organizations, criminalization and arrest, pillory and stigmatisation in the newspapers and amongst donors. These risks are seen as being able to seriously weaken the organization. As one HRD explained:

> "When donors start asking questions, and start wanting audits when the newspapers blame us for doing illegal work or being corrupt, the word will spread. Communities will start distrusting you. It makes it impossible to do our work".[24]

Besides, arrests and court cases are seen as very time-consuming. Other fears that are mentioned are on the personal level, such as physical violent interventions like beatings, abductions and torture. Furthermore, HRDs fear for their families and friends,

[20] Author's interview with HRD 9, June 2015
[21] Author's interview with HRD 8, June 2015
[22] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015
[23] Author's interview with HRD 2 and HRD 5, June 2015
[24] Author's interview with HRD 9, June 2015

since they are often included in the threats and insinuations of gathered information.

As Vigh argues, linking the invisible force and the negative potential in a culture of fear leads to a state of vigilance. Vigilance, as explained in his case of Bissau, is conceptualized as "a space of turmoil and uncertainty where society no longer is seen as moving toward a calm and coherent future but instead is viewed as being caught in a state of insecurity and uncertainty" (Vigh 2011:98). In the case of Zimbabwean HRDs, this constant uncertainty about what the state could do in terms of surveillance – and what the possible response could be is obvious. Vigilance then leads to a state of constant awareness and a relentless unease. During elections, a time when state surveillance is expected to be increased, this can even lead to a state of hyper-vigilance: HRDs are extremely aware of their behaviour and surroundings.

Chapter 4
Navigating in a crisis as context

As argued in the previous chapters, Vigh, analysing crisis as context, focuses on the way people cope in crisis. The previous chapters have largely focused on how this state becomes a terrain of meaning, and how HRDs shape their perceptions of the regime and its capabilities to harass and conduct surveillance. Using Vigh's framework of negative potentiality and invisible forces and agents is helpful to get an understanding of how a culture of vigilance comes into being. However, importantly, cultures of fear and states of crisis also bring about terrains of action (Vigh 2008:7-8). A state of vigilance that results from the structure implies certain responses. Some scholars analysing cultures of fear argue that the crisis environment can lead reasonable people to making unreasonable decisions (Joseph 2008:63; Margold 1999:64; Mölder 2011:247). But how does this work for Zimbabwean HRDs, experienced in the Zimbabwean political context, and professionally involved in analysing, challenging and critiquing this very structure on a daily basis? Zimbabwean HRDs, highly educated and experienced, are very much aware of the state's tactics of repressive control. In many of their reflections on the state's interventions and glimpses of state surveillance, HRDs considered that those actions were meant to intimidate and silence them. When being aware of those tactics, it seems impossible to analyse HRDs as docile bodies. As Vigh argued in the cases of Belfast and Bissau, residing in the future shadows of the present leaves people "busy trying to predict the future and prepare for the next round of trouble" (Vigh 2011:105). The anticipation of HRDs towards the risks their work brings with it, and the eventual perceived room to navigate within that context of risk stand central in this chapter.

Agency and navigation

A crisis as context has a direct normative dimension as it is tied to a departure from how things ought to be; it signifies stagnation, decline and decay, the direct opposite of correct and desirable progress (Vigh 2008:10). But, Vigh argues, in this situation of 'disorder and ruin', people actively seek new bearing and continue to have the ability to act. Seeing crisis as fragmentation, which entails loss of coherence and unity, the experience of fragmentation does not necessarily lead to passivity (idem). This brings about questions of agency within a structuralism-approach. The highly insecure context in which a state of vigilance comes into being, is characterized by constant changes and risks. Seeing this as a 'structure in motion', Vigh argues there is motion within motion. Going against the image of an 'agent' as an unconditioned individual, as portrayed as such in individualism, Vigh illuminates agency without accepting the idea of an autonomous and absolute subject (2009:432). In this perspective, agency is not a question of capacity but of possibility; answering questions as to what extent people are able to act within a given context. Researching agency as possibility gives a point of departure in anthropological analysis of crisis as context. It highlights that in situations of crisis, people adjust their reading of the social environment and their movement within it to its critical characteristics. This context, Vigh argues, makes life unpleasant,

but not impossible (2008:11).

Particularly applicable to the case of HRDs in Zimbabwe, Vigh argues that the normalisation of crisis should not be confused with indifference. As he argues, chronic crisis may become normal in the sense that it is what is there most of the time, but it does not become normal in the sense that people think it is how things should be. Zimbabwean HRDs definitely experience their situation and the structure they live in as being problematic. As discussed in the previous chapter, the risks HRDs perceive that can result from the negative potential and the invisible force can have huge implications for their personal and relatives' safety and their organisational existence, which does not lead to indifference, but rather to finding ways to brace themselves (idem).

The concept of navigation, serving as a metaphor for practice, is used when referring to how people act in difficult or uncertain circumstances – such as crises as context and cultures of fear – and describes how people "disentangle themselves from confining structures, plot their escape and move towards better positions" (Vigh 2009:419). Central to this concept is that it allows us to see the intersection or interactivity between the changing context and social practice. Strategies and tactics are acted, adjusted and attuned in relation to the way people experience and imagine and participate the movement and influence of social forces (idem:420). Although similar, the concept of manoeuvring describes practice highlighting a constant striving for balance and control and thereby directs our attention towards the immediate or short-term engagement with the forces that move us and move around us. Navigation, on the other hand, encompasses a broader temporality, analysing both the way people move in the here and now as well as the way people move in relation to social goals and prospective positions. Navigation is as Vigh argues "related to movement through both the socially *immediate* and the socially *imagined*" (idem:425). This focus on the imagined makes the concept a useful tool for analysing how HRDs anticipate and act in a context of risks that might be revealed in glimpses, but are a potentiality, shaped by imagination. Using this concept it becomes possible to describe how HRDs acted upon their interpretations of reality.

To analyse how HRDs navigate and what happens to their construction of meaning and ideas in the instable and unpredictable 2013 election times, attention should be paid to the resulting increased social reflexivity: "the heightened awareness of the way we interpret the social environment, our perspectives and horizons" (Vigh 2008:19). This heightened awareness is thus threefold: to the way HRDs interpret their environment; to the way they interpret their own perspectives and modes of constructing meaning; and to interpretations of the future. This heightened reflection of the self came forward in many interviews with HRDs.

Preparing for the worst

During the 2013 elections, HRDs kept a vigilant eye on processes that might bring about danger. With the memories of the previous elections, HRDs responded with a range of pre-emptive measures to minimize the risks of state harassments that are described as the negative potential.

Some HRDs only travelled in numbers, to reduce the risk of abduction, others

make sure they are never alone, even at home. Especially HRDs that suffered from severe state harassments in the past monitored the environment and looked for suspicious vehicles. This hyper-attentiveness to real or imagined stimuli becomes clear as one HRD described how she got around:

> "I constantly check if somebody is following me. I keep an eye on my rear window, and if somebody after three times takes the same turns, I start to worry". [25]

Interviews often took place in highly secured offices, with electronic gates and fences, guards, finger verification locks and heavy doors. HRDs explained that most of those security measures were implemented after 2008. Although the legal environment is perceived as enabling the regime to conduct searches any time they would like, securing offices does give HRDs the feeling it reduces risks of brake ins from state agents. During the elections, many HRDs adjusted their security protocols. Some of them had teams of doctors and lawyers fully alert, ready to intervene if something would happen. HRDs braced themselves for consequences of legal cases and physical harm. These 'rapid response systems' led HRDs to believe they were at least prepared for the worst.

HRDs did not only prepare for the negative potential, but also took measures against the invisible force surveillance that can produce the risks. As argued before, mainstream surveillance literature is not applicable to this case. However, one framework for analysing surveillance resistance that points us to important aspects of the Zimbabwean case, although also very Western-centred and focused on digital surveillance, is that of Martin et al (2009). In their article, they contend that most surveillance resistance is focused on resistance relations between the surveyor and the surveilled, and neglects other relevant actors. Their framework draws attention to the importance of identifying other actors who resist surveillance to understand the interplay of the different relational roles of different actors and the nature and direction of their resistance to surveillance (Martin et al 2009:217). Many HRD's organizations have received help from external actors in resisting surveillance. International and national privacy organizations are engaged in assisting HRDs in racketing up their (cyber) security. Most interviewed HRDs had received trainings; some organisations offered all their local staff cyber training and trainings in phone safety. However, often HRDs do not use the security tools that are offered to them. Reflecting on why they do not, they note using security tools are seen as cumbersome and time consuming. Besides, some HRDs said that they can take measures against surveillance, but "if the state really wants to get certain information, they will always find a way to get it".[26] There seems to be a general conception amongst the HRDs that were interviewed that it is pointless to invest in resisting surveillance using cyber security tools because of the legal landscape created by the regime and its lawlessness, especially during election times when the party's retain of power is at stake.

[25] Author's interview with HRD 5, June 2015

[26] Author's interview with HRD 8, June 2015

Trying to predict the next round of trouble

The negative potentiality of state harassments, potentially produced by the invisible force of state surveillance, has a future presence, thereby representing a problem yet to be experienced. Besides the social orientation and awareness that is hyper-attentive to real and imaginary aspects of the context HRDs lived in during the 2013 elections, by scanning the environment and implementing security measures, HRDs found innovative ways for coping with the risks they are faced with in their daily lives. Greenhouse defined crises as: "crises, by definition, involve *conditions* in which people (including the state's agents) must improvise with the elements of their social and political technologies and cope with a variety of unexpected disruptions and opportunities (Greenhouse 2002:8, in Vigh 2008:10)". This definition literally captures this innovation by including state's agents. As argued by Moore, "Zimbabwe's gigantic intelligence community is rather leaky – it shares more than it conceals – and divided" (2014:105). The most unexpected outcome of the interviews that were conducted for this thesis was the anticipation of HRDs towards future risks through making use of that leaky and divided intelligence community.

There are many cordial relations between CIO agents and HRDs: some interviewees contended that at least every organization makes use of a few informants within the CIO. In any case, almost every HRD that was interviewed for this thesis had at least some informants: old school friends, neighbours, friends or relatives. Because the state is believed to have many employees in the CIO, many people know people that work for the intelligence apparatus. Some HRDs believe their informants give them information out of friendship:

> "I have relatives and friends working in the CIO. They give me information because of personal reasons. They won't give classified information, but will just tell you 'you are being followed' or 'they are tapping your phone'."[27]

HRDs consequently anticipated on the information they received out of these relationships. Most obviously, security measures are taken, by for example changing phones or refraining from discussing certain topics on the phone. One HRD told me that this 'intel' has even lead people to flee the country, suggesting that information about a serious attack or a possible abduction was shared. In that case, information from within the CIO did not come from cordiality. As two HRDs addressed in the interviews, many HRDs have to pay for certain information. As one of them explained:

> "Almost every time something happens to me, I was warned before. But we spend a lot of money on those relationships, on buying information. And often, they will come back to you later, saying they need to pay school fees or something".[28]

Besides the by HRDs expected motivations such as cordial relations or financial reasons, HRDs have increased social reflexivity on why CIO agents would share information. Some HRDs envision the agents to be "fed up with the system and politics"

[27] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[28] Author's interview with HRD 10, June 2015

and see the information sharing as "the way they are silently resisting" [29]; they think they "get information that our office will be raided because we have sympathizers within the CIO", perceiving some agents as "really tired of the system".[30]. Not unimportantly, the economic situation in Zimbabwe was and is so deteriorated that the state is said to be struggling to pay wages to its civil servants.

Different expected motivations of HRDs why CIO agents share information on future attacks or oncoming risks are evidently affecting different ways the information is received. When information comes from friends or relatives, HRDs often feel they can trust that information because the agents care for their safety. But HRDs are very aware giving information can also be used as a tactic to scare and silence them. An example of this is how one HRD explained that he received intel during the 2013 run-up to the elections that one of his employees was an infiltrator from the CIO. He decided not to take action against him. The reason for his action was that he suspected that the spread of the suspicions was a tactic from the state. He knew it would have weakened the organisation if he had acted upon it – so he decided not to fire him, although chances were there that the employee was an informant of the CIO and that he could have posed a threat. The reflection that information can be given deliberately to encourage self-censorship is taken into account when receiving information, but as the HRD stated: "Given the brutality of the state, sometimes it is better to pull back, just in case". [31]

Directing life positively into the future

HRDs take different measures and use different practices to brace themselves in the structure that is always in motion, and highly unpredictable. They do this by taking the appropriate security measures, and gathering as much information on what is about to happen as possible. HRDs tried to prepare for and predict risks during the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. Related to rejecting indifference amongst people in crises as context, Vigh argues navigation as a concept refers to more than just survival and is directed to both making a way through immediate difficulties as well as directing life positively into the future (Vigh 2009:423). Navigation contains planning and hoping, and engaging in struggles for specific goals (idem:425).

Many HRDs are constantly reflecting on the work they are doing, and in how far that work could be seen as illegal. Although the state has shown in the past that staying within the law is not a guarantee for safety, many HRDs warrant themselves with the idea that the work they are doing is not illegal. By not doing anything illegal, they imagine themselves some room to navigate. The level of reflexivity, the awareness of one HRD of how she interpreted her own mode of constructing meaning, becomes clear in one of the interviews:

> Interviewee: "We are very careful to stay away from anything illegal. We get permission for every event, and stay away from political comments."
> Interviewer: "Do you think you are safe, when you stay away from illegal activities?"

[29] Author's interview with HRD 2, June 2015

[30] Author's interview with HRD 7, June 2015

[31] Author's interview with HRD 9, June 2015

> Interviewee: "It's a coping mechanism, to think that if we do not do anything illegal we are safe. Because if you are always scared, you cannot do your work."[32]

Rejecting to always be scared relates to the passionate conviction of HRDs to fight injustice and challenge the regime when human rights are violated. Through the many informal conversations, observations and interviews conducted, it became clear that HRDs reflect on their work and the risks it entails as a sort of 'whatever happens, they can't stop us'-mentality. Risks are seen as "occupational hazards" [33]; another interviewee reflected on her room to navigate by asking, "what worse can they do to us"[34]? Although it is clear that HRDs live in a state of vigilance, which only worsened during the 2013 elections, many interviewees seem to try to refuse to be intimidated, or at least to not let them stop that in conducting their work. HRDs constantly engage in the struggle with the goal of fighting injustices perpetrated by the regime. As one interviewee stated when reflecting on the harassments from the state against herself:

> "The experience of injustice that was done to me makes me want to continue my work. I have now experienced the injustice myself that I am fighting against for other people. How can I fight for those people if I let myself be intimidated by the state?"[35]

[32] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[33] Author's interview with HRD 6, June 2015

[34] Author's interview with HRD 4, June 2015

[35] Author's interview with HRD 5, June 2015

Conclusion

In this research, I aimed to understand how Zimbabwean HRDs perceive the risk of state harassments and targeted state surveillance, and how those perceptions shaped their perceived room for navigation during the 2013 elections. To get an understanding of the context HRDs operate in, and understand how Zimbabwe became that authoritarian regime that it is known as now, I first analysed how on Zimbabwe focused scholars explain the structure. Scholars agree that the endurance of authoritarianism in Zimbabwe needs to be related to the highly politicized militarized environment. As argued by Jackson (2011), this environment was created by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) after the Rhodesian Bush War that was fought between the armed wings of ZANU, ZAPU and the white minority of the Rhodesian Front. After long and intense fighting between the three military groups, in 1977 peace talks started, resulting in an independent Zimbabwe which held its first elections in 1980 won by Mugabe's ZANU. The following years with increasing tensions and violence between ZANU and ZAPU were used by Mugabe to clear the way for the creation of a ZANU-led politicised security policy that emphasised the political role of the military. In 1987 a Unity Accord was reached between the two parties, which merged the parties into ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front. With this, the main black opposition to Mugabe's rule was eliminated and nothing would stand in his way to conflate national security with regime security.

After the economic heydays of Zimbabwe came to an end in the late 1990's, civil society and political opposition in the form of the MDC led by Morgan Tvangirai became a real threat to Mugabe's regime. In the years that followed the electoral institutions became more and more politicised and the environment for civil society got further repressed by the enactment of repressive legislation. The military's involvement in political life became increasingly open from that point, and the elections that followed were characterized by widespread violence, intimidation and torture of opposition supporters and other repressive tactics, which led to Mugabe being able to hold on to power in an increasingly contested political regime and a deteriorating economic situation. This came to an end in March 2008, when ZANU-PF lost the elections for the first time. Although the MDC-T had won more votes than Mugabe, it had failed to achieve the legal threshold. Therefore a runoff election was planned for June 2008. The period in between the March and June elections can be seen as one of the most politically violent episodes in Zimbabwe's recent history and is labelled the 2008 'reign of terror' (Masunungure 2011:54). The military and security allies were fully in charge of ZANU-PF's run-off election campaign. Mugabe's 'militarized form of electoral authoritarianism' (Masunungure 2009:82), which instigated countrywide state violence against opposition supporters and activists led to his eventual victory in the elections. After international pressure the Inclusive Government was formed, which brought MDC into government alongside ZANU-PF, but of which scholars argue provided space for ZANU-PF to rebuild its power. Although scholars' opinions differ on how ZANU-PF continues to hold on power, they do agree on the power and occurrence of the use of violence and intimidation by the ZANU-PF regime.

From the first chapter it thus became clear that the regime makes use of its highly politicised security apparatus to repress the population, opposition supporters and civil society. The second chapter then aimed to illustrate how this structure is perceived by human rights defenders (HRDs). In particular, it analysed how the politicised security apparatus becomes perceived as a risk by them – analysed with concepts from Vigh's vocabulary such as crisis as

context and negative potentiality. In the run-up to the 2013 elections, pressure on HRDs increased. ZANU-PF's propaganda portraying Zimbabwe as a state at war between nationalism and sovereignty versus imperial recapture of the state by Britain, targets not just opposition members as traitors and 'puppets of the West', but also tags civil society as such (Raftopoulos 2006). Especially human rights defenders that work on election related topics are labelled as aligned with opposition parties and experience increased pressure. Although treats increase during election times, the risk of harassments from the state becomes a 'state of emergency' that is not an exception but the rule, analysed by Vigh's concept of crisis as context (Vigh 2008). In this context, state harassments against HRDs are seen as an underlying constant that can easily re-emerge, thereby becoming the 'negative potential'. This negative potential of state harassments, based on past experiences of the interviewed HRDs or their colleagues, comes in all kinds of forms, such as fears of physical violence, abduction, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detentions, unfounded prosecutions, stigmatisation in the press, threats against livelihood, threats against relatives and friends, and impediments on organisational freedom. These fears are seen as a constant future possibility, continuously on the verge of materializing itself.

A vital part of Vigh's argumentation reflects on how the negative potentiality as a risk is caused. He argues that there are shadow worlds of actors and factors that might be out of sight and beyond our immediate senses, but that should be imagined, expected or perceived in a glimpse for the negative potentiality to be perceived as such. In the context of the Zimbabwean state, with the regime's strong ties in the security forces and history of harassing HRDs, I argued in the third chapter that the negative potential of being harassed in the future can be caused by the invisible force called state surveillance. As all the information about the mandate, structure and size of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) is classified, the invisible factor becomes evident. The CIO's presence is however shown in glimpses, and is perceived by HRDs in different ways. Since the CIO is not expected to have the capacity to follow everyone, HRDs assume the intelligence focuses on a few targets. The HRDs then create a ranking for themselves, and imagine in how far they are targeted. Although most HRDs expect the CIO not to have the capacity to follow everyone, the interviewed HRDs assume that during the 2013 elections they were part of the few targets the CIO focused on. HRDs shape their perception of being a target of state surveillance through glimpses such as published information gathered by surveillance in state news outlets, rumours or silence about the possible cooperation between the Zimbabwean regime and Iran and China, surveillance related legislative developments, brake-ins and missing files and intimidations by intelligence agents with personal information about the HRDs. HRDs expect the state to predominantly make use of low-tech surveillance, such as infiltration and physical following. Interestingly, however, HRDs have very different perspectives and expectations of the level of technological advancement of the state's surveillance system.

The feeling of being under constant observation by an invisible force and the negative potential of state harassments that is constantly on the verge of materializing itself, lead to a state of vigilance amongst HRDs. The surveillance apparatus as the invisible force that is shown in glimpses plays a central role in actualising representations of the regime as a source of risk. The state of vigilance during the 2013 elections as a result of the perception of constant risk and uncertainty, lead to a state of constant awareness and unease amongst HRDs. This state of vigilance also brings about terrains of action (Vigh 2008:7-8). Especially in the case of Zimbabwean HRDs, who are professionally engaged in analysing the regime, there is a high level

of awareness of the regime's tactics and a passionate conviction to challenge human rights violations. In the fourth chapter of this thesis, I therefore analysed how HRDs perceived their room to navigate within the structure of negative potentiality of state harassments and the perception of a high risk of being under constant surveillance. I analysed their practices by using the concept from Vigh's vocabulary 'navigation': referring to how people "disentangle themselves from confining structures, plot their escape and move towards better positions" (Vigh 2009:419). The concept of navigation was a useful concept to answer questions as to what extent HRDs are able to act within their context of difficult and uncertain circumstances, especially because it takes into account the interactivity between practice and the imagined, and the high level of social reflexivity. This made it possible to focus particularly on their perception of their room to navigate.

It appeared that Zimbabwean HRDs took all kinds of measures to brace themselves against risks during the 2013 elections and were prepared for the worst. Security policies were implemented to protect themselves as much as possible against physical attacks and arbitrary detention, and cyber security trainings were conducted to try to protect data gathered during the election times. Moreover, many HRDs tried to actively prepare for oncoming risks by making use of 'intel' from within the CIO. Cordial or financially motivated relations between HRDs and CIO agents enable an exchange of information about threats and oncoming risks, which is used by HRDs to prepare them for possible state harassment. Part of navigation is also the conviction to direct life positively into the future – which in the Zimbabwean case of HRDs is best described as continuing to do the job. Refraining from illegal activities, and 'accepting' the risks that come with the job, enabled HRDs to navigate in the structure that generates constant fears and risks.

This research aimed to understand how the negative potentiality of state harassments and a high risk of state surveillance shaped HRDs perceptions of their room for navigation in the context of the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe. It became clear that the perceived room for navigation is highly influenced by the structure HRDs live in: a crisis as context, in which risks are always on the verge of materialising. In their work, as a result of the politicised security apparatus, HRDs constantly have to take into account their safety and take appropriate measures to brace themselves against the negative potential of interference of state agents. The invisible force, surveillance, also shapes this perceived room for navigation: although HRDs have different views on the capabilities of the CIO, they do all believe to be targeted in the run-up and aftermath of the 2013 elections. Some HRDs tried to disentangle themselves from the surveillance structure by taking surveillance resistance measures such as cyber security trainings, but most HRDs think there is no point in trying to resist surveillance. In the HRDs' quest to prepare themselves for future risks by gathering information from within the CIO, the effect of the negative potential also becomes clear: through constant social reflexivity, HRDs wonder to what extend information should be trusted, and in how far information could be shared with the sole purpose of intimidating and silencing them, which obviously shapes their room for navigation.

Most interestingly, although HRDs are very aware of the risks they take in conducting their work, they try to stay positive. By reflecting on their work as not illegal, HRDs imagine themselves some room to navigate. The structure has proved to be able and willing to arrest or detain HRDs without legal grounds. Still, the HRDs feel like they are able to navigate by staying away from illegal activities, which is a common coping mechanism for HRDs – implying in how far HRDs do not *allow* the negative potential to shape their room for navigation. Another effect of the negative potential that results from a history of state interventions against HRDs, is that it

becomes an extra motivation for HRDs to challenge the regime. The case of Zimbabwean HRDs has shown that people can actively try to resist fear – and although they are aware they are actively trying to resist it and coining it a 'coping mechanism', they do stay able to conduct their work and challenge the state and its performing displays of threat amongst the rest of the population. This sentiment becomes arguably even stronger during election times, when the ZANU-PF regime is known for not following democratic processes and respecting human rights. In this sense, the negative potential becomes a driver to keep challenging the structure and a motivation to find ways to navigate within it, in contrast to it solely being a factor that holds back the perception of room for navigation of HRDs. Simplified, one could conclude that the perception of the negative potential of state harassment and the perception of being targeted by intelligence services, makes it hard for HRDs to conduct their work, but is in a sense also the reason why they keep doing the risky work they are doing. During election times, this only intensifies with increasing threats targeted at HRDs, but also increasing numbers of human rights violations committed by the regime towards the population of Zimbabwe and suspicions of election rigging. This thesis illustrated the motion within the 'structure in motion', and shed light on what agency as opportunity means in reality.

With this thesis, I have aimed to address issues related to both conflict studies and surveillance studies, by analysing state surveillance in an authoritarian and conflict affected environment. Furthermore, central concepts in this thesis have been invisibility and imaginations of technology, thereby contributing to a developing field within conflict studies. This research showed that perceptions of Zimbabwean HRDs about the technological sophistication of the surveillance system are divided. The reason for the CIO not being technologically advanced would according to some HRDs be that the state lacks financial means or technology. With this research focusing on perceptions, the actual capabilities of the Zimbabwean intelligence sector remained unknown. Furthermore, ethical considerations have made it impossible to give as much attention to surveillance resistance and technology as I would have liked in the beginning of this research undertaking. Getting an understanding of how HRDs protect themselves against privacy invasion while human lives are at stake is important – but publishing the results of such research could do more harm to the research participants than good for the academic world. As was done by Leistert (2012), a bigger research project in the form of a comparative study of several countries could partly overcome this problem. When focused solely on repressive contexts in which state violence is of frequent occurrence, the academic world could start addressing state surveillance, its effects on the subjects and their responses in authoritarian settings. Future research projects could address specific resistance strategies and behavioural techniques as done by Dupont (2008) and Marx (2003), and thereby also contribute to shared learning amongst HRDs in different countries living and working in authoritarian settings. The worldwide increasing use of technologically advanced surveillance in repressive contexts cannot be denied. Following WikiLeaks' revelations of the 'secret new industry' of interception technologies, situations in which developing states might not yet have the capability for the use of such tools can easily change in the future and pose new risks to HRDs and their struggle for human rights.

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Annex 1

University of Utrecht – Master Conflict Studies & Human Rights
Participant information sheet

"Resistance against state surveillance in Zimbabwe"

- What is the title of the research?
  At the moment, the title of the research will be 'Resistance against state surveillance in Zimbabwe'.

- Who will conduct the research?
  The research will be conducted by Maria Veger, a student from the master Conflict Studies & Human Rights, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands.

- What is the aim of the research?
  The aim of the research is purely academic. The researcher aims to gain knowledge on how human rights defenders resist state surveillance in times of political activity.

- Why have I been chosen?
  You have been contacted for an interview because you are either a human rights defender or an expert in their work.

- What would I be asked to do if I took part?
  If you decide to take part, the researcher would like to conduct an interview that will take approximately 30 minutes.

- What happens to the data collected?
  The information that the researcher gets from the interviews will be analyzed for this thesis in a qualitative way.

- How is confidentiality maintained?
  The researcher will not note your name or the name of your organization. Details that will give away the nature of your work and thereby possibly your identity or organization will not be literally written down in the final version of the thesis. Before the thesis will be handed in, you will get an opportunity to read it and give comments in case you question your anonymity. The researcher took all necessary (cyber)security measures to protect data as best as possible.

- What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?
  If you do not want to participate, or if you change your mind, you can contact the researcher. The researcher will then subtract your data from the research.

- Will I be paid for participating in the research?
  No, the university does not offer any payments for participants.

- What is the duration of the research?
  The field research will be conducted between February and July 2015; the final version will be handed in beginning of August.

- Where will the research be conducted?
  The research will be conducted in Zimbabwe.

- Will the outcomes of the research be published?
  Master's theses of the University of Utrecht get uploaded on the online thesis-database of the university. This means that the thesis will be open to public.

Annex 2

University of Utrecht – Master Conflict Studies & Human Rights
Consent Form

"Resistance against state surveillance in Zimbabwe"

If you are happy to participate please read the consent form and initial it:

I confirm that I have read the attached information sheet on the above project and have had the opportunity to consider the information and ask questions and had these answered satisfactorily.	☐
I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to any treatment/service.	☐
I agree to the use of anonymous quotes.	☐

I agree to take part in the above project

| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of participant | Date | Signature |

| --- | --- | --- |
| Name of person taking consent | Date | Signature |