

FOREWORD

Volumes of relevant research, workshops and other supporting documents have been produced over the years and continue to be produced on the universal rights of women and the equality, dignity and respect that they should be accorded as equals in order for them to assert their rightful positions as critical players in decision making processes and in the socio-economic and political development in given communities, societies and ultimately at national level.

This imperative is further strengthened and highlighted under the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals that stress the promotion of gender equality and empowering women.

MISA-Zimbabwe is in that regard cognizant of the fundamental role that the media should play in the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals to ensure that women are given the requisite and opportunities to earn the recognition that they rightfully deserve as equals to men. It goes without saying that among the fundamentals of the right to the enjoyment of freedom of expression are those relating to pluralism and diversity of views and opinions and the imperative of gender sensitivity in the coverage and portrayal of women in the media.

It is against the backdrop of the desired objectives of the Millennium Development Goals that MISA-Zimbabwe was compelled to monitor and evaluate the media's representation of women at the peak of the election campaign period that preceded the presidential, parliamentary, senatorial and local government elections held in March 2008, as well as the presidential election run-off of June 2008, in the wake of Zimbabwe's deepening socio-economic and political crisis.

MISA-Zimbabwe acknowledges the commendable efforts by gender activists and other civic society organisations in Zimbabwe to conscientise the media on the need to feature women's voices in their reportage on all topical social, political and economic issues. The government has also gone out of its way to enhance the legal status of women through legislation which: empowers the court in the event of divorces, among other notable strides in that regard, to divide property equitably. Women are also entitled to a claim of the estate in the case of the death of their spouse. The Domestic Violence Act, which aims at affording victims of domestic violence maximum protection under the law and ensuring that the relevant organs of the State give full effect to the provisions of the law, is another such effort.

It is sad to note though that despite these meaningful strides towards the emergence of a gender sensitive environment, women continue to bear the brunt of the socio-economic and political crisis engulfing Zimbabwe with the most vulnerable being those that reside in the rural areas and commercial farming communities.

Walking the Talk, the pictorial journal, is a reflection of the media's portrayal of Zimbabwean female citizen in the political arena, particularly during the just ended elections; their economic status and their day to day life.

It is MISA-Zimbabwe's hope that in launching the *Walking the Talk* journal which comes together with a comprehensive report on the monitoring undertaken as well as an audio production of interviews conducted with selected female candidates that contested the elections in question, the media, civic society organisations, politicians as well as government will be able to gauge how far the media has gone in advancing the cause of gender equality and sensitivity. The journal, monitoring report and audio interviews should therefore serve as a lobby and advocacy tool that should spur us all to do more in advancing the rights of women as equals and complete the walk that will see women assuming critical and visible roles in the socio-economic and political wellbeing of Zimbabwe.

MISA-Zimbabwe Chairperson

Loughy Dube

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. General Introduction

This is a report on the assessment of the manner in which the media covered Zimbabwe's harmonised elections held on 29 March 2008. The findings of this report are based on the conceptualisation of media as public sphere platforms through which members of the public from across the socio-economic and political divide can democratically access information and freely participate in political and socio-economic debates that are central to their welfare.

The report focuses on the period leading to these elections based on a sample of the country's media structure that includes privately controlled and state controlled media. The monitoring was conducted to gauge whether the Zimbabwean media have been able to *Walk the Talk* in terms of gender mainstreaming and upholding the principles of critical, balanced and objective reportage. The report also pays attention to how the media fared in covering electoral issues pertaining to the youth. It then makes recommendations on how the media in Zimbabwe can be maintained as critical and objective public sphere platforms that are acceptable to all citizens, regardless of their gender; and if not how the media can be transformed to play that role.

2. Background and Contextual Information

Taking place against a deepening political, social and economic crisis, the 29 March 2008 elections provided yet another spectacle through which keen world interest was focused on Zimbabwe. Against a backdrop of an inflation of 800 000%, unemployment of over 80%, a collapsed health delivery system, shortages of basic commodities, human rights abuses, and a bout of other political and socio-economic problems, the elections took place in an atmosphere pregnant with eager anticipation for democratic and progressive change in the political, social and economic spheres.

This anticipation was against the background of a series of momentous political developments and events. Among these was the ZANU PF annual conference in December 2007. At this conference, the ZANU PF Politburo had tabled a proposal seeking the postponement of the 2008 presidential election to 2010. The conference however, rejected the proposal, setting in motion a set of new developments that culminated in the holding of the harmonised elections on 29 March 2008. In the mix of these developments was the SADC initiated dialogue which brought ZANU PF and the two opposition MDC formations to the negotiating table to discuss possible solutions to the Zimbabwean crisis. The initiative came in the wake of the events of 11 March 2007 during which leaders of the opposition and civic society were brutally assaulted by the police for organising a national day of prayer rally in Harare's Highfield Township. Much to the dismay of civic society, the SADC initiated dialogue did not yield much in so far as it related to the opening of Zimbabwe's constricted democratic space.

The passage of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (Number 18) Act through parliament was widely condemned as a reactionary product of the unmitigated dialogue initiative. The amendments to the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) that were effected in January 2008 did not do much in terms of paving way for the full enjoyment of the freedoms of expression, association and the right to access to information. While opposition political parties were given token access to flight their advertisements with state controlled media a few days before the March 29 elections, editorial coverage in these media largely remained biased in ZANU PF's favour.

With respect to media coverage, the prevailing atmosphere of autocracy was particularly displayed in the run-up to the presidential run-off election of 27 June, 2008 when the opposition was exposed to a complete blackout by the country's sole broadcaster, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC). This blackout points to a situation in which the little coverage that was granted to the opposition in the run- up to the March 29 elections can only be surmised as having been a window-dressing act designed to placate the SADC electoral observer mission team into believing that the broadcaster was sticking to the SADC principles and guidelines for the holding of free and fair elections. This window-dressing generosity was soon to be confirmed as such following the dismissal of the ZBC chief executive officer Henry Muradzikwa and other key personnel soon after the March 29 elections. Muradzikwa was fired for having granted the opposition coverage in line with the SADC Principles and Guidelines on the conduct of democratic elections in the southern African region. From this critical analysis it becomes clear that the role of the media with respect to the March 29 2008 harmonised elections was conceived against the background of suppression and repression in which vested political interests thrive on muzzling free flow of information. It is with respect to this scenario that the elections took place in an environment in which there continues to be a dearth of diversity in terms of sources that which citizens can rely on for information that is essential for their day to day survival. The elections also took place in a context in which the Zimbabwean media continue to be polarised along political lines, with one section of the media backing the status quo while the other has devoted itself to the cause for political change. This has not augured well for the ideal role of media as critical sources of information that operate on the basis of objectivity, fairness, balance and non-partisanship.

Contrary to these principles, the state controlled media, including ZBC and publications in the Zimpapers stable were openly biased in favour ZANU PF. The privately controlled media, on the other hand, were observed as having basing their reportage in line with the cause to have ZANU PF ousted from political power.

3. Expectations from the Media

In the interest of a diversified, objective, critical and balanced coverage of events such as elections, the media have ideally been conceived as Public sphere platforms in line with Jugern Habermas's Public Sphere concept. The Habermasian Public Sphere theory is an idea that conceives media as public platforms through which citizens from different social segments can express their views and acquire information in line with ideals such as gender equality, political diversity and pluralism. The concept originated from ancient Greece where citizens had access to a public space, the *agora* where political and socio-economic issues were tabled and discussed in the interest of public good.

The idea of the public sphere was revised by Jugern Habermas to delineate public space as a space that is separate from the state and the private spheres of the family and business. The public sphere arena is further seen as an open arena in which citizens are granted equal status, notwithstanding their social, political and economic standing. Unlike in the public sphere of ancient Greece in which women were left out, the modern public sphere is driven by egalitarian principles that include gender equality. The media have been conceptualised as this ideal public sphere that, among other ideals, operate within the rules of rational discourse, enhance open political debate and do not dance to the whims of political or economic power, but to that of argument based upon evidence. When closely looked at, these principles are covered in the code of journalistic ethics that calls for objectivity, accuracy and balance in media reportage.

In this respect, media are expected not to operate on the basis of any form of discrimination be it on social, economic or political lines. Instead, the media must operate in line with what Habermas termed “communicative rationality”, a principle that is underpinned by objective, argumentative and unconstrained discourses.

This is what was expected of the Zimbabwean media in their coverage of the harmonised elections of 29 March, 2008. In terms of this expectation, the media should have granted equal, balanced and objective coverage to the different political players contesting in the elections. The media were also expected to carry diverse views from a cross-section of citizens, notwithstanding their gender, socio-economic status and such other stratifications from which discrimination has often sprung.

These expectations are further stressed in instruments such as the SADC Principles and Guidelines for the holding of free and fair elections, which, among other provisions, provide for the granting of equal access to public media to all parties contesting in elections. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, while not being a public broadcaster in practice, is legitimately expected to be such. Newspapers under the Zimpapers stable are also legitimately expected to serve a public role considering that the principle of the Mass Media Trust under which they were conceptualised was essentially put in place for public service purposes.

Whether or not the media acted in line with these public sphere expectations in reporting issues around the March 29 harmonised elections is what this report examines. The report is based on the observation of how ZBC and some Zimbabwean newspapers covered the election. News articles were sampled and analysed from these media outlets during the period stretching from January 2008 to the end of March 2008, the period when the harmonised elections were topical.

The articles were analysed with respect to establishing whether the media managed to walk the talk in terms of operating in line with the principles of public sphere concept, which ideally positions them as the Fourth estate in the governance structure. In line with this, the survey that produced this report sought to answer the following questions:

- * whether the media were gender sensitive in terms of coverage of male and female candidates in the election how general electoral issues affecting both men and women were covered with respect to the need for gender equity in media coverage whether there was equal access to the media for the different political parties and candidates contesting in the election the extent to which electoral issues pertaining to the youths were covered in the media.

Apart from the above questions, the survey also broadly looks at whether or not the media did not discriminate citizens on the basis of social status in their coverage of issues to do with the elections.

Newspapers in the Zimbabwe Newspapers stable include *The Herald*, *The Chronicle*, *The Sunday Mail*, *The Sunday News*, *Kwayedza*, *Umtunywa* and *The Manica Post*. The Zimbabwe Newspapers operate under the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust, which was set up to ensure that the operations of media outlets under it are not subjected to partisan influence from market and political forces.

CHAPTER 2

WHO APPEARED AND WHO FEATURED PROMINENTLY

2.1. The Question of Appearing and Featuring Prominently

A reading of certain media in Zimbabwe tends to point to who is who in society in terms of political and social power. This is so when one considers that appearance in the media has become sort of a status symbol in terms of defining both social and economic power. This is especially so in the “Third World” where media ownership and control largely remains in the hands of government and, in some cases, in the hands of a cabal of business people. It is against this general background that a better answer may be found as to who appeared and who featured prominently in media in the wake of the 2008 elections in Zimbabwe. This question is being tackled broadly in so far as the coverage of broad electoral players is concerned. The term, a broad political player in this instance refers to political parties, ZANU PF, MDC, the Mavambo Movement and independent candidates.

In tackling this broad question, this part of the report will qualitatively and quantitatively help towards answering of the following questions:

- * Did the media equitably cover the different political players who participated in the March 29, 2008 harmonised elections?
- * Was there no marginalisation of some participants in the election in terms of media coverage?
- * What sort of issues was covered with respect to the different political players in the election?
- * Did stories on the elections carry balanced views from a diversity of sources?

The answering of these questions was explored through a quantitative and qualitative analysis of news articles on different political parties and other contestants in the election. The analysis was as per the sample that is referred to elsewhere in this report. Quantitatively, the research process for this part of the report proceeded by looking at the total number of stories on each of the political players as described elsewhere in this report. The quality of the stories was also looked at with regard to whether they portray a negative or positive picture on each of the different players who contested in the elections.

2.1.1. Coverage of different political players by ZBC Television

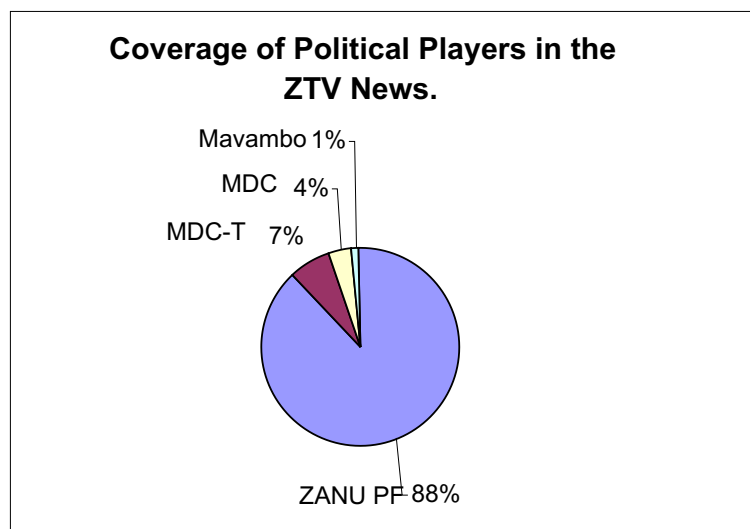
Ideally the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) is supposed to be a public broadcaster operating on a non-partisanship basis. This ideal status would better position a public sphere platform that covers political and socio-economic issues in line with the principles that underpin the Habermasian Public Sphere concept. Whether or not the ZBC TV main news bulletins conformed to these principles is the focus of the analysis that follows. First, there is a focus on the total number of stories on different political players. The total number of stories will be looked at in relation to the number of stories on each of the political parties and independent candidates who contested in the elections. Judging by the number of stories that appeared with respect to each of the contestants and other related issues, a conclusion will be reached as to whether or not the ZBC TV was an ideal public sphere platform accommodating a multiplicity of voices in its coverage of the March 29 harmonized elections.

Number of stories on each of the political players

A total of 205 election related stories were covered on ZTV main news bulletins from 6 January to 31 March 2008. Of these, 173 (88%) were on ZANU (PF), 15 (7%) were on the MDC Tsvangirai (MDC-T), 4 (4%) were on MDC (Mutambara) and 3 (1%) were on the Simba Makoni led Mavambo movement. There was no single story on independent candidates. The percentage representation of the coverage of the stories is as shown in Figure 1 below.

Hansen, M. 1993: Foreword to Negt, O. and Kluge, A: Public Sphere and Experience: Towards an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, pg xxvi
Garnham, N. 1986: “ The Media and the Public Sphere ” in Golding, P., Murdock. G. and Schlesinger, P. (eds): Communicating Politics. Mass Communications and the Political Process, Leicester University Press, Leicester, pg 41.
Payne Michael 1996: A Dictionary of Cultural and Critical Theory, Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, pg 233.

Figure 2.1.



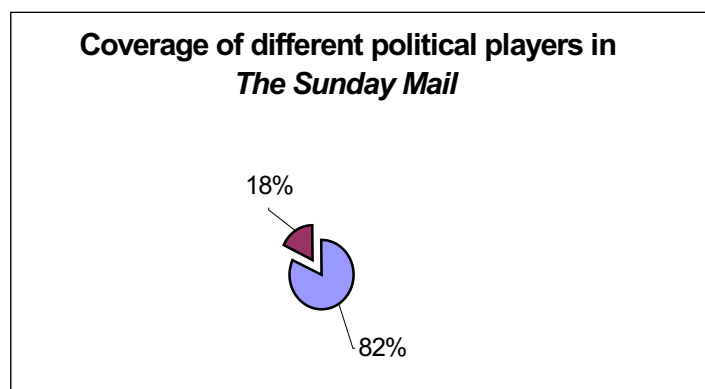
From the above presentation, it is clear that the bulk of the editorial airspace on the ZTV main news bulletins was devoted to ZANU PF. The other political players were left with a mere 12% of the editorial airtime that was also unevenly distributed among them, with MDC- T receiving the largest chunk of the remainder. None of the independent candidates appeared in any, of the 205 stories on ZTV news during the period under review.

2.1.2. Coverage of different political players by *The Sunday Mail*

The Sunday Mail, being part of the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust was meant to operate in the public interest without partisan influence from either politicians or the business sector. To this end, *The Sunday Mail* should not have been biased in its coverage of the elections.

A total of 11 election stories carried by *The Sunday Mail* were observed for the purposes of this report. The stories were observed during the period 17 January and 31 March, 2008. Of these stories, two (2) stories were on MDC-T while nine were on ZANU (PF). None of the observed stories were on Mavambo, MDC-M and independent candidates. Figure 2 presents the percentage coverage of the different political players as reflected by these stories.

Figure 2.2



As can be observed, the coverage in *The Sunday Mail* was largely on ZANU PF. MDC- T received scant coverage while the other political players, namely the Mavambo Movement and independent candidates were not covered during the reviewing period.

The coverage of the different political players by *The Sunday Mail* points to a situation in which the paper neglected other political players concentrating its coverage on ZANU PF.

2.1.3. Coverage by privately controlled press

Privately controlled newspapers have often been referred to as independent media that present alternative viewpoints to those offered by the state controlled media. To this end, it is expected that the privately controlled media are a real alternative source of information that uphold the public sphere ideals of inclusivity, objectivity and balance. For the purpose of measuring the

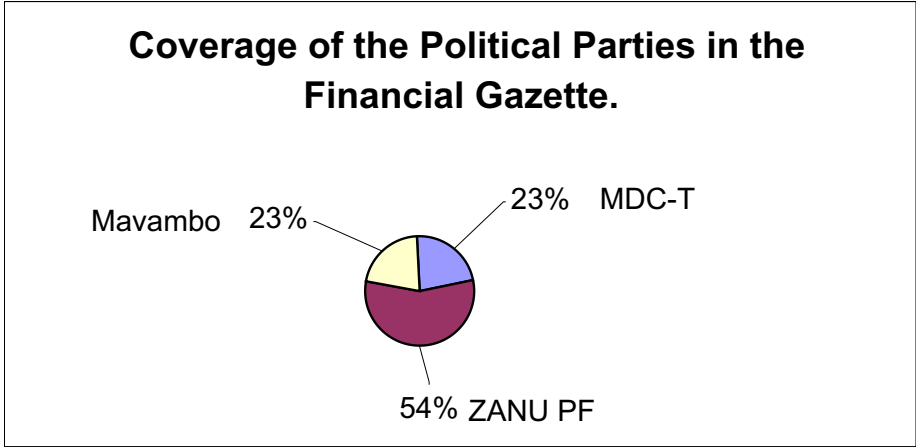
extent to which these ideals were adhered to, a sample of privately controlled newspapers including *The Financial Gazette*, *The Standard* and *The Zimbabwe Independent* was analysed.

The Financial Gazette

The weekly *Financial Gazette*, describes itself as Southern Africa's leading business and political newspaper well known for its in-depth and authoritative reportage that is anchored on providing timely, accurate, fair and accurate balanced news.

A total of 36 stories were published in *The Financial Gazette* from 4 January to 16 April. Of these stories, six (23%) were on MDC-T, fourteen (54%) were on ZANU PF and six (23%) were on Mavambo formation as shown below.

Figure 2.3

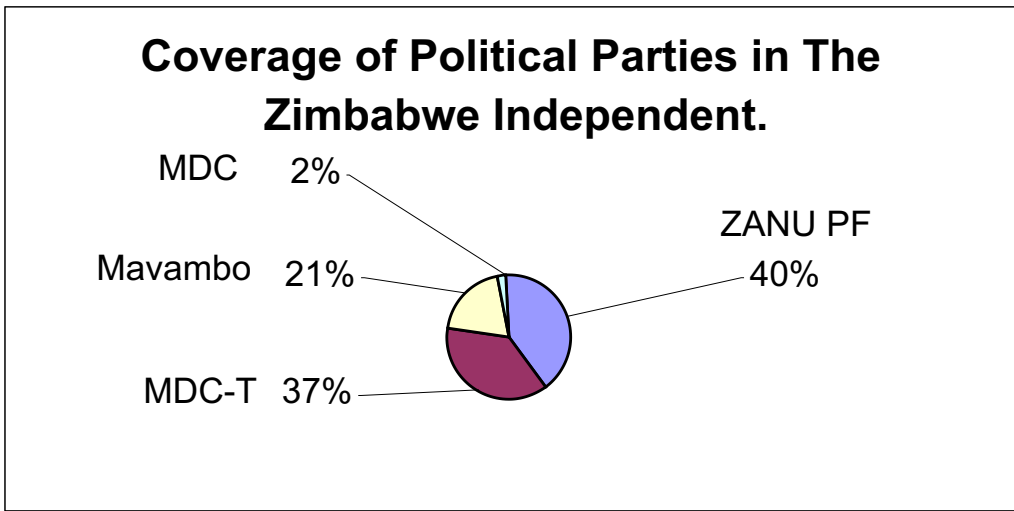


2.1.4. Coverage by the *Zimbabwe Independent*

The *Zimbabwe Independent* carried a total of 43 election stories from 4 January to 24 April 2008. Seventeen (40%) stories were on ZANU PF, sixteen (37%) were on MDC-T, nine (21%) were on Mavambo and only one story (2%) were on the MDC-M. There was no coverage on the independent presidential candidate, Langton Toungana as shown below.

The percentage coverage of the different political players in the *Zimbabwe Independent* is presented in Figure 2.4.

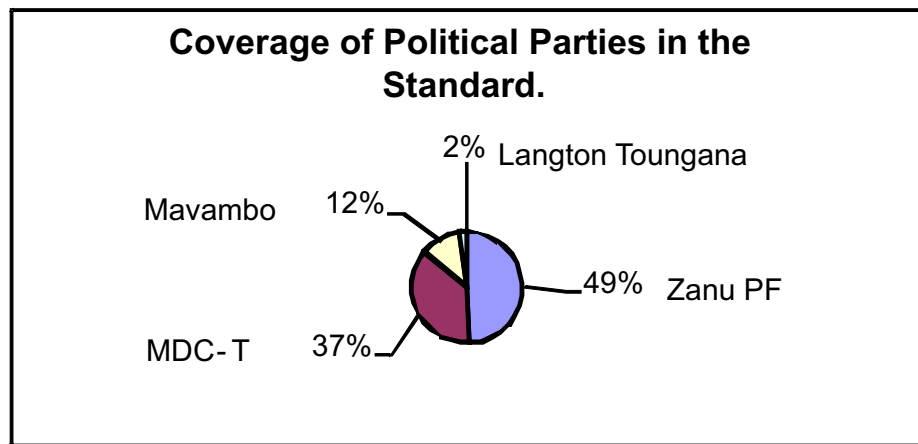
Figure 2.4



2.1.5. Coverage by the *Standard*.

A total of 58 stories were published from 6 January to 12 April in the standard. Of these stories twenty (49%) were on ZANU PF, fifteen (37%) were on MDC, five (12%) were on Mavambo faction and one (2%) story were on independent candidate Langton Toungana.

Figure 2.5



2.2. Relating the coverage of different political players to the public sphere concept

As can be noted from the presented statistics, the coverage of the different political players in the different media was not balanced. In the case of state controlled media, ZTV and *The Sunday Mail*, the balance was heavily tilted in favor of ZANU (PF), with other political players receiving what amounts to token coverage. While there was a fair coverage of other political players other than ZANU (PF) in privately owned newspapers, *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Financial Gazette* and the *Standard*, it is notable that these privately owned media still carried more stories to do with ZANU (PF) than the other political players. As the case of Langton Tougana and other independent candidates proves, some political players were literally ignored by the media in their coverage of the elections. This is contrary to the public sphere ideal that calls for a multiplicity of voices in media coverage. The lop-sided coverage that was witnessed with respect to the coverage of the different political players in the March 29 harmonised elections also betrays the notion of the equality of citizens before the media. It was, indeed a case in which other players featured prominently while others appeared on a token basis, with others being wholly ignored.

2.3. Issues of slant and discourses

2.3.1. The Propaganda according to *The Sunday Mail*

The slant and language used by the different media with respect to the different contestants in the election further testifies to the partisan nature of these media's reportage. For example, in its story headlined *Surprise in Poll Nominations* on the different candidates nominated to contest in the polls, *The Sunday Mail* concentrates on the ZANU PF nominees, neglecting those from other political parties. On the whole *The Sunday Mail* narrative on the elections portrayed other political players in bad light buttressing the idea that ZANU PF represents a revolutionary vanguard that is under threat from imperial forces of the West being represented by those contesting ZANU PF in the elections.

For example, in its edition of 16 - 22 March 2008, *The Sunday Mail* carries a story headlined, *No to Coalition with the MDC* in which Vice President Msika accuses the Tsvangirai- led MDC of being a "puppet political party propagating the interests of the British and mother western powers". In the same story, Mr Dumiso Dabengwa is described as a dangerous man who has lost his dignity by virtue of joining the Mavambo movement. Political players from both MDC-T and the Mavambo movement were not accorded right of reply in the wake of such far reaching accusations, pointing to how *The Sunday Mail* became an outlet of partisan political discourses in its coverage of the elections.

The extent to which *The Sunday Mail* became a medium of ZANU PF sponsored discourses is further confirmed by many other news articles that it carried during the course of the election campaign. In an article entitled *Sanctions and white fantasy of Zim's Self-extinction*, Tafataona P. Mahoso, a regular *Sunday Mail* columnist says the MDC is made up of 'proxies' of imperialism. In other stories, *The Sunday Mail* plays the ZANU PF propaganda role by pitting ZANU PF opponents against each other. A good example is found in the one sided story, *MDC calls Makoni a Zhing Zhong*. In this story, the paper's point of focus is not the policy context in which Makoni was called a *Zhing Zhong*. The focus is simply on the language that portrays Makoni in bad light.

2.3.2. The one man megaphone: The case of ZTV News

As already observed, most of the stories carried by ZTV's main news bulletins during the election period were on ZANU PF. With the exception of a few stories that centered on administrative officials namely Tobaiwa Mudede, the Registrar General, David Mangota, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Utoile Slaigwana of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), the narrative in most of the stories carried by the national broadcaster were similar to those of *The Sunday Mail* in which those who contested ZANU PF in the elections were accused of parroting western imperial

interests. Most of these articles, especially from 21 March were largely reports on rallies addressed by ZANU PF presidential candidate, President Robert Mugabe. Without factoring much in terms of analysis and alternative views, the ZBC reporters tended to regurgitate what President Mugabe said on a word to word basis. Viewers were often exposed to instances in which the Zanu PF candidate often used foul language to describe his opponents. A good example is a wide ranging interview in which he described Simba Makoni as a prostitute as he reflected on political developments on the eve of his eighty-fourth birthday.

2.3.3. The privately owned media and the tragedy of exclusive democracy

The quantitative analysis on the coverage of the elections by *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Financial Gazette* and *The Standard* points to an exclusion of some political players, especially independent electoral candidates. The election narratives in these media also tend to be littered with discourses of partisanship. For example, in one of his long articles that appeared in *The Zimbabwe Independent*, Trevor Ncube, the paper's publisher did not hide his preference for Simba Makoni. "He is a man who I would not be ashamed to call my president", Trevor said of Makoni. In another long article that preceded the March 29 elections, Trevor Ncube, among other things stated: "I am now more than convinced that an MDC government would have been a disaster..." Both articles, which point to partisanship at the highest level of media operations, also appeared in *The Standard* and *The Mail and Guardian* that are also published by Trevor Ncube. The articles explain the reasons for the glossy coverage accorded Simba Makoni in *The Zimbabwe Independent* and *The Standard* when Makoni entered the presidential race.

As testimony to their exclusive nature, discourses in the privately owned media tended to be one-sided opinion articles revolving around personalities. *The Financial Gazette's* story, *ZANU PF split looms* is typical of an opinion piece that is presented as fact. The story borders on rumor that is covered in perpetual off the record language that often starts with glossy phrases such as... "Impeccable sources revealed this week that..." In most cases, such impeccable sources never get to be identified, giving credence to the idea that the privately owned media often carry rumours as opposed to serious and critical news discourses. For example, impeccable sources that were never identified are said to have revealed to *The Financial Gazette* of 4-9 January that:

- * "a cabal of President Mugabe's inner circle, largely consisting of reformists disillusioned by the status quo, has joined hands with key players in the fractious party, the MDC, and could launch a united challenge against ZANU PF in the 2008 harmonized elections..."

When the united challenge did not come, *The Financial Gazette* never followed up on its initial claims. Instead, the paper tried to cover up with a headline; *Mugabe crushes rebellion*, which came almost a month later. This headline was based on reports that Simba Makoni had met President Mugabe and assured him that he was not in any way linked to any challenge against Mugabe's leadership. Simba Makoni, however, announced his presidential candidature against President Mugabe a few days after the publication of the story.

Whether the democratic discourses in the privately controlled media and state controlled are of an inclusive or exclusive nature with respect to democratic principles such as gender is further tested in Chapters 4 and 5, which focus on how these media conducted themselves with regard to gender equality and issues relating to the youth.

The Sunday Mail, 7-23 February 2008, "Surprise in Poll Nominations".

The Sunday Mail, 2-8 March, 2008, "Sanctions and white fantasy of Zim's Self-extinction", p.6.

The Sunday Mail, 9-15 March, 2008, "MDC calls Makoni a Zhing Zhong".

CHAPTER 3

THE MISSING FEMALE VOICES

3.1. Gender equality as an integral aspect of the public sphere

As observed in the introductory chapter, gender equality is part and parcel of the democratic ideals relating to the public sphere. If they were to act as true public spheres, the Zimbabwean media should have reflected a semblance of gender equality and gender sensitivity in their coverage of the elections. In exploring this aspect, this part of the report seeks to provide answers to the following questions:

- * was there gender equality and sensitivity in the media coverage of the March 29 harmonised elections ?
- * how were women candidates covered by the media in relation to the elections ?
- * what were the personal experiences of female election candidates regarding their coverage by the media?

3.2. Gender equality and sensitivity in media coverage

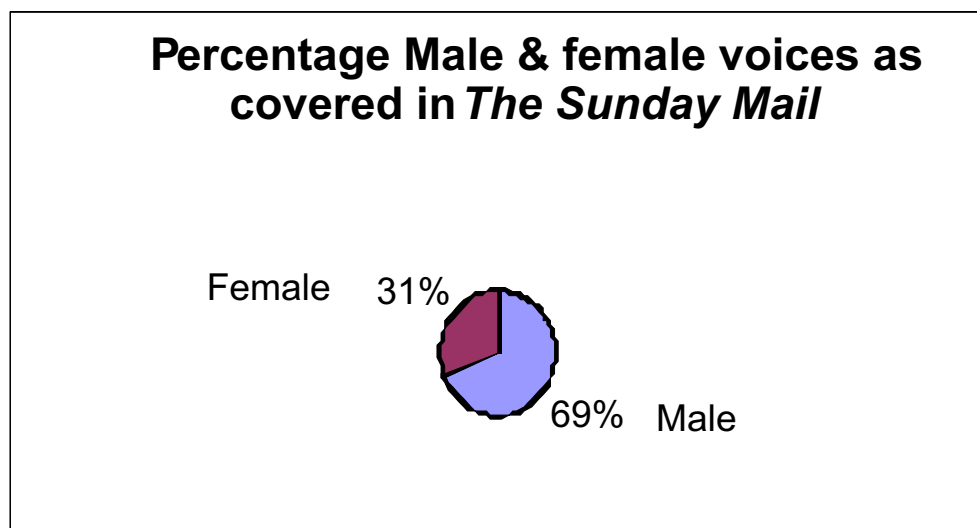
To answer the question on gender equality, a critical look was taken at the stories that came out in the selected media during the period of the elections.

3.2.1. Female and male voice distribution in *The Sunday Mail*

Of all the election stories in *The Sunday Mail* beginning 17 January to 18 April 2008, only 5 stories were dedicated to women while 11 were on men. The women who appeared in these media outlets are mainly those of high political and social standing such as Vice President Joice Mujuru, Bona Mugabe, President Robert Mugabe's daughter and other women of high standing belonging to ZANU PF.

The percentage distribution of the coverage of female and male voices is as indicated in Figure 3.1 below:

Figure 3.1



As shown above, the stories that appeared in *The Sunday Mail* during the election period were dominated by male voices. This runs contrary to the Public Sphere ideals that include gender equality.

The lack of gender sensitivity is further indicated by Table 3, which is a presentation of details on the *Sunday Mail* stories and how they discriminated against women.

Table 3.1: Diagrammatic Representation of male and female voices in *The Sunday Mail*

DATE	NUMBER OF STORIES	TOTAL VOICES QUOTED IN STORIES	NUMBER OF FEMALE VOICES QUOTED	NUMBER OF MALE VOICES QUOTED	STORIES WITHOUT QUOTED VOICES	BRIEF DETAILS & COMMENT
30 March-1 April	Story 1 <i>no need for re- run</i>	1	0	1	0	President Mugabe addressing a rally where he said he would win the presidential election and there would be no need for a run-off election. The story is centered on President Mugabe, making it a single dimensional story
	Story 2 <i>Mujuru predicts landslide victory</i>	1	1	0	0	The story is on Vice President Joice Mujuru addressi ng a rally. The story is centered on Mujuru in so far as she represented ZANU PF interests.
	Story 3 <i>president to win overwhelmingly</i>	1	0	1	0	The story is centered on Vice P resident Joseph Msika's address at a ZANU PF campaign rally. Focus is where he proclaimed that President Mugabe would win the election
	Story 4 <i>president's daughter Bona votes.</i>	1	1	0	0	The story is centered on Ms Bona Mugabe. Much attention is devoted to her being the president's daughter. There is no attention paid to her being a w oman casting her vote in that right.
	Story 5 <i>Zanu-PF candidate's house bombed</i>	1	1	0	0	The story is on the bombing of the house of Ms Judith Mkwanda, a Zanu PF aspiring Member of Parliament. There is not much critical focus on the implications of the bom bing on her as a woman. Rather, greater attention is placed on ZANU PF being exposed to a campaign of violence by unruly characters from the opposition.
	Story 6 <i>Anxiety grips Zim</i>	0	0	0	1	The story is a generalis ed report on the voting around the coun try. It is more of an editorial comment that contains the paper's own views, not those of a cross section of voters
	Story 7 <i>foreign media fault electoral process</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voices. International media organizations, BBC and CNN said elections were not free and fair.
	Story 8 <i>SADC observer team to issue preliminary report</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voices. The s tory was a report that there had been no report of political violence.
9-15 March	Story 1 <i>Accept victory or defeat with integrity.</i>	1	1	0	0	The story is a one -sided piece on Ms Karen Shermet writing a letter to the Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United States about the country's situation.
	Story 2 <i>MDC calls Makoni a zhing zhong toy</i>	3	0	3	0	This is a male dominated piece in which Morgan Tsva ngirai called Simba Makoni a "zhing zhong" and in which Aurthur Mutambara, claimed that President Robert Mugabe was using Simba Makoni to effect vote splitting. The story is more on the rumour side of things.

The Financial Gazette, 4-9 January, 2008, "ZANU PF split looms".
The Financial Gazette, 4-9 January, 2008.

	Story 3 <i>Promoting women empowerment</i>	1	1	0	0	This is a one sided story of Ms Tendai Marere. claiming that her life has changed since the day she received the farm implements from government. It is more of a propaganda piece in which a woman source is utilized. if not abused, to promote the ruling elite's political interests.
17-23 January	Story 1 <i>surprises in poll nominations</i>	1	0	1	0	The news article revolves around Mr. Utoile Silaigwana of ZEC, announcing the delay in the unveiling of the full list of election candidates. It is a one-sided 'public relations' story in which Mr. Silaigwana is not subjected to critical scrutiny
	Story 2 <i>presidential aspirants to be tightly screened</i>	1	0	1	0	This is a one dimensional article in which Mr. George Charamba the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Publicity is extensively quoted describing Mr. Simba Makoni as a power hungry individual taking advantage of loopholes in Zimbabwe's legal system. The story is also littered with male chauvinism as it does not present any views from women.
27 January- 2 February.	Story 1 <i>Madhuku predicts Zanu-PF victory</i>	1	0	1	1	The story revolves around National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) Chairperson Dr. Lovemore Madhuku's statement in which he predicted a landslide victory for ZANU PF in the elections. It is a one-sided propaganda piece meant to prop ZANU PF fortunes in the elections
	Story 2 <i>we're geared for polls- parties.</i>	0	0	0	1	This is more of an editorial comment in which the paper claims that Political parties are prepared for the harmonised elections without quoting a single voice from any of the political parties.
24 February- 2 March	Story 1 <i>violence mars MDC rally</i>	5	0	5		This is a story on the MDC -T. Male voices of Maxwell Mapungwana, Austin Gundani, Nelson Chamisa, Morgan Tsvangirai and Elias Mudzuri are quoted urging the electorate to vote for MDC in the March 29 2008 harmonised elections.
	Story 2 <i>president writes off opposition</i>	1	0	1	0	The story is on President Mugabe proclaiming that he will win the elections. It presents him as a champion of a revolution with reference to the liberation war and the land reform programme.
	Story 3 <i>Mpofu blasts Makoni</i>	2	0	2	0	This is a one-sided story in which Obert Mpofu and Lot Mbambo, both of ZANU PF criticising Simba Makoni for challenging President Mugabe in the presidential race. No alternative viewpoints are presented
	Story 4 <i>Zanu PF manifesto</i>	1	0	1	0	The article is a one man story in which Mr. Elliot Manyika, the ZANU PF
12-18 April	1 <i>No crisis in Zimbabwe</i>	3	0	3		The story revolves around Mr. Thabo Mbeki, the South African President's statement that there is no crisis in Zimbabwe following the delay in the announcement of the presidential election results. It is a propaganda piece meant to cast government in positive light considering that it does not bring in critical perspectives on Zimbabwe's unstable political and socio-economic situation that has largely affected women and children.

3.1.1. Female and male voice distribution on ZBC TV News

A total of 205 election stories were carried on ZTV's main news bulletins from 6 January to 31 March 2008. Only 20 (10%) contained female voices compared to 185 (90%) that carried male voices. This state of gender discrimination in terms of the projection of male and female voices in news bulletins is further illustrated by Figure 3.2 that is a percentage representation of the projection of female and male voices on ZTV's main news bulletins. Of the 12 stories that have female voices, some of them are largely to do with men. For example, there is one story of 22 February in which the wife of ZANU PF parliamentary candidate, Sikhanyiso Ndlovu, gives an address at her husband's campaign rally. In the story, Mr. Sikhanyiso Ndlovu's wife comes out urging people at the rally to vote for her husband. It is a typical story in which women are used to further the political interests of men. It points to the trend in which women, while making up more than half of the Zimbabwean population continue to be agents which men use to attain positions of influence in society.

Similar sentiments can be echoed with regard to the story that was carried by ZTV between 22 and 25 February in which Governor Angeline Masuku addressed another campaign rally for Mr. Sikhanyiso Ndlovu was the main player, with Governor Masuku being part of his campaign support structure. Governor Masuku appears in the story urging those who attended the rally to vote for Sikhanyiso Ndlovu because he belongs to ZANU PF, which she says, represents the wishes of the majority. In this story, the Governor comes out not as a critical political player but an agent through which Sikhanyiso Ndlovu can attain political power.

There was also a news article on the ZTV main news bulletin of 20 March 2008 in which Sarah Kachingwe, the chairperson of the Multi-Party Liaison Committee on Elections was extensively quoted in a story that implied that the different political parties in the elections were smoothly working together towards the conducting of free and fair elections. The story strikes as a case in which women appear in the media by virtue of official positions they may hold in society. It also points to a situation in which women appearance in the media is on a selective basis. While there were some widespread concerns on the freeness and fairness of the elections at the time the story came out, the picture of smoothness presented through the story points to yet another tragedy in which women only appear in the media for the purposes of giving political and social legitimacy to processes that may not be necessarily legitimate. This becomes the case when one considers how election candidates such as Theresa Makone and Trudy Stevenson raised serious concerns over ZANU PF's alleged tempering with the voters' roll around the same time.

This pattern of gender imbalance and discrimination against women in news coverage is shown through Figure 3.2, which presents the percentage coverage of females in comparison to that on ZTV main news bulletins. The sequence of discrimination is further portrayed on Table 3.2 which gives a breakdown of the total female and male voices in the different stories carried by ZTV main news bulletins during the reviewing period.

Figure 3.2

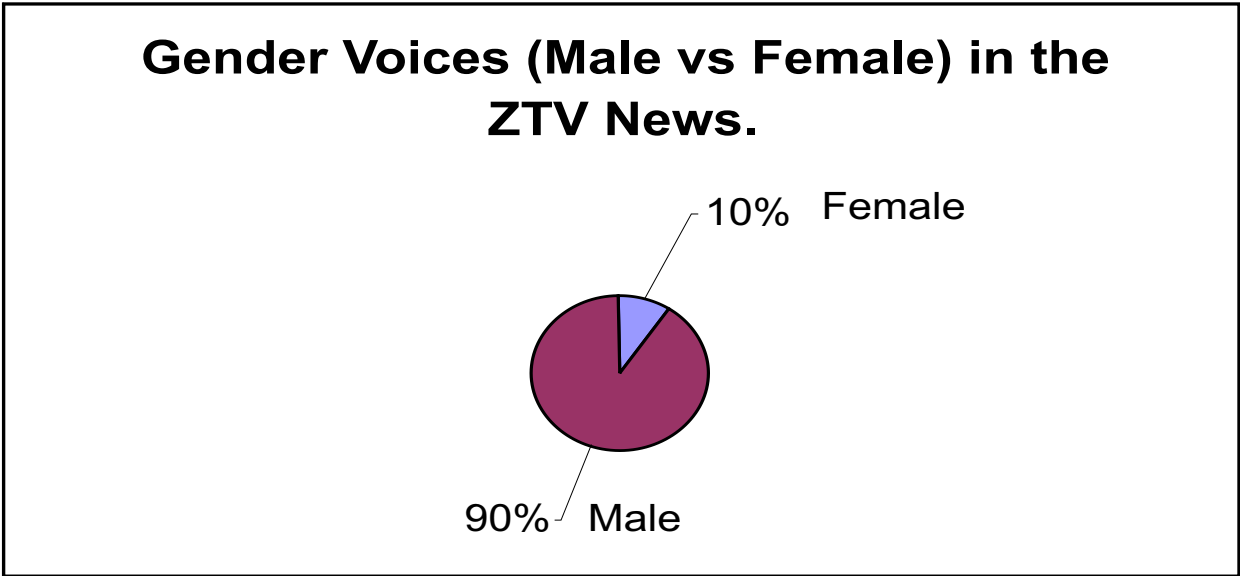


Table 3.2: Diagrammatic Representation of male and female coverage by ZBC Television News

DATE	NUMBER OF STORIES	TOTAL VOICES QUOTED IN STORIES	NUMBER OF FEMALE VOICES QUOTED	NUMBER OF MALE VOICES QUOTED	STORIES WITHOUT QUOTED VOICES	BRIEF STORY DETAILS AND COMMENT
06 January	Story 1 <i>ZANU PF launches an election campaign.</i>	2	0	2	0	The story on the launch of ZANU PF election campaign in the Midlands province revolves around Jason Machaya the ZANU PF provincial chairperson for Midlands and Emmerson Mnangagwa, a member of ZANU PF's politburo. This is a male dominated story. Voices of women in the ZANU PF structures should also have been projected.
	Story 2 <i>Delimitation of constituency boundaries concluded.</i>	1	0	1	0	Justice George Chiweshe, ZEC Chairperson speaking on the conclusion of the delimitation of constituency boundaries for purposes of the elections. This is a one dimensional story in which one male official is allowed to monopolise debate on an issue of critical public interest.
10 January	1 <i>ZANU PF prepared for primary elections.</i>	1	0	1	0	Elliot Manyika, the ZANU PF political commissar talking about the party's preparation for its primary elections. The story revolves around one man and one political party. It symbolises the monopolisation of the public sphere along patriarchal political party lines
14 January	1 <i>Contesting candidates to submit CVs through their District Coordinating Committee.</i>	1	0	1	0	Elliot Manyika announcing that the ZANU PF National Elections Directorate has agreed that all candidates wishing to contest in the elections should submit their CVs through their District Coordinating Committee. The story constitutes the elevation of partisan political party procedures to national status. The story also represents the personalisation of news as it gives prominence to one man in the form of the ZANU PF political commissar. Other people, among them aspiring ZANU PF candidates must have also been given space to air their views. As it is, the story is not a critical public sphere debate piece. It is part of ZBC's public relations exercise on behalf of ZANU PF.
11 February	1 <i>Sibanda launch election campaign.</i>	1	0	1	0	Jabulani Sibanda, the National Chairperson of the Zimbabwe War Veterans Association on the occasion of the launch of the ZANU PF election campaign. The story revolves around one male individual. It is part of the personalisation of national debate through ZBC, which must be a national public broadcaster representing a cross-section of national views.
12 February	Story 1 <i>Shamhuyarira expressing his view against the expulsion of Makoni</i>	1	0	1	0	Nathan Shamuyarira, the ZANU PF Secretary for Information and Publicity expressing his view against the expulsion of Simba Makoni from ZANU PF. The story must have carried more views from a cross-section of ZANU PF members and officials. As it came out, the story portrayed the tragedy in which national debate is confined to a few officials who are largely men.

	Story 2 <i>Mudedede denied some candidates denied access to inspect the voters roll.</i>	1	0	1	0	Register General, Tobaiwa Mudede denying reports that some aspiring candidates for the March 29 elections have been denied access to inspect the voters roll. The story was constructed around one male official. Views from candidates must have also been sought. Otherwise the story constituted a ZBC public relations exercise for the Registrar General who was allowed to present his statement without exposure to the kind of scrutiny that befits critical public sphere debate.
15 February	1 <i>Mutambara has no leadership qualities to contest in the March elections</i>	1	0	1	0	Professor Arthur Mutambara, the president of one of the two MDC formations in a story in which he is reported to have said that he has no necessary leadership qualities to contest in the March elections. This is a news article that has been created around one man. More views should have been included in this story, which was also about the decision by the Arthur Mutambara led MDC formation to back Simba Makoni's presidential bid.
16 February	1 <i>Progress in the nomination of election candidates</i>	1	0	1	0	ZEC official, Moffat Musabeya speaking on the progress in the nomination of election candidates. The story is basically on statements from this ZEC male official. No other views were sought on his claim to progress as was necessary in the true spirit of critical public sphere debate.
10 January	Story 1 <i>ZANU PF candidates nominated for the march elections.</i>	1	0	1	0	Elliot Manyika speaking about the nomination of ZANU PF candidates for the elections. This is yet another personalised news article in which only one man is allowed to speak on a subject that is of interest to a cross-section of ZANU PF members. Considering the controversies surrounding the ZANU PF nomination process, it was necessary that a cross-section of views be brought into the story.
	Story 2 <i>ZANU PF election mobilisation has started in Bulawayo.</i>	1	0	1	0	Jabulani Sibanda was given time to widely speak to the ZANU PF revolutionary credentials. From the story, the impression that is created is that the story of ZANU PF's revolutionary credentials can only be told by a few men like Jabulani Sibanda.
16 March	Story 1 <i>Foreign election observers arrived in the country.</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voices. The story was an announcement that foreign election observers have arrived in the country. The story must have included more voices other than those of ZBC news-readers and reporters. It was necessary that voices of those in the election observer missions and those of a cross-section of Zimbabweans be factored into the story.
	Story 2 <i>ZANU PF politicians promised to deal with water shortages.</i>	0	0	0	1	The story is a blanket report on two ZANU PF campaign rallies in Mbare and Chitungwiza at which ZANU PF politicians promised the audience to deal swiftly with problems including water shortages. No other voices appear in the story except for the reporter's praise loaded narration of the events.
1- 2 March	Story 1 <i>Tracy Mutinhere launches her election campaign</i>	1	1	0	0	Ms Tracy Mutinhere, a ZANU PF parliamentary candidate in Mashonaland East launching her election campaign. This is one of the few instances in which ZTV news carried a report on a female candidate. Still, the story lacks analytical depth and is devoid of a diversity of voices that could have made it an ideal public sphere news item.

	Story 2 <i>Chamisa and Matibenga addresses a joint campaign rally</i>	2	1	1	0	Nelson Chamisa and Lucia Matibenga addressing a joint MDC-T campaign rally in Kuwadzana. In a case of clear gender bias, more prominence was given to Chamisa's address as opposed to Matibenga's.
	Story 3 <i>Makoni and Dabengwa address the electorate at a campaign rally.</i>	2	0	2	0	Simba Makoni and Dumiso Dabengwa, addressing the electorate at one of the campaign functions for the Mavambo Movement. As if to suggest that this is a male movement, no woman is given prominence in the report.
22-25 February	Story 1 <i>Angeline Masuku campaigning for Sikhanyiso Ndlovu.</i>	1	1	0	0	Angeline Masuku campaigning for Sikhanyiso Ndlovu at a campaign rally. In this case, Ms Masuku comes out in so far as Mr. Ndlovu and ZANU PF campaigns are concerned, not in her own right as a politician
	Story 2 <i>Ndlovu's wife campaign for her husband.</i>	1	1	0	0	Wife of Sikhanyiso Ndlovu campaigning for Sikhanyiso Ndlovu at a rally. This is a case in which a woman is dragged into the marshy waters of politics for the sake of her husband. Otherwise
25 March	Story 1 <i>Mugabe attack Makoni and Tsvangirai at a rally.</i>	1	0	1	0	President Robert Mugabe addressing a rally at which he personally attacked Morgan Tsvangirai and Simba Makoni. This is yet another incident in which the national broadcaster was submerged to levels of the personality cult.
	Story 2 <i>Stella Nyandoro urges the electorate to vote for ZANU PF at a campaign rally.</i>	1	1	0	0	Stella Nyandoro, ZANU-PF Harare Central House of Assembly candidate. At a campaign rally where she urged the electorate to vote for ZANU PF. The story focuses much on her in relation to her affiliation to ZANU PF. The impression is that she should be voted simply because she belongs to ZANU PF, not because she is an able politician.
	Story 3 <i>Mujuru and Nyamupinda address rally in Goromonzi.</i>	2	2	0	0	Joice Mujuru and Beatrice Nyamupinga. Addressing a rally in Goromonzi West where they encouraged the audiences to vote for ZANU PF. There is nowhere in the story where the two politicians urged the electorate to vote for women candidates
24 March	Story 1 <i>Mugabe, Msika and Chombo addresses a rally in Bulawayo.</i>	3	0	3	0	President Robert Mugabe, Vice President Joseph Msika and Ignatius Chombo addressing a ZANU PF rally in Makokoba in Bulawayo. The story is dominated by male political heavyweights. Women and others are only mentioned in passing as support structures.
	Story 2 <i>Tsvangirai at his rally in Harare.</i>		0	1	0	Morgan Tsvangirai addressing a campaign rally in Harare. Not much attention is paid to audiences at the rally. Focus is on Tsvangirai and him alone.
20 March	Story 1 <i>Mugabe addresses rally at Gokwe Centre.</i>	3	0	3	0	President Robert Mugabe addressing a rally at Gokwe Center. Audiences are mentioned in passing and there is some commenting from Mr. Christopher Mutsvanguwa and around Mr. Sydney Sekeramayi. This is a story on men.
	Story 2 <i>Nyamupinga at her campaign rally in Goromonzi.</i>	1	1	0	0	Beatrice Nyamupinga the ZANU-PF candidate for Goromonzi West addressing a rally in Goromonzi. No other voices apart from hers feature in the story. But her being a woman in politics is not much of a factor. She is viewed through the eyes of a male dominated ZANU PF narrative.

16 March	Story 1 <i>Tsvangirai biggest rally in Harare</i>	0	0	0	1	The story was about Tsvangirai's biggest rally in Harare where he promised to work with civil servants in the event of forming a new government. The story is dominated by the reporter. The voice of Tsvangirai and people who attended the rally must have been given some significant prominence.
	Story 2 <i>Tracy Mutinhiri at her campaign rally in Marondera</i>	1	1	0	0	Tracy Mutinhiri, the ZANU-PF candidate for Marondera addressing a campaign rally where she encouraged the electorate to vote for ZANU PF. This is another projection of women operating from within the parameters of a gender imbalanced political equation where men dominate political processes.
21 March	Story 1 <i>Chinamasa and Mangota urge the electorate to vote for ZANU PF</i>	2	0	2	0	The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Justice Legal and Parliamentary Affairs David Mangota and Patrick Chinamasa encouraging people to vote for ZANU PF at a campaign function. This is a male centered story that lacks a diversity of voices.
21 February	1 <i>ZANU PF Women's League told to shun Makoni</i>	0	0	0	1	This is a blanket report in which a reporter narrates how a senior ZANU PF male official has advised members Simba Makoni's presidential bid. The fact that no voice from any member of the generality of the ZANU PF Women's League has been factored into the story points to the stereotyping in which the pattern and tone of women political participation has to be set by men.
9 February	1 <i>Tawenga urge the electorate to vote ZANU PF</i>	1	0	1	0	ZANU PF senatorial candidate for Hwata Constituency, Charles Tawenga urging the electorate to vote for candidates who have the people at heart. This is yet another generalised and praise report for a male ZANU PF functionary. It adds to many such other reports that dominated the national airwaves during the period of the elections
28 February	Story 1 <i>Nyanhongo at his campaign rally.</i>	1	0	1	0	ZANU PF House of Assembly election candidate for Harare South, Mr. Herbert Nyanhongo urging the electorate to vote for ZANU PF at a campaign rally. The story is dominated by Nyanhongo and praise laden descriptions of ZANU PF. It constitutes part of the unbalanced media debate in which the majority of people are treated as consumers, not citizens endowed with rights and freedoms including the right to independently participate in political processes.
	Story 2 <i>Manyika announce the date of the launch of the ZANU PF electoral manifesto</i>	1	0	1	0	Elliot Manyika announcing the date of the launch of the ZANU PF election manifesto. This is a one man story that is without any shred of analysis.
	Story 3 <i>ZEC announces the type of ballot boxes to be used.</i>	0	0	0	1	This story in which there is no other voice apart from that of the reporter was about the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) informing the public about the type of boxes to be used on polling day and the documents to be brought on this day. The story should have carried more voices from across the social divide considering its importance.

29 February	1 <i>Mugabe at a ZANU PF manifesto.</i>	1	0	1	0	President Robert Mugabe speaking extensively at the launch of the ZANU PF manifesto encouraging people not to vote for MDC.
26 February	Story 1 <i>Shirichena at the launch of her manifesto.</i>	1	1	0	0	The Zanu PF candidate for Mberengwa South, Elina Shirichena. She was speaking about her manifesto.
	Story 2 <i>MDC candidate died.</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voice. The story is on the death of the MDC candidate in the House of Assembly, Glory Joseph Makwati
08 March	1 <i>Silaigwana inform the electorate that the elections are going to be ward based.</i>	1	0	1	0	ZEC Chief Election Officer Mr. Utoile Silaigwana. He was informing the electorate that the elections are going to be ward based.
09 March	Story 1 <i>Midlands launch an anti- violence campaign.</i>	1	0	1	1	Patrick Chademana the police spokesperson in Midlands province said an anti- violence campaign had been launched in the city of Gweru to curb political violence during the elections.
	Story 2 <i>Candidates applauded the agriculture mechanisation programme</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voices.
10 March	Story 1 <i>Magaya defects from MDC-T party.</i>	1	0	1	0	Farai Magaya, House of Assembly candidate has defected from the Tsvangirai led MDC to the Mutambara- led camp.
	Story 2 <i>Opposition does not have the country`s well being at heart, ZANU PF urge</i>	0	0	0	1	No quoted voices. The electorate is simply briefed on Zanu PF achievements and urged not to vote for the MDC because it does not have the people`s interests at heart.
	Story 3 <i>Raradza support s ZANU PF</i>	1	0	1	0	Edward Raradza an uncontested candidate as MP for Muzarabani South. He expresses his support for the ruling ZANU PF party and urges the electorate to unite and vote for President Robert Mugabe.
	Story 4 <i>Mugabe at campaign rally in Matabeleland North Province.</i>	1	0	1	0	President Robert Mugabe briefing people at three rallies that were held in Matabeleland North Province.
12 March	Story 1 <i>120 observers prepared at correct procedures.</i>	1	0	1	0	Dr Tomaz Salomao the executive secretary of SADC said 120 observers were being prepared on the correct procedures and that Joao Miranda the head of the SADC team, as well as Angolan minister of foreign affairs will also be present during the election period.
	Story 2 <i>Mwanza: No violence during upcoming elections</i>	1	0	1	0	Reverend Godwin Mwanza, president of the Zimbabwe religious authority board, said there would be no violence during the upcoming election from the public or the police.
27 February	1 <i>Mutomba urges construction of two clinics.</i>	1	0	1	0	Buhera North Zanu PF legislator William Mutomba. He urged the government to speed up the construction of two clinics in his constituency.

15 March	Story 1 <i>Mutambara at a campaign rally in Mt Pleasant</i>	0	0	0	1	This is a male centered report on a rally addressed by Arthur Mutambara in Mount Pleasant, Harare. The fact that only the voice of the reporter features in the story leaves its objectivity and balance in question.
	Story 2 <i>ZANU PF campaign rallies.</i>	0	0	0	1	This is a blanket report summarising a series of ZANU PF campaign rallies. The report is dominated by the reporter, robbing it of the diversity that is required in public sphere debate
	Story 3 <i>Government to work with those loyal to ZANU PF</i>	0	0	0	1	The story is generalised on government plans to only work with those who are loyal to ZANU PF. This is a generalised report that can best be seen as a political propaganda piece. It is devoid of the rationality and diversity of opinion that is required of public sphere debate items.
17 March	Story 1 <i>Mutinhiri at her campaign rally in Marondera East</i>	1	1	0	0	Ms Tracy Mutinhiri addressing a rally in Marondera East. The report has nothing much on her achievements as a politician. She is being projected as nothing more than a ZANU PF functionary.
	Story 2 <i>Gumbo urges doctors to offer free medical care.</i>	1	1	0	0	Mavis Gumbo, a ZANU PF local government election candidate at a campaign where she mobilised doctors to offer free medical care. Not much is said on what Ms Gumbo is to offer to the electorate.
	Story 3 <i>Tsvangirai at a campaign rally in Mkoba.</i>	1	0	1	0	Morgan Tsvangirai addressing a rally at Mkoba stadium in Gweru. The story lacks a diversity of voices. People who attended the rally must have been interviewed to present their views on the rally and the substance of Tsvangirai's address
	Story 4 <i>Karimanzira urges electorate to vote for ZANU PF.</i>	1	0	1	0	David Karimanzira Harare Metropolitan Governor addressing a ZANU PF campaign function. This is yet another of the many stories that revolve around a single male figure. It is devoid of the diversity of opinion. More voices and views must have been heard through the story.
18 March	Story 1 <i>Mugabe at a rally in Mkoba Stadium.</i>	1	0	1	0	President Robert Mugabe addressing a rally at Mkoba stadium in Gweru. This is one of the many articles that ZBC personified around Mugabe. As differentiated from the ZBC news articles on women candidates, this and other stories on Mugabe were often characterised by long narrations on his personal attributes as a revolutionary.
	Story 2 <i>Nyamupinga at her campaign rally in Goromonzi.</i>	1	1	0	0	Ms Beatrice Nyamupinga, ZANU PF candidate for Goromonzi West at a campaign rally. This is one of the exceptional cases in which activities of female election candidates were highlighted. Still, the report does not have much on Nyamupinga's personal experiences and abilities.
	Story 3 <i>Tsvangirai criticised for imposing a candidate on the people of Redcliff</i>	1	0	1	0	Obadiah Dzingirai, who is reported as an MDC activist criticizing Morgan Tsvangirai over allegations of imposing a candidate on the people of Redcliff. The report was compiled after Tsvangirai addressed a violence ridden rally in Redcliff. In this case Mr. Dzingirai's voice was abused for the sake of a negative report against Tsvangirai. Other voices must have been added to the story to make it objective and balanced.

4.1.4. Youth Voices in *The Sunday Mail*.

Only one election story about youths came out in *The Sunday Mail* during the reviewing period. The story was about Bona Mugabe casting her vote for the first time since attaining the voting age. She urged the youth to do like wise and it was published on the 30 March 2008. The percentage coverage is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 4.4

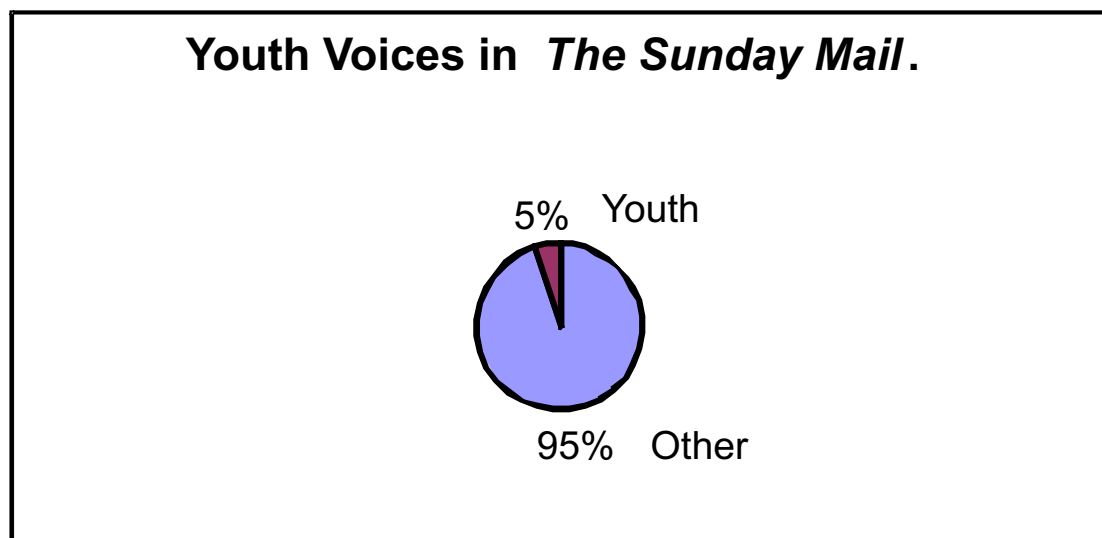


Table 4.4: Diagrammatic Representation of youth coverage in *The Sunday Mail*.

19 March	Story 1 Mutsvangwa at a campaign function	3	0	3	0	Christopher Mutsvangwa, the ZANU-PF candidate for Norton at a campaign function. Focus is on Mutsvangwa and his ZANU PF praise discourses. There is no critical focus on socio-economic issues affecting the residents of Norton
	Story 2 Mushore at a rally in Muzarabani..	1	0	1	0	Luke Mushore, the ZANU-PF candidate for Muzarabani North addressing a rally at Muzarabani Growth Point. The narrative in this story is dominated by the theme of ZANU PF as a revolutionary party that is the custodian of Zimbabwe's heritage including land. Focus is on Mushore and the revolutionary discourse while audiences at the rally, mainly women and children only feature in pictures.
26 March	1 Mugabe campaign rallies flooded	0	0	0	1	This was yet another blanket and personalized report on President Mugabe's numerous campaign rallies. In the report, women and other citizens are confined to spectatorship.
27 March	1 Chikwiramakomo and Bwititi at a campaign rally in Harare North.	2	2	0	0	Ms Juliet Chikwiramakomo and Ms Rosemary Bwititi the aspiring Councillors for Harare's Ward 18 and 42 campaigning in Harare North. The main focus of the story is on these two female candidates belonging to ZANU PF. The issue of their abilities is not brought into perspective.
28 March	1 Mugabe's campaign rallies flooded	1	0	1	0	This is another blanket report on a ZANU PF campaign rally addressed by President Mugabe. The story further, points to the personalisation of ZTV around Mugabe, which became the main feature of ZBC reportage during the election period.
29 March	1 Mujuru predicts a landslide victory.	1	1	0	0	Vice President Joice Mujuru predicting a landslide victory for ZANU PF. In this story, Mujuru is seen not through the eyes of her abilities as a politician, but through the parameters of collective and often patriarchal ZANU PF interests.
30 Mar	1 Mujuru predict a landslide victory	1	1	0	0	This is a repetition of the story that appeared on 29 March. The repetition; points to the limited circles from which ZBC sources its news.
31 March	1 COMESA speaks over observer mission.	1	1	0	0	Ms Lucy Kasanga of the COMESA election observer mission speaking on the mandated of the observer mission. It is good that a woman was interviewed for the story, but more views have been factored into the story. For example, more women voices should have been given space in the story.

4.1.5. Youth voices in *The Zimbabwe Independent*.

In the *Zimbabwe Independent*, no stories were particularly centered on the youths as shown in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.5

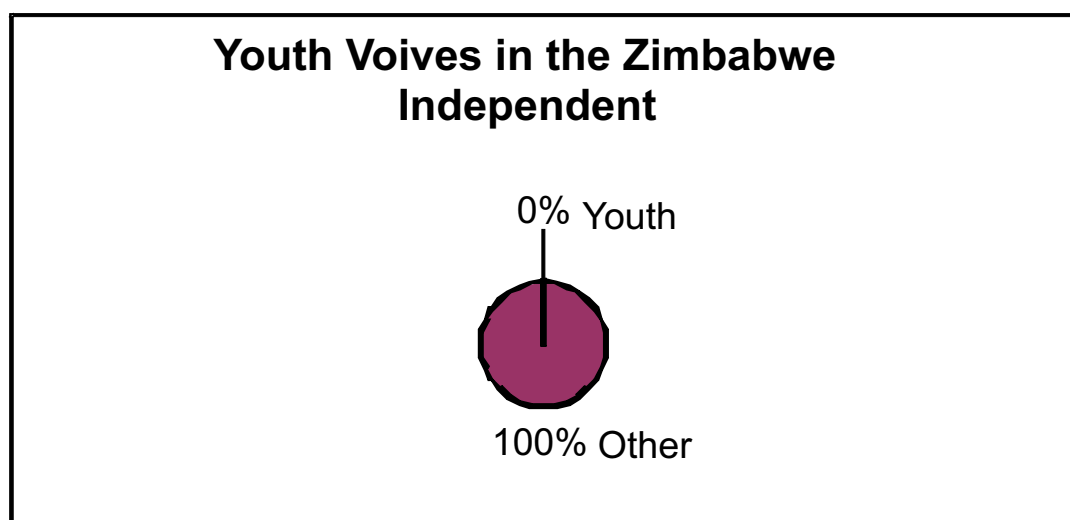


Table 4.5: Diagrammatic Representation of youth voices in *the Zimbabwe Independent*

DATE	NUMBER OF STORIES	TOTAL VOICES QUOTED IN STORIES	STORIES ON YOUTH
4- 10 January	Story 1 <i>Talks collapsed</i>	0	0
	Story 2 <i>talks collapsed over disagreements</i>	1	0
	Story 3 <i>Mohadi accused public media.</i>	1	0
	Story 4 <i>Mugabe wanted a false deal</i>	0	0
11-17 January	Story 1 <i>ZANU PF faction to launch party.</i>	0	0
	Story 2 <i>MDC-T lined up 300 rallies.</i>	1	0
	Story 3 <i>MDC-T engaging in discussions with Mutambara faction.</i>	1	0
	Story 4 <i>Moyo in alliance with the MDC.</i>	1	0
	Story 5 <i>Victory is certain.</i>	1	0
	Story 6 <i>Tsvangirai risks political irrelevancy</i>	0	0
18-24 January	Story 1 <i>Mbeki fails to save MDC/ZANU talks</i>	0	0
	Story 2 <i>Makoni faces credibility test</i>	0	0
	Story 3 <i>Economy in the red, black market thriving</i>	0	0
	Story 4 <i>Zanu pf politburo to meet over crisis</i>	0	0

25-31 January	Story 1 <i>Dabengwa Confronts Mugabe</i>	1	0
	Story 2 <i>Makoni Meets Mugabe</i>	0	0
	Story 3 <i>Election Won't Be Free and Fair: Tsvangirai</i>	1	0
15-21 February	Story 1 <i>ZANU PF to expel Dabengwa</i>	0	0
	Story 2 <i>Makoni, Mutambara forge alliance.</i>	1	0
	Story 3 <i>Chaos in MDC primaries</i>	1	0
	Story 4 <i>Zanu PF breaks own rules</i>	2	0
22-28 February	Story 1 <i>Makoni to meet Tsvangirai</i>	0	0
	Story 2 <i>ZANU PF officials defied Mugabe.</i>	0	0
	Story 3 <i>Makoni contesting the presidential seat</i>	1	0
	Story 4 <i>Mabhande react to loan advancement</i>	1	0
	Story 5 <i>Controversy arise as Mugabe stand as a presidential candidate.</i>	2	0
	Story 6 <i>Presidential candidates clinching 51% outright win</i>	6	0
	Story 7 <i>Trudy Stevenson: the presidential winner must acquire 51% of the total cast.</i>	1	0
	Story 8 <i>Price reviews cuts across social lines.</i>	1	0
	Story 9 <i>Seedco has enough seed for the forthcoming winter wheat.</i>	1	0
29 February -6 March	Story 1 <i>Woman surpass 30% quota but still not keen on presidency.</i>	1	0
	Story 2 <i>Mavambo faction garners support.</i>	2	0
	Story 3 <i>Makoni allies to attend Zanu PF launch.</i>	2	0
	Story 4 <i>Police refuse to give Makoni protection.</i>	1	0
	Story 5 <i>Tsvangirai condemns political violence.</i>	1	0
	Story 6 <i>Mugabe will not win: Biti.</i>	1	0
	Story 7 <i>Madongorere claims victimisation by the state.</i>	1	0

	Story 8 <i>ZANU PF to deal with double nomination of candidates</i>	1	0
	Story 9 <i>Dube condemned police harassment.</i>	1	0
7-13 March	Story 1 <i>Dabengwa explains why he left ZANU PF.</i>	1	0
	Story 2 <i>Makoni: I am not used.</i>	1	0
	Story 3 <i>Simba Makoni a prostitute: Mugabe.</i>	1	0
	Story 4 <i>More people defect from ZANU PF</i>	1	0
	Story 5 <i>Chinamasa claimed to have links with Mavambo.</i>	1	0
	Story 6 <i>ZBC accused of biased broadcasting.</i>	2	0
20-27 March	1 <i>Hawkins slams government mechanisation programme.</i>	1	0

4.1.6. Neglecting the youths: A critical perspective

The presented statistics show a total neglect of electoral issues pertaining to the youths in the media's coverage of the March 29 elections. Notwithstanding the fact that the youths are a special group that must have received fair and critical media coverage during the elections, the different sections of the media did not have a particular focus on the youths. In its narrative on ZANU PF as the custodian of the Zimbabwean revolution and heritage, *The Sunday Mail* did not have any focus on the youths in this so-called revolution, which the ZANU PF old generation of leaders who dominated media space during the elections claimed to be safeguarding for future generations. The only story in *The Sunday Mail* was that of Bona Mugabe voting and urging other youths to do so. The substance behind the youths voting in the March 29 elections was never critically explored in this story and others, which tended to regard youths as part of political party collectives.

From the ZBC TV story in which a Zimbabwe Congress of Students Union (ZICOSU) official is quoted and *The Standard* one in which some ZANU PF youths are implicated in political violence, one can only identify discourses that point to a scenario in which youths are used as cannon fodder in the fight of what is essentially the ageing politicians' political battles. It is in this context that there was no particular media focus on election candidates who were drawn from among the youths. There were youthful candidates such as Marvelous Khumalo, Solomon Madzore and Nelson Chamisa who contested in the elections. However, there were no particular news articles that focused on these candidates and what their participation meant for the youths. This was unlike the case with the 2000 parliamentary elections during which there was significant media focus on Learnmore Jongwe, Tafadzwa Musekiwa and Job Sikhala who were among the youthful candidates that contested in the elections. The case of the youths was also differentiated from that of female candidates who benefited from a media campaign that was sponsored by The Women's Trust to promote women candidates who contested in the March, 2008 elections.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the monitoring of media coverage of the March 29 2008 harmonized elections, this report brings to the fore serious challenges that have to be addressed by the media in Zimbabwe if they are to become critical public spheres through which democratic political communication can be exercised. Based on the sample that was used for the purposes of this report, there were serious biases in the manner that the media reported issues to do with the elections. On the political front, there was unmitigated bias against political players outside ZANU PF. This was particularly noted with respect to the way in which the election was covered by state-controlled media including *The Sunday Mail* and ZBC TV. With respect to the latter, it is unfortunate to note that coverage of opposition political players was largely confined to commercial slots with prime editorial space being largely devoted to ZANU PF, particularly its presidential candidate, Robert Mugabe. Where the opposition received coverage, this was done with the objective of portraying it in bad light.

While the privately owned media attempted to include as many political players as they could in their coverage of the elections, they were still found wanting in terms of being critical public spheres carrying a multiplicity of voices in their coverage of election related issues. As proved through this survey, the privately controlled media largely concentrated on ZANU PF and the Tsvangirai led formation of the MDC in their coverage of the election. While the Simba Makoni led Mavambo political project and the Arthur Mutambara led MDC formation were also given some coverage in the state controlled and privately controlled media, independent candidates, among them the presidential independent candidate, Langton Tloungana were, to a large extent, ignored by the media in their coverage of the elections.

The Zimbabwean media's inordinate bias and dearth of objectivity and balance was particularly reflected with respect to the manner in which they treated women and the youths in their coverage of the March 29 2008 elections. As observed, women voices are missing in most of the stories covered by the media during the period under review. Where women were covered, the coverage was peripheral. In some cases the images of women were only featured on television and newspapers after being captured ululating and cheering their male counterparts who otherwise monopolised what should have been a public sphere platform.

It is also notable that those who were given critical attention are the so-called prominent figures such as Vice-President Joice Mujuru. Ordinary women, like ordinary men, were relegated to the pedestal edges of the information highway. The same applied to the youths who in all the stories that came out during the sampled period where the youths received coverage only in one story. This points to a situation where the youths, together with women and the so-called masses continue to be marginalised in Zimbabwe's political communication processes. These points to a stratified, discriminatory communication regime that is contrary to public sphere ideals of the modern era.

As this report proves, there is serious and urgent need for the media's political reportage to be transformed in the interest of objectivity, balance, fairness and gender sensitivity. It is only within the framework of this much required transformation that the Zimbabwean media, both state-controlled and privately controlled can move towards being critical public spheres that enhance democratic practice.

Recommendations

Sets of recommendations have been prescribed before in the interest of cultivating a democratic political communication system in Zimbabwe. The recommendations include those that have come from the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) and MISA (Zimbabwe). These recommendations, which still retain relevance and await implementation, include the following:

That Zimbabwe must have a genuinely independent electoral commission whose responsibilities must include the regulation of media coverage in the interest of objective and balanced political reportage.

- * That there should be an independent body through which the media can regulate themselves along professional lines.
- * That the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) must be transformed into a public broadcaster whose editorial content must reflect a multiplicity of political views and ideas.
- * Those stringent operational regulations such as those contained in the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Broadcasting Services Act be scrapped to pave way for diversity and pluralism in Zimbabwe's communications sector.

If implemented, these recommendations will help pave way for a democratised political communication system that resembles the ideal public sphere. Considering that the problem has largely emanated from non-implementation, it is recommended that the core problem be addressed in line with the following recommendations:

- * That people who are often marginalised by the media, including women, the youths and other citizens who are often ignored by the media engage in peaceful and legal mass protest actions such as peaceful demonstrations and picketing to push for the democratisation of Zimbabwe's communications sector. The democratisation must include the implementation of the above presented recommendations
- * That Zimbabwe's civic society must forge a united front that jointly pushes for a democratic constitutional framework, which guarantees the right to access to information, freedom of expression as well as other political and socio-economic rights and freedoms.
- * That executives of both state-controlled and privately controlled media be persistently and consistently be petitioned in the interest of promoting a media coverage that is objective, fair, balanced and gender sensitive.
- * That interest groups such as those representing the youths must engage in 'publicity campaigns to promote politicians that are drawn from among the youths.
- * That civic organisations must engage in publicity and advocacy campaigns to promote the establishment of a democratic Zimbabwe based on media diversity, freedom of expression, full gender equality, full and active participation of youths in political processes and other democratic principles enshrined in the Zimbabwe People's Charter

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