

Media representation of Women in Politics – Part 2

(December 1st 2012 to February 28th 2013)



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Preface

THIS report is a sequel to the *Media Representation Of Women In Politics In Zimbabwe* (October 1 to November 30, 2012) published by the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) into the representation of males and females in the local mainstream media.

It is part of the organisation's efforts to promote responsible journalism in the country considering the media's status in society as pervasive and highly influential socialising forces. HIVOS-IMS funded this research.

It is aimed at assessing the media's commitment to act as platforms where both men and women are able to contribute and participate equally in all aspects of private and public life in accordance with local, regional and international regulations and protocols on gender and development.

MMPZ's research team conducted the research.

It comprised Eric Matingo and Edson Madondo, coordinators of the research; compiler of the report, Elijah Daka; and media researchers Sibusisiwe Dube, Prisel Samu, Mabel Shoko and James Bvumira (Print media monitors); and Stephen Manjoro, Zenzele Dube and Pauline Ihani Phuthi (Electronic media monitors)

Chapter One

Introduction

THE principles of democratic governance and human rights are premised on the notions of majority rule and equal participation in most aspects of human and national development. This is why it is important for both men and women, including all minority groups that fall under them, to have equal and meaningful representation and participation in all facets of life.

Women constitute somewhat more than half the world's population. It is a trend reflected in Zimbabwe too.

According to preliminary census results released by the Zimbabwe Statistics Agency (Zimstat), females constitute 6, 738 877 of the country's 12, 9 million population, about half a million (503 945) more than males, whose population stands at 6, 234 931.

Yet despite this, women's participation in formal political structures and programmes – where decisions regarding their lives and the use of societal resources are made – remain at the periphery.

Statistics show that women hold only 14 percent of parliamentary seats in the country, down from 16 percent in the previous parliament. Representation of women in Zimbabwe's main political parties also mirrors this pattern, as the leadership and decision-making bodies of the two major political parties in the country – ZANU PF and the MDC-T – are male dominated.

According to the MDC-T website <http://www.mdc.co.zw/> (18/12/12), the party's National Standing Committee comprises nine members of which only Thokozani Khupe, who is also the Deputy President of the party, is the sole female representative. The MDC-T's National Executive is made up of 40 members consisting 26 males and 14 females.

Similarly, the ZANU PF website <http://www.zanupf.org.zw> (18/12/12) shows the party's presidium is made up of three men and one woman, Joice Mujuru, who is also one of the party's two vice presidents; while the party's decision-making body in between congress, the Politburo, comprises 26 males and seven women.

It is no wonder then that there has been lots of lobbying in support of women's participation in politics. A local feminist Non-Governmental Organisation, Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU), justifies this stance thus:

“Participatory democracy cannot be achieved if more than half of the population remains voiceless with no full access to decision-making and to the activities that influence the course of their future.”

Likewise, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, an international organisation established in 1889 as the first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations contends ***“genuine democracy cannot exist without the full participation of both men and women in politics”***.

1. Framework

THERE has been a lot of rhetoric in the country on the need to politically empower women although this has not really translated into substantial action.

The Lancaster House-brokered constitution does not provide any quota for women representation in politics. For example, women representation in the House of Assembly has fluctuated from one election year to the other since Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980.

However, a proposed new constitution appears to take critical steps towards enhancing gender equality in politics by proposing the allocation of 60 “affirmative action” seats for women for the first two terms after the new constitution is adopted. The 60 female MPs

would add to the 210 parliamentary seats and the 88 senate seats that the country currently has.

While this creates opportunities for more women to enter politics, the level of participation by the women proposed in the draft constitution still falls short of the benchmarks set by several local, regional and international policy frameworks that promote and support women's extensive participation in politics and decision-making roles that the country has committed itself to.

These include:

- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), which informed the African Decade for Women under which the African Union (AU) declared 2010 to 2020 as a Decade for Women
- SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (Article H of 1997) that sets a minimum target of 30 percent representation of women in leadership by 2005; and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (Articles 12 and 13) that aims to achieve a 50 percent representation in decision-making roles by women in all SADC countries by 2015;
- 2000 Millennium Declaration and Development Goals, which set a target of 50 percent proportion of seats by women in parliament by 2015;
- African Women's Protocol of 2003 (Article 9) where the AU set targets of 50 percent women representation in decision making bodies by 2012; and
- 2004 National Gender Policy (Section 6.2.3.2), which advocates a 52 percent representation of women in decision-making positions.

Although it is the responsibility of the State to respect and implement these commitments, this study investigates whether the media is also playing its institutional role of creating the groundwork for gender equity in the country. It looks at the extent to which the position of women in political issues has been approached and portrayed in the surveyed media.

1.1 Lessons from other researches

SEVERAL studies on gender and the media have paid great attention to the manner in which the media represent and portray women.

The Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, (2004) notes that the media behave stereotypically when covering women politicians by focusing on their appearance, wardrobe, mannerisms, and when photographers try to get ridiculous or compromising pictures in order to get readers' attention.

The assertion also confirms what Kahn (1994) observed.

Khan highlights that representation of women politicians in the media are more prone to focus on gender based evaluations of dress and demeanour than on the substance of decisions and actions.

Studies on the traditional relationship between politics and women have also shown that traditionally women's participation and access to formal political power structures has been hindered by various factors.

In a study facilitated by the United Nations (UN), Bari (2005) notes that the structural and functional constraints faced by women have been shaped by social and political relations in a society. Among these are social and political discourses, political structures and institutions and the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective capacities.

The main ideological factor noted by Bari is patriarchy, a system of male domination that puts women's position in politics on the margins. Patriarchy is used as an ideological tool to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere of politics and economics.

Bari argues that these socio-cultural factors that restrict women from exercising their political freedoms are embedded within the socially constructed subordinate status of women upon men. This results in low resource allocation to women's human development by the state,

society and the family. It also contributes to varying degrees of gender disparities in education, health, employment, ownership of productive resources and politics in general. This study uses some of these indicators to assess how women politicians are reconstructed in the media.

1.2 Scope of the research

THIS is a three-month investigation, conducted from December 1st 2012 to February 28th 2013. The report is a follow-up to the first issue of *Media Representation Of Women In Politics In Zimbabwe* (October 1st to November 30th , 2012). Just like its predecessor, it focused on 10 of Zimbabwe's 16 mainstream media outlets, both private and public (state-owned). The surveyed media are listed in Fig 1.

Fig.1: List of media under inspection

Media	Regularity	Status
ZTV (ZBC)	Everyday	Public media
Spot FM	Everyday	Public Media
<i>The Herald</i>	Everyday	Public media
<i>Chronicle</i>	Everyday	Public media
<i>The Sunday Mail</i>	Weekly	Public media
<i>Dailynews</i>	Everyday	Privately owned
<i>Newsday</i>	Everyday	Privately owned
<i>Zimbabwe Independent</i>	Weekly	Privately owned
<i>The Standard</i>	Weekly	Privately owned
Star FM	Everyday	Privately owned

1.3 Methodology

THE research used both quantitative and qualitative methods to extract information for analysis.

Quantitative techniques were basically used to statistically measure the quantifiable elements that gave insight into whether reportage represented male and female voices fairly. This was done through a voice/source-coding mechanism. The coding system sought to identify the most quoted between men and women so that equitability in coverage could be assessed. The data were presented in form of tables and graphs so that findings can be better understood.

Qualitative analysis was used to fine-tune the quantitative findings as well as deduce the diction and pictorial presentation of women in the surveyed media.

Chapter Two

Summary of findings

- The media gave little attention to women's political messages
- There was underrepresentation of women sources in the media
- Men outtalked women in stories on core political issues

2.1 Distribution of political topics in the media

THE media carried a total of 1 189 reports on political developments in Zimbabwe in the three-month period under study. The private media carried 725 of these with the official media containing the remaining 464.

Popular political developments during this period included issues relating to the constitution revision; party politics, national elections, violence and human rights; legal and parliamentary issues. The 'others' section consisted diverse stories that had political connotations in their coverage by the media such as indigenisation, international relations and local government issues.

Notably, stories carried in the surveyed media on the activities of political parties were mostly covered in the context of the constitution referendum in particular and the proposed harmonised elections in general.

Categorisation of these topics and the number of stories allocated to each subject by the media are shown in Figs 1 and 2.

Fig 1: Distribution of political stories in the public media

Political topics	Number of stories
Constitutional	124
Prty politics	192
elections	33
Parliamentary	7
Legal/Judiciary	7
Violence/human rights	15
Others	86
Total	464

Fig 2: Distribution of political stories in the public media

Political topics	Number of stories
Constitutional	98
Prty politics	145
elections	274
Parliamentary	18
Legal/Judiciary	23
Violence/human rights	88
Others	79
Total	725

2.2 Women as secondary subjects

THE media carried very few political stories that exclusively dealt with women issues in the period under examination.

Of a total of 1 189 political reports these media carried, only 33 (public media [18] and private media [15]) were wholly devoted to political issues directly related to females and featured them as the primary sources of information.

In the official media, these comprised two on electoral and constitutional issues, five on political parties' activities, four on political violence and seven on other issues. Stand-alone political stories on women issues carried in the private media consisted seven on electoral and constitutional matters; political parties and parliamentary issues (one apiece); violence and human rights (four) and the remaining two were on the others category.

These media reports were generally urging reports by women organisations, parliamentarians and political party figures encouraging other women to involve themselves in national politics by supporting the draft constitution, particularly because of its inclusion of women's rights.

2.3 Voice Distribution

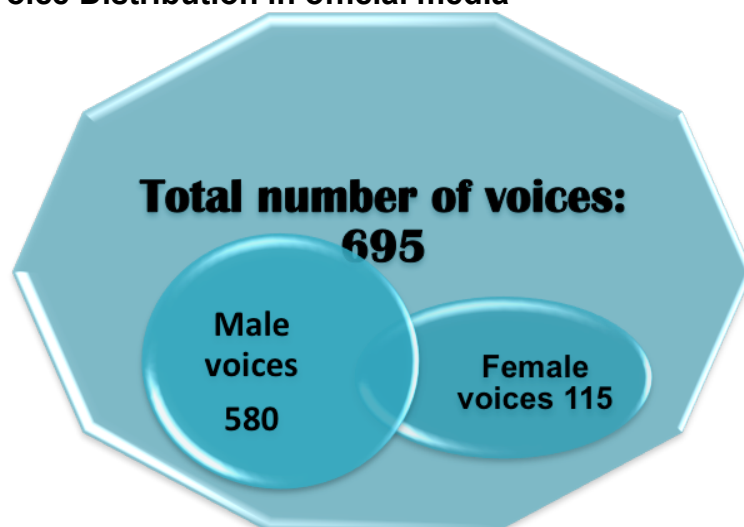
WOMEN were heavily undersourced in all media.

Of the total 1 654 voices both the government and private media used in their stories on politics in the period under review, only 239 (14%) of these belonged to women. The remaining 86 percent (1 654 voices) were those of males.

This pattern was also reflected across both sections of the media.

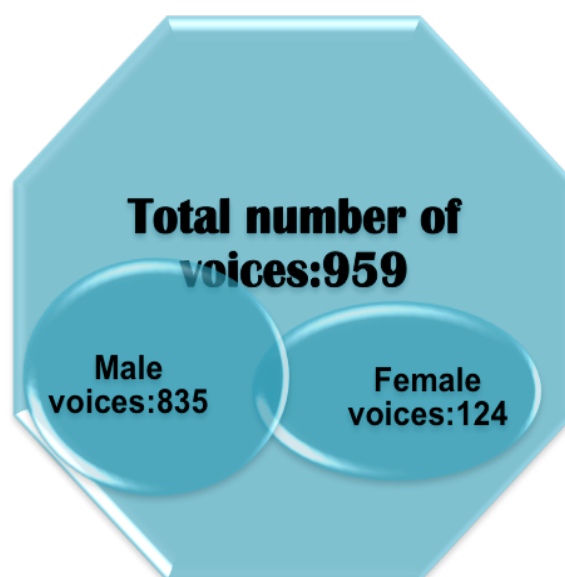
As shown on Figs 1 and 2, out of a total of 695 voices quoted in all political topics carried in the public media, 580 (83%) were of males while females made up 115 (17%).

Fig 3: Voice Distribution in official media



In the surveyed private media, women accounted for just 13 percent of the sources used in political stories against the 87 percent for men.

Fig 4: Voice Distribution in the private media



2.4 Voice distribution per topic

WOMEN were likely to be quoted speaking more on political violence and human rights across all media (public media [42% against 58% by men] and private media [23% versus 77% by men]).

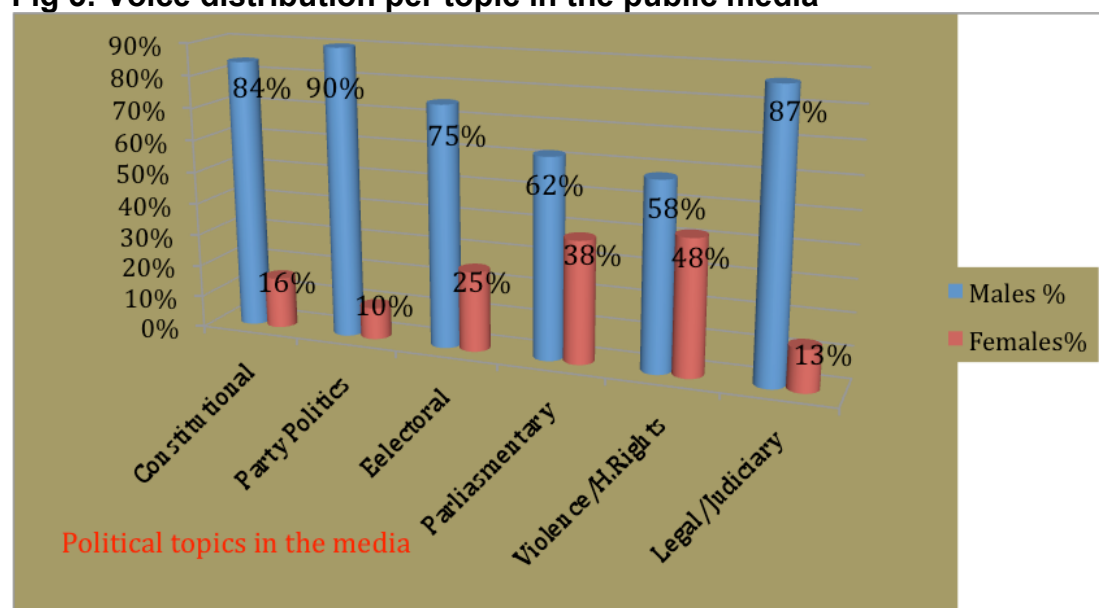
But they were likely to be least used as sources of information in stories on party activities than men – also in both sections of the media. See Figs 5 and 6.

Notably, the number of women recorded in the public media speaking on political motivated violence in the period under review (10) marks a significant increase from the five percent (one) recorded in the preceding two-month period study of *Women and Politics in the media* conducted from October to November last year.

Similarly, the private media saw an increase in the number of women who were quoted commenting on human rights abuses or political violence. This rose from the nine female voices used in the 2012 study to 26 recorded in the current research.

Other areas where females were largely preferred as sources of information in the official media were on parliamentary and electoral issues. In the private media, it was on electoral and constitutional issues.

Fig 5: Voice distribution per topic in the public media

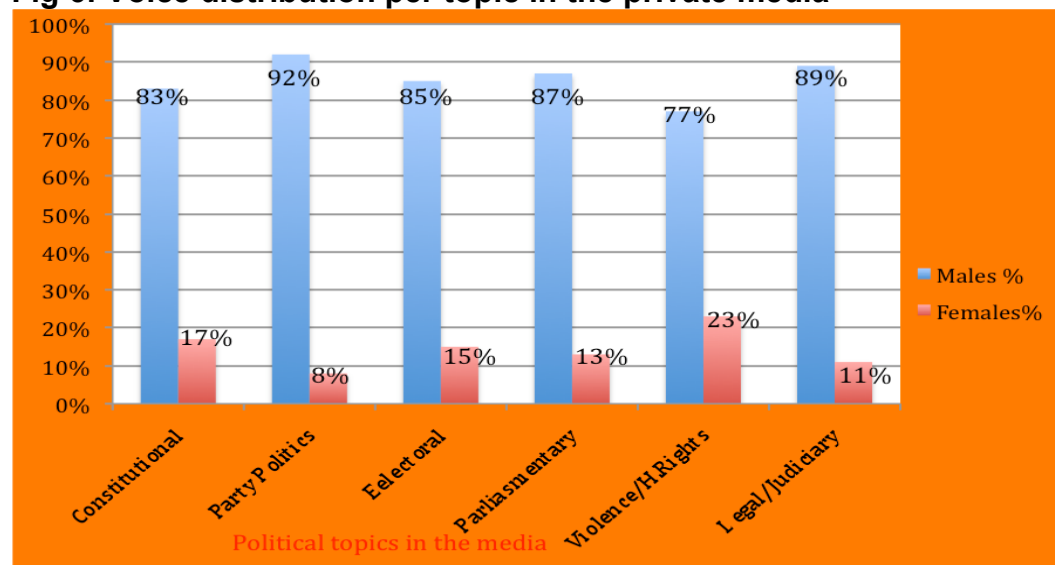


Notwithstanding the shorter period undertaken in the initial 2012 study, the increase in the use of female voices commenting on political violence and human rights coincided with prominent developments that threatened the rights of women.

These included the arrests of human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa and human rights activist Jestina Mukoko; police clashes with rights activists of Women Arise (WOZA) during demonstration across the country and police clashes with the wives of Renco Mine workers in Masvingo who were demanding better working conditions for their husbands. This resulted in the proliferation of women sources.

The increase in the use of women sources in the media in the period under review could also be attributed to increased non-violence calls ahead of the March 16 constitution referendum and debates on provisions on women's rights in the Charter that attracted interest from various civic women institutions and individuals.

Fig 6: Voice distribution per topic in the private media



2.5 Voice distribution per role

OVERALLY, males continued to outtalk females in the roles they were depicted performing. This is illustrated in Figs seven and eight.

Fig 7: Voice distribution per role in the public media

Roles	Male voices	Female voices
Politicians	358	48
Analysts	104	16
Ministers	67	15
Parliamentarians	25	8
Legal experts	20	2
Police	7	3
Ordinary people	17	15
Total	598	107

Although female sources appear to have been given more voices when speaking in their roles as politicians in both the official and private media, this represented a very small fraction of the opportunities given to males.

For example, while female sources were cited 48 times airing their views as politicians in the public media in the period under review, this translated to just 12 percent of the total 406 voices recorded. The remaining 88 percent (358) were males.

Similarly, females comprised only 12 percent (64 voices) of the 513 voices published in the private media commenting in their roles as politicians. The rest of the voices belonged to males.

In the public media females were most likely heard speaking in their roles as ordinary members of the public than in any other capacity, constituting 15 of the 17 voices used in these media in the three-month study. In the private media they were most likely to be sourced for their views in their official capacities as police officers and Members of Parliament than in any other roles.

Fig 8: Voice distribution per role in the private media

Roles	Males voices	Female voices
Politicians	449	64
Analysts	200	16
Ministers	101	21
Parliamentarians	10	6
Legal experts	33	2
Police	16	17
Ordinary people	36	13
Total	845	139

2.6 Emerging themes

ALTHOUGH a comparative analysis of statistical evidence on voice and story distribution patterns between men and women in the surveyed media shows serious underrepresentation of women in the three-month assessment, it would be unfair to project women as mere footnotes in the news pages of these media.

The finalisation of the new constitution, coupled with increased activity mainly by the three coalition parties campaigning for its adoption in a referendum, and a surge in alleged human rights abuses involving high profile women rights activists provided fertile ground for women input into these political developments.

In fact, the number of reports in the media on these issues swelled, especially in the first two months of 2013, as Copac started galvanising the country for the referendum, following the release of the final draft at the end of January. At the same time, the media obligingly provided women with platforms to express their views on the Constitution-making process, particularly on provisions dealing with women's rights issues in the draft

The media carried several reports that specifically encouraged women to take keen interest in, and vote for the draft constitution. These comprised news, opinion pieces and current affairs reports that all sought to justify why women should vote for the Constitution, citing the inclusion in the draft of provisions that cater for their rights as the compelling factor.

Most reports, especially towards the referendum, quoted various women organisations, parliamentarians and other stakeholders mobilising women to vote for the Constitution. These included gender-based organisations such as the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WcoZ) and Msasa Project and female politicians such as Senate President Edna Madzongwe.

For example, ZTV (28/2/13) cited Madzongwe urging women to fully participate in the referendum and ensure the adoption of the draft charter. The President of the Senate was speaking on the sidelines of the Women's Pre-referendum conference meeting in Harare.

Earlier, the *Dailynews* (3/12/12) quoted Musasa Project advocacy and legal officer, Tariro Tandi as being ***"...excited about the draft as it ... tried to address the plight of Zimbabwean women"***.

2.6.1 Women sidelined from core political issues

NONETHELESS, the media tended to largely restrict women to commenting on women's issues only, while giving them little room to comment on other serious political matters that equally affect their daily lives.

In their coverage of the constitution-making exercise, for example, the media did not prioritise women's views on debates about controversial issues such as devolution of power, gay rights, executive powers, dual citizenship, war veterans' issues and other political matters. This was mostly turned into a men's domain.

Thus, women were basically heard commenting on those provisions in the draft constitution that related specifically to their rights as females without giving them the opportunity to contribute to other crucial political and socio-economic issues in the draft that also concerned them. In the same vein, there was also very little media effort to incorporate the opinion of males on the supposedly 'exclusive' women issues in the draft charter, considering the strong views of the feminist movement that blame patriarchy for the existing inequalities between males and females.

Further, many reports on women and the constitution were simply campaign reports that quoted various high-ranking individuals and officials rallying women to vote for the draft constitution because it 'includes women's rights'. Yet, the media made little effort to fully explain what these rights were, and what they entailed, for the benefit of the public in general and the ordinary women in particular. Neither did the media give adequate opportunities to ordinary women to express their views on these new rights for women in the draft charter.

This type of coverage risked trivialising the proposed women's rights, while at the same time, also portraying women as petty and narrow-minded who could not positively contribute to anything other than the desire for recognition and fulfilment of their rights.

2.6.2 Victims and peace builders

THE study shows that the media recorded females speaking more on issues of human rights and political violence than on any other politically related stories they carried in the period under assessment.

The women were presented in two capacities: victims of abuse and political motivated violence and preachers of peaceful existence.

In the countdown to the constitution referendum, for example, the media contained several reports that project women as peace builders in which several females holding high offices in the public sector, the police and political parties, among others, were reported denouncing politically motivated violence and urging other women, and the nation in general, to promote peace.

The majority of the stories appeared in the official media.

These include a story (ZTV 27/2/13) where ZANU PF women applauded the police for ***"thwarting political violence"*** in the country and calls by a board member of the

Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, Mavis Gurapira, urging women to promote peace ahead of elections during an interdenominational conference in Harare (Sport FM, 2/2/13).

However, while the public media mainly carried general reports of women encouraging peace ahead of the constitution referendum, the private media went a step further. They also carried reports identifying, exposing and condemning incidents of human rights abuses and politically motivated violence against females.

These reports included the condemnation of the arrest of prominent human rights lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa in the *Dailynews* (8/12/12); the alleged barring by the police of the former ZANU PF Women's League Commissar and now MDC-T official, Tracy Mutinhiri, from addressing a workshop at Dhirihori growth point in Svosve, Mashonaland East province (Newsday, 26/1/13); allegations that starving residents (mainly women) in Gwanda, Matabeleland South, were being asked to produce ZANU PF cards as a pre-condition to receiving food aid (SW Radio Africa, 28/2/13); and that WOZA Valentine Day's protestors were allegedly beaten and arrested by police in Bulawayo (SW Radio Africa, 14/2/13).

In all these reports, women were either cited as victims or quoted commentating on these developments.

2.6.3 Women still portrayed performing less influential roles

MALE voices dominated news reports with 'hard' political content in the period under review, particularly those relating to parties' activities, electoral, ministerial and legal issues.

Only a pocketful of women occupying influential positions such as Zimbabwe Election Commission Chair Justice Rita Makarau, her deputy Joyce Kazembe, and national police spokesperson Charity Charamba, were regularly quoted in the media performing their roles as experts and spokespersons on political related issues.

Even then, their views often appeared to be overridden by those of Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa, President Mugabe, ZANU PF spokesperson Rugare Gumbo and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, who were sometimes preferred as more authoritative sources of information on hardcore political developments.

Other females widely quoted in the media included Gender and Woman's Affairs Minister Olivia Muchena, her deputy Jessie Majome and female politicians representing their political parties within Copac (Star FM 30/1, 2013; *Chronicle*, 7/2/2013).

However, their comments were mainly restricted to commenting on the Constitution making process, particularly issues to do with women and their rights in the draft constitution.

Women leaders of gender-based organisations such as Msasa Project's Netty Musanhu and Virginia Muwanigwa of Zimbabwe Women's Coalition were also quoted several times across all the media commenting on women related issues in the Constitution-making process (Spot FM 2/2/2013 and *Dailynews* 27/2 2013).

The media's underestimation of women as vital contributors to the political discourse of the country is embodied by the way they sourced the views of only four female legal experts against 53 male legal experts commenting on political related matter in the period under study.

The portrayal of women performing non-influential roles, particularly aspiring female candidates, has the potential of discouraging citizens from voting for them or viewing them as capable of taking part, or making decisions, in serious political matters.

2.7 The positives

2.7.1 Media promotes women's constitutional cause

THERE was general gender-neutral reporting in the media in the three-month study than in the previous study. Equally important was the proliferation of media reports that promoted women's cause in the constitution-making process.

In this context, the media quoted various stakeholders urging women and the country in general to vote for the draft constitution. Although these reports usually narrowed on women's issues only, they appeared genuine in their promotion of the democratic rights of women in all spheres of life.

As a result, there were very few cases that reproduced traditionally held misconceptions about women and other sexist discourses.

Chapter Three

3.1 Conclusion

AS in the preceeding study (October 1st – November 30th, 2012), women continued to be underrepresented as sources of information in political stories that the surveyed media carried in the period under review. Reliance on men as sources in political news showed that the genre of politics is still dominated by men.

Of the total 1 654 voices both the government and private media carried on political developments in the country, only 239 (14%) of these belonged to women. The remaining 86 percent (1 654 voices) were those of males.

This pattern was also reflected across both sections of the media.

In the public media, male sources were used 580 times (83%) against the 17 percent (115 times) female sources were accorded an opportunity to air their views on political issues in these media.

Similarly, women voices comprised just 13 percent of the voices used in the private media in their coverage of political news against the 87 percent for men.

However, the number of women recorded in both the public and private media speaking on human rights issues and political motivated violence in the period under review increased from the levels recorded in the October – November 2012 study.

In the official media, there were 10 females recorded commenting on the subject, nine voices up from the single source used in the preceding study.

Similarly, the private media saw the recorded number of women commenting on human rights abuses and political motivated violence rise from nine in the previous study to the 26 voices recorded in the current research.

However, the surge in the number of females carried in the media commenting on human rights issues appeared more coincidental than a premeditated media act. This is especially so as the increased use of female sources coincided with campaigns for the adoption for a new constitution – where women prominently featured urging for a peaceful referendum – and a swell in alleged human rights abuses involving high profile women rights activists, which also provided a fertile ground for women to air their views on the matter.

But female sources remained less likely to be used as sources of information in stories on core political developments, including party activities than males.

For example, while female sources were cited 48 times airing their views as politicians in the public media in the period under review, this translated to just 12 percent of the total 406 voices recorded. The remaining 88 percent (358 voices) were males.

Likewise, females comprised only 12 percent (64 voices) of the 513 voices published in the private media commenting in their roles as politicians. The rest of the voices belonged to males.

Notably, unlike in the earlier study, there was less stereotyping of women in the media in current study that, for example, reproduced traditionally held misconceptions about women and other sexist discourses.

Encouraging too was the way the media promoted women's self-awareness and fulfilment in finding political space, realisation and identity, particularly in these media's coverage supporting the women's cause and rights in the new constitution.

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