Review of: "Animation and YouTube as Alternative and Counterhegemonic Digital Public Sphere in Zimbabwe"

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I enjoyed reading this paper. I think it needs a bit more work to get it to a well organised argument. The majority of the paper is an analysis of the cartoons without the contextualisation of literature and theory to help that analysis along from the outset. I suggest you create a section that you define the following against the literature/theory before you begin the analysis of the cartoons.

Terms that need defining/contextualising/theorising: counter-hegemonic, cartoons as a public sphere, subaltern public spaces, biased and binary counter public sphere.

Further things to think about but I think could be improved by a bit more rigour in the front-matter.

The "hostility and rigidity of mainstream media" needs to be demonstrated/evidenced as it provides the contextual foundation for the study.

Connect the dots between these three ideas: "This article adopts this typology of resistance to study the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) resistance to ZANU PF hegemony through the use of digital media platforms (1). The paper argues that political animations diverge from print media political cartoons in terms of visual style, but not function (2). Thus animation has emerged as a vehicle that exploits both the cartoonist's customary drawing skills as well as the new-media affordances of sound and motion (3)."

Connect the European definition and contextualisation of cartooning to the Zimbabwe context.

"Consequently democracy becomes a monopoly for the MDC, other opposition political parties are discredited" - there is a lot of political theory that has made similar statements about so-called democracy and the idea that a cartoonist is satirising this is really interesting. The theorist that comes to mind is Chantal Mouffe but I am sure you can find another that sits closer to the Zimbabwean context. Possibly the cartoonists have a theorist they are reading, that you could track down and draw this all together through their framework? Maybe you could get Curran to work a bit harder - or maybe Curran needs to be combined with another theory?

Papacharissi (2010) and Fuchs (2011) come from a different context where social media is demonised. It is very difficult to find European social media researchers who acknowledge that social media can be both democratising and oppressive of democracy at the same time. For example, Indigenous Twitter and Black Twitter in the US have long critiqued these overly Westernised characterisations of social media as oppressive.