

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES



**Striving towards representation in
Zimbabwean Politics: Women in the
Opposition, Movement for Democratic
Change (MDC)**

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Leslie Mudimu

5 October 2020.

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my mother Sekai Gladys Chitemerere. My pillar of strength and my inspiration. Thank you for all the support you have given me up until this day. I hope I continue making you proud.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The position of women in politics has been a highly unfavourable one in Zimbabwe irrespective of political affiliations. Gender inequality has been prevalent in the country and has motivated a large civil sector aimed at addressing these issues (Win, 2004; Chiroro, 2005). The Zimbabwean political environment is one influenced by patriarchal ideals that are predominant in the wider society hence the place of women in this system and their capacity to represent other women is a constant area of discussion (SADC, 2009). Women's political participation has been identified as necessary by the United Nations (UN) and is goal number 5 on the sustainable development goals (SDG). Having women in decision making positions is said to have a great influence on development. The alleviation of women's status has been identified by organizations such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) as necessary to achieve the development agenda in Africa. The international community and the regional community in Africa have created several treaties and protocols that serve the purpose of addressing the position of women in decisionmaking institutions and increasing their participation in public office. Regionally and continentally, gender parity is a recurring theme in policy spaces, particularly those affecting the social, economic and political status of women. Constant interrogation of women's position in important decision-making bodies continues to reveal gaps in representation of women and this is very apparent in their participation in politics.

The African community has created many instruments to govern the consideration of women's issues through legislation and policy adoptions. For example, SADC has invested in researching gender parity and how to improve women's participation in politics. In 2009 the SADC Secretariat published a report titled; *SADC Framework for Achieving Gender Parity in*

Political and Decision-Making Positions by 2015 (SADC, 2009). This is one of many efforts by the SADC body to invest in improving gender parity in the region. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development which was signed in 2008 is another effort which marked the inclusion of the gender agenda in SADC affairs (SADC,2013). According to a report produced by SADC, a gender monitor on the progress or development of the Protocol, the intention of the Protocol is to harmonise the implementation of national level gender parity measures with regional, continental and international instruments on gender parity (SADC, 2013). These instruments include the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals and the Protocol to the African Union Charter on Human and Peoples Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2013). These instruments have also been domesticated in the form of gender quotas and affirmative action policies. Zimbabwe has followed the example of many countries and constitutionalized a gender quota to stimulate an increase of women in politics. Gender parity clauses have also been included in the constitution for other decision-making bodies in the country. The adoption of a more gender sensitive constitution is a positive development however the gender quota was initially implemented to be used in only two elections cycles, 2012 and 2018 (Majome, 2011). In 2019, there were discussions around extending the use of this quota to up to 2023, the next election year for Zimbabwe. On 21 October 2019, cabinet approved a motion to extend the use of this quota for another ten years (Tshuma, 2019 & Kubatana, 2020). An additional clause to include a youth quota was also added to motivate the inclusion of young people in parliament.

While this is a positive achievement for the overall goal of facilitating the inclusion of women in politics, it is important to understand the impact the quota has had in the last 7 years and assess its strengths and weaknesses and how other factors are contributing to this. One of the ways to ensure that quotas such as these are effective and yield positive results is through support from political parties. SADC's gender monitor report of 2012 details how part of the implementation of gender promoting instruments is to have support from political parties (SADC, 2012). If internal practices of parties match the national goal and agenda to increase participation of women in politics then goals and targets set by bodies such as SADC and the

AU are easier to reach (SADC, 2012). It is imperative for internal strategies within political parties to match the constitutional instruments to influence the participation of women in politics. This research intends on investigating how the main opposition party in Zimbabwe, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) has been operating in order to match the national agenda of increasing women's participation in politics. The party has faced some sense of instability over the years with the creation of several factions branching off from the main party since October 2005 when Welshman Ncube initiated the first MDC break off (Mudimu, 2017). The second major breakaway was in 2014 when former secretary general Tendai Biti led another breakaway formation called the People's Democratic Party (PDP). There have been also other smaller and rather insignificant breakaways such as MDC 99 led by Job Sikhala who re-joined the party in 2014. In all cases, the breakaways have left a significant and larger component of the party referred to MDC (Tsvangirayi). After the death of Morgan Tsvangirayi and the ascendance of Nelson Chamisa, the other breakaways led by Biti and Ncube came back and the core MDC morphed into the MDC Alliance. This research focuses on the core MDC formation which ran under the umbrella name MDC Alliance in the 2018 and has history as the MDC (Tsvangirayi).

The MDC has stood and presented itself as an alternative vehicle for necessary transformational and progressive development that will result in many political and economic changes in Zimbabwe. The MDC is central to this research because as the political climate in Zimbabwe continues to shift, the party has gained traction as the main opposition to the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU (PF)). Very little however, has been academically written about the party regarding its policies and practices and their impact on Zimbabwe. Furthermore, with the passing of Morgan Tsvangirai and the ascendance to leadership of Nelson Chamisa, MDC has received much focus as evidenced by the last elections where it garnered 44,3% of the votes in the National Election. Therefore, an analysis of its practices and contributions to transforming gender equality in Zimbabwe is necessary. In addition, much of the analysis on political developments in Zimbabwe has been focused on historicizing and understanding the internal politics of Zanu PF as the ruling party.

This research will unpack how the main opposition has internally responded to the national agenda of increasing political participation of women in Zimbabwe by answering the following questions;

- What role has the MDC played in promoting the Parliamentary gender quota in Zimbabwe?
- How has the MDC used the gender quota to harness and nurture female politicians?
- What have been the party's responses to the 2013 pro-gender constitutional reforms?
- In what way has the progression of women in the party been stimulated, supported or undermined?

These questions are answered through an analysis of MDC practices in promoting women as members of parliament and the experience of women in the party. This research was conducted through an analysis of electoral documents, party policies and information gathered through in-depth interviews with some party members and political experts as key informants.

Research into Zimbabwe's political developments has been greatly focused on understanding the ruling party, its policies and the policies' impact on the political and economic deterioration of the country. These issues cannot be addressed in a vacuum without considering gender.

Irrespective of political affiliations, gender continues to be a factor influencing women's role in politics. Civil society has been instrumental in representing the needs and wants of women in relation to social, political and economic recognition by the state in Zimbabwe. One cannot assess the gender quota and the gap in the need for women's political representation without foregrounding the efforts made by civil society and many women who are notable for challenging the state on their stance on women's affairs. In fact, the formation of the MDC coincided with a monumental time in the women's movement in Zimbabwe. The party came at a time when the collective of several women's groups and civil society members were campaigning around several causes which included creating a more gender sensitive constitution, addressing the archaic laws inherited from the British constitution and carried forward by the Lancaster House constitution, among other causes (Win, 2004). Some of these women remain key actors in representing women's issues at the state level and some of them

went on to join the MDC (Win, 2004). For any national political agenda to be effective, political actors need to work collectively towards that goal. Political parties are key in this; thus, their actions have an impact on the success or failure of national agendas.

On another level, the Zimbabwean political environment is one governed by patriarchal ideals and the place of women in this system and their capacity to represent other women is a constant area of discussion (SADC, 2009). SADC has identified how patriarchy continues to influence the political activities on the continent and their impact on women's advancement. Despite an introduction of reforms in 2013 aimed at promoting the inclusion of women in politics, few positive results of their impact on gender issues have been seen (Gender Index, 2019; Chronicle, 2019). For women belonging to the opposition, they experience the shortfalls of the system in two ways, through their political affiliation and their identity as women. In other words, their oppression is double layered, first through their position as women in an environment dominated by patriarchal ideals and secondly as women belonging to an opposition party in a political environment dominated by a repressive political party. This means the parties they belong to have a responsibility of nurturing them and essentially playing a role to develop their position within the country's political system, a task this research endeavours to assess.

Rationale

This research is important because the use of gender quotas is seen as a necessary tool in assisting the inclusion of women in politics or other institutions of power. The necessity has arisen out of the recognition that there is inequality in terms of opportunities available to women to exercise power and influence. There are several barriers that work against women participating in political spaces and for this reason gender quotas have been necessary. Quotas force institutions to rightfully include women in these decision-making bodies and their goal is to one day result in balanced numbers of women in political spaces. Zimbabwe noted the underrepresentation of women in politics and due to pressures from civil society organizations, the country decided to follow the example of countries such as India, Brazil and Rwanda by

implementing a gender parliamentary quota. The quota was introduced in 2013 as part of a series of constitutional amendments. The quota was introduced with the motive of creating an influx of women in government for 10 years following the new constitution. Ten years was seen as an adequate time frame to address the issues raised by civil society and women's movements about the lack of substantial numbers of women in politics. An analysis of the statistics and research conducted by other scholars, in conjunction with my own findings, show that the impact of the quota has not been as monumental as expected. In addition, the constitutionalized quota is referred to as a compromise to what civil society was advocating for which was 50/50 representation (Interview, 17 September 2019). In 2019, Cabinet announced the motion to extend the duration of the quota by an additional 10 years. The 2018 election results were an insight on the performance of the quota and commenting on the results, Speaker of Parliament Advocate Mudenda acknowledged that more women were seen entering Parliament owing to the gender quota however, Zimbabwe is capable of doing more (Herald, 2018). The presence of women and the impact is something that Mudenda says needs to be encouraged and promoted by political parties. The political parties, according to Mudenda, need to match the national agenda which is aligned with regional, continental and international commitments to advance the position of women in politics. For this reason, unpacking the internal dynamics and policies of a political party to understand how it is operating to match these agendas is necessary. With the 2023 elections a few years away, it is imperative that the slight improvements seen in 2023 continue to be pursued and there is more impact in the next election.

The Women in Politics Support Unit hosted a dialogue session in 2019 to discuss the importance of women participating in politics and why we still needed the gender quota (WIPSU,2019). Radio stations have also picked up this conversation having open discussions with experts on why the quota was implemented and its continued need in Zimbabwe following the 2018 elections (Capitalk Radio, 20 September 2019). Two reasons govern why there is advocacy around the extension of the quota. Firstly, Zimbabwe is currently on a new postMugabe development trajectory that sees the country attempting to fix social, political and economic ills. Part of development is the inclusion of women in decision making positions and

this removes gender blind spots in the development agenda. The former president Robert Mugabe failed to use the new constitution in 2013 as an opportunity to show the country's dedication to promoting the participation of women in politics and to mark it as symbolizing a new era in Zimbabwe following the expiration of the Government of National Unity. This is shown by the dismal number of women he picked for his 2013 Cabinet (Dziva, 2014). Extending this quota gives Zimbabwe the opportunity to match the commitment to gender equality which they pledged through signing on to the regional and international protocols on women's rights and their inclusion of the gender quota in the Constitution.

The choice to focus on how political parties are acting in relation to the quota and overall efforts to improve women's presence in politics is inspired by two reasons. Firstly, there is a gap in the research surrounding the creation and implementation of quotas. Research has been done surrounding the necessity of representation, the different forms of representation and the ways in which quotas address this. No research, however, has been done unpacking the impact of political parties and their internal practices in making sure representation is achieved through quotas. According to Bjarnegard and Zetterberg (2016), there can never be any successful quotas if political parties are not committed to making them work (SADC, 2012 & Bjarnegard & Zetterberg, 2016). Internal policies need to be in harmony with the national agenda.

Secondly, the MDC was created at the crucial time for the women's movement that was pushing for constitutional reform in Zimbabwe. The events of this period impacted a lot in the political space, even influencing some counter Zanu PF policies in an attempt to quell the women's movement (Win, 2004). In addition, MDC has often stood as the alternative to Zanu PF in terms of policies and founding philosophies modelling itself as the political party to vote for to spark transformation in Zimbabwe. Given these two factors, understanding MDC's role and position with regards to the gender quota and how its practices as a party match this agenda is a very vital area of research. Furthermore, the party needs to address issues if there are any in relation to their position on women in politics before the next election which is scheduled for 2023.

Continuous conversations about the gender quota and its impact in Zimbabwe are necessary. This allows room for change and improvement while assessing what works and how to pursue

that on a sustainable basis. Political parties are part of the broader political system that will contribute to the successes and failures of the gender quota. Assessing their impact is a necessary aspect of investigating what is being done right and what areas need improvement. In this research, given information and data from the last two election years and personal accounts from MDC members, I unpacked what practices the party is engaging in and how they contribute to the quota and the national agenda to increase women's participation in Zimbabwean politics. My findings will assist in ensuring the continuation of positive practices and highlight areas where the MDC could improve. This assessment will additionally assist in motivating recommendations to the party for the next election years. The purpose of this research is to provide an assessment of this party and its practices in order to give a reflective account that can be used to reconsider policies and methods in the party in the area of women empowerment and also provide the electorate and aspiring future politicians with a critical analysis of the party's position on matters concerning women in politics and in essence gender empowerment.

Research into gender and politics on a grand scale has unpacked issues of representation in several ways; defining it, categorizing it and discussing issues of gender quotas and how they promote this representation. There has been much work written about the necessities of gender quotas and the role they play in influencing the inclusion of women in politics and their representation. Most of the research in this area has analysed the various ways countries have implemented gender quotas, the electoral systems that have been put in place to ensure positive results from these quotas however there is a gap that has failed to assess how political parties fit into the entire picture. This is something that this research will attempt to discuss especially in the context of Zimbabwe. The national agenda cannot be achieved if the stakeholders in the political system do not make the environment conducive for the national goals to be achieved. The purpose of this research is to identify how political parties are working to achieve the nationally set agenda of achieving gender parity in Zimbabwean politics. The research aims to fill the gap that is there in gender parity studies and gender quota literature in that it interrogates a variable that has an impact on the success and the failures of quotas. Researching the MDC is also an important contribution academically because Zimbabwe's political history cannot be

researched or discussed without mentioning the MDC which has grown over the years as Zimbabwe's main opposition party.

Methodology

Research design

Our choices of research design are inspired by what we are researching. Our methods of conducting research impact our findings and our contributions to academic knowledge (Creswell & Garrett, n.d.; Cleary, 2014 & McNabb, 2004). My research investigated a political party's role in promoting women in their party following constitutional amendments introduced in 2013 to stimulate the participation of women in politics. To unpack this, qualitative research which combined the use of interviews and desktop research was suitable.

Qualitative research design is the most commonly used research design within the social sciences especially those seeking to take inquiry on feminist issues (Creswell & Garrett, n.d.; McNabb, 2004; True, 2010). McNabb defines qualitative research as a collection of words or other non-numeric records collected by the researcher and that have relevance to the social group under study (McNabb, 2004). The goal is to capture the voices of people and their experiences within a society and to find meaning in human action (Schwandt, 2001). Qualitative research design leads us as researchers to interact with the individuals we are studying and the methods that facilitate this include key informant interviews, informal interviews, in-depth interviews, textual studies, case and historical research, ethnography and an application of theory (Carter & Little, 2007; Creswell & Garrett, n.d.; Marshall, 1996; McNabb, 2004). Additional methods include historical analysis, live histories, surveys, projective techniques and narratives (Marshall, 1996). My qualitative research method has been infused with feminist understandings of politics and representation through various literature on the subject. Some of it is also reflected in my findings from my key-informant interviews.

Research methods

As indicated earlier, this research relied on the combination of interviews with key informants and desktop research. Key informants are defined as individuals who are experts on a subject (Marshall, 1996; Punch, 2006; Steber, 2017). Owing to their position in society, key informants will provide more information and a deeper insight on what is going on around them (Marshall, 1996). The advantage and purpose of beginning with key informant interviews is that the informants can provide information on who are the right people to talk to for access to the information necessary to unpack this research topic. My key informants were individuals who have been active in civil society pushing feminist issues within the political space, former members of the MDC, current members of the MDC and experts on Zimbabwean politics. I was able to use my personal network to access these individuals for interviews which were conducted in Harare, Zimbabwe. Some interviews were also conducted telephonically from Johannesburg, South Africa. I have been able to establish relationships with some of my participants who have continued to provide useful information to enhance the quality of this research. Owing to an established relationship to various members of the party in various levels of the party structures, I had an easier experience gaining access to my research participants. In addition, I have written on the MDC critiquing their party politics in spite of this relationship therefore, my work remains unbiased or in favour of certain factions of the party.

Considering the multifaceted aspect of this research, my sample was not limited to include women who have been in the MDC or are currently members but was also inclusive of men and women who are experts in politics, feminist governance and Zimbabwe's civil society sector. I interviewed eight key informants with backgrounds in politics as active politicians, governance experts. My sampling was purposive and dependent on my research subjects referring me to other actors. Of those eight, two were telephonic interviews and the rest consisted of face to face conversations. Two of the interviews were conducted in Johannesburg, and the rest were conducted during my fieldwork in Harare. My sample was influenced by recommendations and snowballing from other participants. who fit that criteria,

Ethical issues

An important aspect I considered when I conducted this research was the ethics behind my collection of data particularly from my human subjects that I was interviewing. Ethics are important to consider in our research especially when dealing with human subjects. Ethics in research are our methods and procedures in analysing the complex problems we are trying to unpack (Elmusharaf, 2012; Resnik, 2015). The purpose of ethical research is to protect our subjects through seeking consent, following procedures to minimize the risk of harm to participants, protecting their confidentiality and anonymity, avoiding the use of any deceptive practices and giving participants freedom to withdraw from the research (Cleary, 2014; Resnik, 2015). Given the nature of my research and my understanding of the political environment in Zimbabwe, I fully informed my participants of the intentions of my research and the purpose of the information. I also guaranteed anonymity or the use of pseudonyms depending on what my participants were comfortable with. All necessary measures to protect the participants and myself were implemented. I applied for ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand Faculty of Humanities. My ethics clearance was approved, and I was able to start conducting my research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

An extensive amount of literature has successfully detailed the historical relationship Zimbabwean women have had with the state. Research has been done to unpack the role of women during the period the country was fighting against colonialism by the British, the post-Independence period and the transformation of the state's relationship with women. In addition, some scholars have researched the role women's movements and civil society in general have played in addressing some of the issues women have with the state. This plethora of literature has provided an adequate historical background for this research. While this aspect brings the necessary Zimbabwean perspective for this research, work written about the importance of gender quotas, their use in other countries, the issues that make these provisions necessary and how scholars think quotas will benefit the countries they are implemented in features in this literature review. This review will unpack the literature that has provided a foundation for this research across several themes. Firstly, I will discuss other scholars' work on gender quotas and their importance in assisting an increase in women's participation in politics. I will then discuss why we need quotas and how an increase of women in politics can impact states. I will conclude this review by also discussing the background and foundation of the gender quota in Zimbabwe and reasons for its necessity, analysing the influence of culture in Zimbabwe's society on the limited numbers of women in politics.

Representation and gender quotas: a conceptual framework

The stagnant progress in the inclusion of women in politics has created a necessity for mechanisms to be incorporated in states to influence the movement of women into politics (IDEA, 2019). Electoral gender quotas are affirmative policies that have been around since the 1990s with a goal of increasing the proportion of female candidates for political office (IDEA, 2019 & Ramos & da Silva, 2019). Their goal is to change the political landscape in a country by influencing the dramatic increase in women's representation (IDEA, 2019). This has been notable in countries such as Rwanda, Argentina, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Costa

Rica. The low numbers in women's political participation and the representation of women in politics has affected women across the globe. This has led to much research with several case studies (Beckwith, 2007; Beckwith & Cowell-Meyers, 2007; Clark, 1991; Dhavan, 2008; Hughes, 2011; Sadie, 2005). Women tend to occupy structural niches that are less conducive to robust political activity making it necessary to implement mechanisms to combat this. Political representation is central to feminist politics and defining representation is an integral part of this (Campbell, Childs, & Lovenduski, 2010; Wolack 2019).

The most notable contribution to understanding and defining political representation comes from Hanna Pitkin (1967). She identifies four types of representation; authorised, descriptive, symbolic and substantive (Campbell et al., 2010 & Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Descriptive and substantive representation have been the most researched types of representation (Campbell et al., 2010, Walsh, 2013 & Wolak, 2019). Descriptive representation calls for an individual to stand for a group of people as a representative by virtue of having the same characteristic as the group. On the other hand, the duty of substantive representatives is to advance a group's policy preferences and interests (Campbell et al., 2010 & Dutoya, 2016). Feminist scholars have moved from exploring descriptive representation to researching substantive representation to understand what women representatives do once they are present. The importance of this research is to substantiate the argument that having women as representatives in political positions is both beneficial and necessary. There is also a belief that the nature of policies that are adopted when there are a lot of women in politics have a greater chance of being more socially inclusive and sound.

In Zimbabwe's case however, issues of descriptive representation are still prevalent hence the introduction of the gender quota is an important development for women in politics (Chiroro, 2005; Clark, 1991; Parichi, 2016; Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006; Sandusky, 1999; Sadie, 2005). The introduction of quotas is also a part of a global move towards increasing the number of women in public office because the numbers continue to present disappointing evidence of disparities in women's access to power. Gender quotas have played an instrumental role in ensuring

women's inclusion in government for the assumed purpose of representing women's interests (Jennings, 1983; Hassim, 1999; Dhavan, 2008; Lambert, 2010; Ramos & da Silva, 2019 & Jankowski, 2019). Paxton and Kunovich state that political structures are important influences on political representation and need to compliment such gender provisions (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). The research area surrounding the topic of women in politics has developed to unpacking other variables that have an impact on women's participation in politics. For example, scholars have studied the impact electoral courts have on the representation or inclusion of women in politics while some have also researched how socialization has influenced policies that continue to result in the exclusion of women among many other themes. A notable piece of research is a case study of the Egyptian constitutional amendment process in 2012 and 2014. The research analyses the gender composition of the process, the extent of its inclusivity of women and the impact this had on the constitutional amendments. In addition, political parties may hold barriers that affect women despite having mechanisms in place to promote their involvement in politics. As a result, this research wants to investigate the MDC and their role in promoting the representation of women in politics. The history of women in politics and the efforts that provide context for the constitutional reform of 2013 need to be understood for the purposes of this research.

Ramos & da Silva's (2019) case study of the implementation of the gender quota in Brazil is an example of several gaps in the research area of gender quotas that need to be researched by academics. The gender quota in Brazil has been unsuccessful and has not led to an increase in women's participation in politics (Ramos & da Silva, 2019). Their report looks at the role the Electoral Court plays in the success or failure of the gender quota in Brazil (Ramos & da Silva, 2019). Their hypothesis is that the Court is an overlooked variable that has a relationship to the quota and its results and implications. This study welcomes a new angle in studying gender quotas in our societies because it introduces the idea of assessing other variables that are in relation to the political system that women are attempting to be participants in. Their argument is that the quality and intensity of the control that the Electoral Court exercises when it is called to decide on the enforcement of the gender quota law has an influence on the usefulness of the

policy (Ramos & da Silva, 2019). They also mention that the number of men in political parties continues to be higher thus sparking my interest in understanding how parties serve as a variable that potentially has a positive or negative impact on the efficacy of the gender quota in Zimbabwe. In Brazil, research has been done on how political parties fail to meet the minimum required numbers of women as candidates and or in their party. I wanted to assess this in Zimbabwe by looking at the opposition party.

The ultimate goal of gender quotas is to ensure an influx of women for a set period of time. Once the imbalance is corrected, the quota should no longer be necessary. What we constantly need to interrogate is whether or not quotas have achieved this successfully and in what ways they can be strengthened. The necessity of gender quotas is derived from the acknowledgement that gender parity is a necessary aspect to consider in national policies. In conjunction with having overall gender sensitive policies, some scholars have agreed that for gender parity to have an impact in the form of policies such as gender quotas, these changes need to be enacted into law through constitutional reforms.

Constitutional reform and gender parity in Zimbabwe

Constitutional reform is an integral part of the process of addressing gender inequalities in politics. Constitutional reform legitimizes national efforts to address gender imbalance and enhances the legitimacy of rights claims (Scribner & Lambert, 2010). This gives women a solid foundation to challenge the state. It is suggested that for women to improve their political participation, the constitution is an ideal place to start (Scribner & Lambert, 2010). Scribner and Lambert argue that constitutionalizing gender provisions is important for the cause of women's political participation improvements.

Constitutional reform in Zimbabwe is something that has been necessary since the country gained independence from the British. The constitution that was adopted in 1980 had many blind spots particularly in areas concerning gender. Therefore, for any notable changes to be

made regarding women's status in Zimbabwe, the constitution had to be tackled. The post 1990 process to transform the constitution enticed the inclusion of women particularly those who had attended the 1995 UN World Conference on Women and Development. These women began pushing for the inclusion of women in politics and in decision making bodies to become part of the national agenda (UNDP, 2020). Some progress was made in including constitutional reforms that favoured women in the post-independence constitution. For example; the Legal Age of Majority Act in 1982, the Matrimonial Causes Act in 1985, the Sex Disqualification Removal Act in 1985 and the Deceased Person's Family Maintenance Act in 1987.¹

The inclusion of women in the constitutional drafting process of 2012 was imperative because a lack of emphasis on women's inclusion to represent their own interests and goals would have made this a male dominated process (UNDP, 2020). The constitutional making process of 2012 adds significance to this study because this process resulted in the inclusion of the gender quota in the constitution adopted in 2013. "The nature of women's participation in the 1999-2000 constitution-making process was fraught with tension," says feminist legal scholar Dr Amy Tsanga, who served as a Commissioner during the first process. (UNDP, 2020). The foundations of women's agenda remained strong during the 2012 process after years of advocacy work, now would the 2013 constitution reflect their efforts and goals?

Constitutionalizing gender parity is an important in Zimbabwe because there is a need to transform the social, political and economic position of our women in the country especially because they constitute the majority of the population and are an underutilized resource.

¹ The Legal Age of Majority Act enacted in 1982 provided that all Zimbabwean males and females across all races would attain full adult status at age of eighteen particularly in Customary Law. Women were previously disadvantaged under Customary Law and lacked full capacity to act as legally recognized adults who could own property, enter into contracts and make legally binding decisions without male consent (IWRAW, 1999). The Matrimonial Causes Act enacted in 1985 dealt with the division of property upon divorce of registered marriages. The direct and indirect contribution of the spouses to the matrimonial home is taken into account in the decision on division of property (Gender Land Rights Database, 2020). This was followed by an amendment to this clause in 1987 which incorporated civil unions and marriages formalized in terms of the African Marriages Act (Gender Land Rights Database, 2020).

According to projected population statistics compiled by the United Nations Population Division, women constituted an estimated 52,36% of the population in 2018 and the projection for 2019 was 52,32% (United Nations DESA, 2019). The emphasis on women's differences with men created a male norm and a system that normalized power relations in which men and masculinity were treated as the unremarkable standard (Eveline & Bacchi, 2005). Gender parity or the act of gendering is an incomplete and partial process that continuously aims to add meaning to processes and politics (Eveline & Bacchi, 2005). Some debates in the field of gender parity and mainstreaming argue that for a limited amount of time it is necessary to implement policies that are effective in creating a space for women. This is done through quotas and affirmative action policies. The goal is for these instruments to stimulate an influx of women in certain areas to balance out the numbers for a certain period. The assumption is that having this in place will normalize the inclusion of women in predominantly male spaces. The predicted result is that more opportunities will be created to include other women making these affirmative policies eventually redundant.

Some feminist scholars argue that this is a problematic angle of addressing the exclusion of women. This method emphasizes on differences which can be futile therefore, they recommend emphasizing on similarities as a way of boosting women's inclusion in male dominated spaces. Feminists push to address discriminatory legislation and believe that having a more gender sensitive constitution is effective in pushing the cause of gender parity in other spheres (Chiroro, 2005). This also creates a legal framework in support of gender parity practices (Chiroro, 2005). Jessie Majome once commented that the constitution of Zimbabwe is not gender sensitive and required some changes to incorporate some of the issues that women in civil society and activist groups were advocating for. Zimbabwe's commitment to gendered social and political transformation has been shallow and limited and more efforts are required for effective improvements (Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006).

How gender is understood assists us in unpacking gender mainstreaming trends (Eveline & Bachi, 2010). By understanding gender as social attributes, norms and behaviours that are

motivated by socialization, it is easy to argue against the idea that women and men have different attributes that contribute to dictating their function in society or ability to lead in political positions (Eveline & Bachi, 2010). This makes a plausible argument against the idea of women having different functions in the private and public sphere, an assumption that has hindered their contributions to politics. Fellow feminist scholars have been pushing for addressing discriminatory legislature because it might be the most plausible way to address gender issues in politics (Chiroro, 2005). Nkiwane argues otherwise and proposes that relying so heavily on state functions to be instrumental in addressing women's insubordination in politics might be futile because the constitutional negotiations were still well within the limits of a patriarchal state and male influenced laws (Nkiwane, 2000). The argument is that relying on constitutions will not result in any significant improvements and that civil society and activist groups are likely to be more effective and should be at the forefront (Nkiwane, 2000). With particular reference to Zimbabwe, Ranchad-Nilsson argues that the state never had any solid commitment to gender parity (Ranchad-Nilsson, 2006). CA gender audit of the Egyptian constitutional processes of 2012 and 2014 highlights significant points about the act of constitutional processes and incorporating gender in this process (Tadres, 2019). According to this audit the two processes had an equal representation of women however the outcomes of the process were very different (Tadres, 2019). The political environment surrounding the constitutional process plays a significant role in the outcomes of the process (Tadres, 2019). In the context of Zimbabwe, few women were present during the formal constitutional talks surrounding the gender quota. In addition, this process was happening just before the expiration of the Government of National Unity between Zanu PF and MDC. As a result, owing to the timing of this process, the idea of focusing on providing adequate representation of women's needs in the constitution and fully incorporating the changes that civil society and activists were advocating for in regard to enhancing women's presence in politics were not met. In fact, the focus was creating a political environment that would be beneficial for both Zanu PF and the MDC after the GNU was to be dissolved. Tadres argues that political opportunity structures are important to look at during this process because whatever the stakeholders were doing during this process has an impact on the outcomes (Tadres, 2019).

The public and private dichotomy

In African states women are never central to the state and politics and this has negatively affected their political participation (Geisler, 1995). In African democracies, representation of women has not been guaranteed since these countries gained independence. As a result, the separation between women and the state has been institutionalized in the post-independence era (Geisler, 1995). Politics is seen as a public domain reserved for men without any consideration for women (Geisler, 1995). The belief is that by entering politics, women are neglecting their societal role of being the care providers and home makers. The gender problems that African states currently face were facilitated during the colonial period through prejudiced legislature and continued even during the liberation war (Geisler, 1995 & RanchodNilsson, 2006). The failure to address these institutionalized inequalities led to the continued legacy of women's subordination in politics (Geisler, 1995, Esson, & Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006). Ranchod-Nilsson highlights that often scholars try to view the presence of women in the liberation struggle as a feminist act and an acceptance of women in predominantly male spaces. She argues however, that this is a false claim. Women were only included in the liberation struggle to serve a functional purpose (Ranchad-Nilsson, 2006). There was no significant change in ideology. The history of the Ministry of Women's Affairs is evidence that the liberation struggle did not do much to empower women and neither did the new government have intentions of addressing this. The function women seem to only serve in politics is to fill the 'soft roles' in governance and to stand as representatives of women (Geisler, 1995). This is evidence by how women mostly get appointed to social and welfare concerning portfolios and rarely take office in the 'hard roles' and portfolios concerning technology, finance and sometimes defence or state security portfolios. The absence of women in impactful decisionmaking structures reflects and reinforces the uneven power relations between men and women in both the private and public sphere (Vetten et al, 2012).

Geisler argues that the separation of private and public roles of women was adopted in the independent African states and we see the continued domination of men in politics (Geisler,

1995). Nkiwane substantiates Geisler's points and unpacks further the issue of the private public dichotomy in relation to women. In addition, she argues that the state abuses this in order to continue a legacy of women's subordination in order to protect its own power which men have (Nkiwane, 2000). The state has a legacy of manipulating women's rights and citizenship under the guise of culture and tradition (Nkiwane, 2000). The state argues that women have no business being in the public domain and that by nature and culture men fill public office and political spaces. The argument goes further to say that women's participation in the public domain has a negative impact on their work in the private domain as homemakers and caregivers (Nkiwane, 2000). Nkiwane makes it a point to highlight the patriarchal nature of Zimbabwe and interrogates the act of relying on courts and other extensions of state structures in addressing issues of gender equality. This is because these structures are existing and functioning in a patriarchal system and complimenting its values. Their role as vehicles of change is likely to not influence radical and drastic changes (Nkiwane, 2000). Culture and tradition continue to influence people in these structures and their support of women's exclusion (Nkiwane, 2000). As a result, Nkiwane argues that civil society groups and activists are the most effective entities that can challenge the issue of women's political participation. Expecting institutions engrained and approved by a patriarchal state to be central in the process of advocating for women's political representation is futile (Nkiwane, 2000).

Manyonganise supports these arguments in her article "Oppressive Liberative: A Zimbabwean Woman's Reflections on Ubuntu". She breaks down the traditional concept of ubuntu and its intersection with gender in the Shona community (Chiroro, 2005 & Manyonganise, 2015). She reflects on this concept from a womanist perspective and explains that women's experiences in Zimbabwe are complex as they are often associated with multiple marginalized statuses of race, class and gender (Manyonganise, 2015). The state operates to maintain these marginalized identities and thus stifles the movement of women from these predefined identities. She argues that ubuntu is an example of a culture that has been used by patriarchy to push for the exclusion of women and cement their subordinate roles in both the private and public arena (Manyonganise, 2015). Women having political ambitions is seen as a threat to ubuntu and the

confines of their roles in society (Manyonganise, 2015). Using the example of Joice Mujuru, Manyonganise explains that her presidential ambitions were framed as a threat to the function of women in the Shona culture therefore, in order to demotivate her, a political campaign to sabotage her ambitions was framed around the idea that she was disrupting a culture in the Zimbabwean society (Manyonganise, 2015).

Pandit argues that removing the causes of disempowerment is a major step towards inclusive politics that benefits women (Pandit, 2010). In order to achieve this, there needs to be a decentralization of power and a focus on improving the participation of the deprived sections of society in the decision-making process (Pandit, 2010). Pandit also emphasizes the public and private dichotomy and how this has an impact on the exclusion of women in politics (Pandit, 2010). Feminist discourse understands this division of the public and private has an impact on political, social and economic activities of women in society (Pandit, 2010). Women should challenge the socially constructed divide between the private and the public sphere and entering parliament is one way of making the private political (Hassim, nd).

Women and the development agenda

It is very important to push for the inclusion of women in politics because this has a positive impact on state development . Confining women to the private space means they have no access to contributing to robust debates surrounding the political, social and economic developments of their country. The idea of including women in high decision-making bodies is seen as a contribution to sustainable development goals according to the United Nations (Kumar, 2012 & UNDP, 2014). According to the United Nations, having women in high decision-making bodies such as political positions increases the development capacity of states by increasing economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability (Kumar, 2012). Women have been identified as an underutilized resource that needs to be capitalized on in states especially in Africa. For development to be inclusive and reflective of population demographics in Zimbabwe, women need to be included in the important decision-making

positions in order to ensure more gender sensitive policies (Kuman, 2012). Feminist development practitioners argue that for feminist policies and ideals to be advocated for in the decision-making bodies more women need to enter those spaces. Some scholars have also argued that not having women will result in policies that continue to not advocate for the wellbeing of women. We need women at the forefront of development efforts to mitigate the possibilities of exclusion again. One of the problems that arose after the achievement of independence from colonial rule was the institutionalization of the exclusion of women from public office. This created a foundation and legacy for the deprivation of women from opportunities to contribute to state development. According to an OECD Development Centre report which provided a gender index of the Zimbabwean 2018 elections, 58% of the population still believes that men make better leaders than women (OECD,2019). The report also provides statistics that prove that women are still very marginalized in Zimbabwe's political processes (OECD,2019).

The role and impact of socialization and the continuation of a colonial legacy

Women's subordination in politics continues to prevail especially in African societies mainly because these societies are socialized along patriarchal ideals. Patriarchy is a system that favours men over women and influences social, economic and political affairs. The assumption is that through biology, men are better in the public sphere versus women who are more accustomed for being homemakers and active participants in the private sphere. Zimbabwe is notorious for its patriarchy and this has been investigated by many scholars in relation to its influence on governance in the state.

Ultimately the progression of women is hindered. Men raised in a society that sees women as less than and belonging only to certain spaces that have been termed the private sphere results in the few numbers we see in public office and decision-making bodies (OECD, 2019 & RAU, 2019). Socialization has not only played a role in keeping women away from certain positions but has also influenced how people vote for those few women in political positions. According

to findings from research conducted by the OECD and RAU, men still hold perceptions that women are not fit for public office and that men make better leaders. In OECD's report they quote that 58% of the population believe that men make better political leaders than women (OECD, 2019). Such perceptions played a part in influencing some of the 2018 election results as evidenced by the gender audit of the election conducted by RAU. In her research unpacking the concept of ubuntu and its meanings in Shona culture, Nkiwane unpacks how socialization has impacted women's access to public office. Nkiwane explains that the rationalization behind the exclusion of women in Zimbabwe's political space is because women are meant to be confined to the private space where they are wives and mothers and perform socially accepted roles that fulfil these roles (Nkiwane, 2010). Growing up in a society that is aligned towards the subordination of women is the reason why women's issues continue to prevail (Nkiwane, 2010). Scholars have argued that this is a continuation of a colonial legacy which viewed women as secondary citizens to men (Nkiwane, 2010, Hassim, nd).

Citizenship and political rights are granted by states and the inherent structural barriers and constraints surrounding the conceptualization of these perpetuate women's exclusion to full citizenship status (Maswikwa et al, 2017). Value systems that were put in place during colonialism have been institutionalized and the gender inequalities that they brought upon their colonies have been entrenched even in the post-colonial states (Maswikwa et al, 2017). Jennings argues that we can trace back variation and gender disparities to socializations in the family units where roles and responsibilities were divided and influenced by one's assigned gender (Jennings, 1983 & Nkiwane, 2010). Hassim also argues that African countries are continuing historical legacies of women's insubordination in present democracies and this can only be ratified if they transform their constitutions (Hassim, nd). There is room for women's agency to shape politics and this can be done through formal institutions if they transform (Hassim, nd). A society with cultural practices that derive power from the insubordination of women is likely to lack representation for other groups in society (Vetten et al, 2012). Patriarchy's deep rootedness in post-colonial societies has deferred gender equality which is a social good that can push development (Vettel et al, 2012).

Paxton and Kunovich seek to unpack the impact ideology and cultural norms have on the participation of women in politics despite there being other systems in place to motivate women's participation (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). Their research acknowledges that despite other instruments being present to assist women when prejudiced cultural norms exist, they will constantly have a negative impact on women's participation in politics (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). They conclude by acknowledging that political parties are the vehicles for these ideologies that create barriers for women's participation in politics (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003). This provides a basis and a necessity for this study because this area is under-researched. Previous studies have shown us that social structures, politics and ideology have provided explanations for differences in women's political representation (Paxton & Kunovich, 2003).

The liberation struggle and early years of independent Zimbabwe

Women's involvement in political developments in Zimbabwe dates to the period of the national liberation struggle. The literature on the liberation struggle and the early years of Zimbabwe's independence describes the development of the role of women in politics along two themes. Firstly, the research has sought to discuss the role played by women during the liberation struggle (Luekka, 1998; Grove, 2007, Lyons, 2004; Mudeka, 2014). The second stream of literature focuses on the position of women in the early years of Zimbabwe's independence (Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006, 2008; Essof, 2013; Makaudze, 2017). Women were included in the liberation struggle as a matter of the convenience they served and not necessarily a potential shift in ideology pertaining to gender roles in Zimbabwe's society (Ranchod-Nilsson, 2008). Ranchod-Nilsson, states that the inclusion of women was a shallow commitment to transforming their role and that what we note is simply a transfer of patterns of inequality or power relations in a new context and this is continued in the early years after independence (Mudeka, 2014; Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006). Efforts were made to include women in Zimbabwe's new government and to encourage women in politics. This was through the creation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs which was headed by former liberation war hero Joice Mujuru. The inclusion of black women in the independent Zimbabwe's political offices

was limited and the Ministry was soon dissolved and replaced by the Zanu PF 's Women's League whose function has been to cater to the patriarchal ideals of their party (Makaudze, n.d.; Seldman, 1984; Win, 2004). This period highlights the continuation of some of the social and political values that were adopted during colonialism. The disregard for women especially in the public sphere is a continued legacy of the colonial state and continues to impact the position of women in politics presently (Makaudze, n.d.; Mudeka, 2014; Muswikwa et al., 2018). With continued rule of Zanu PF, this subordination of women has continued and has become a norm in Zimbabwean society.

The rise of civil society and the creation of the MDC

The challenges faced by women in politics continued to persist between 1981 and 2000. During this period the land reform programmes occurred and while some scholars still highlighted the importance of focusing on women during this project, the focus was on addressing the social and economic injustices of colonialism while also securing Zanu PF 's power (Jacobs, 200; Mafa, 2004; Gaidzanwa, 2011; Krook, 2017). The limited focus of the ruling government to transform the role of women in politics and their capacity to represent other women inspired a wave of civil society movements and organisations that focused around addressing issues women faced in Zimbabwe (Win, 2004). Everjoice Win discusses the historical context of the development of women's organization in the civic space which was dated to have started in 1979. Initially these movements were focused on issues of welfare and transformation of economic and social status for women and did not stand as a threat to the government (Win, 2004). Some organisations, however, were not scared to push pro-women agendas that would be viewed as a threat to the government. For example, the Women's Action Group (WAG) which challenged the government when it launched a clean-up campaign targeted at single and unmarried women in urban areas (Win, 2004). Civil society movements with a human rights approach rose between 1987 and 1990 because of growing suppression from the government constitutional amendments aimed at securing Zanu PF's rule (Win, 2004). Feminist groups began to grow from this period, notably the Musasa Project created in the early 1990s, the

Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) and the Women and AIDS Support Network (Win, 2004). These various bodies attempted to address women's issues by creating coalitions however, as Win identifies, lacking shared values and agendas led to the detriment of these coalitions. In addition, the creation of the Movement for Democratic Change in 1999 had a negative impact on the coalition efforts (Win, 2004). In 1997 a coalition had been created under the name National Constitutional Assembly (NCA) which identified that the biggest problem was Zimbabwe's governance framework- the constitution. The NCA therefore pushed for constitutional reform to address the issues that had brought them together. The Women's Coalition (WC) was set up in 1999 to complement the NCA. In efforts to derail the NCA, the state launched a Constitutional Commission which had the same function as the coalition body and purposefully recruited members of the NCA and the WC (Win, 2004). The MDC's creation also led to some NCA and WC members shifting their focus to joining the new party which was the strongest opposition to emerge since 1980 (Win, 2004). Win explains that these developments have highlighted why it is important for political parties to step up and represent women and address the issues that affect them (Win, 2004). Political parties have the advantage of having shared identity and values. In addition, women's movements and similar coalitions require access to political power to ensure the interests of representation are addressed effectively, an engagement with the political system can result in successful implementation of desired changes (Hassim, Nd.).

Constitutional reform and a gender agenda

The work that civil society focused on through the NCA and WC coalitions had all been centered around constitutional change that would target the issues women faced. Targeting the constitution is an integral part of ensuring that the rights claimed are legitimized (Scribner & Lambert, 2010). Furthermore, if women's rights provisions have established a legal foundation it provides an avenue for women with resources to challenge the state in court if there are any specific violations (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013 & Scribner & Lambert, 2010). In 2013, the Zimbabwean constitution was changed and introduced mechanisms that targeted the agenda of

having more women in politics and functional bodies within the government that assist in promoting the gender cause (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013 & OECD Development Centre, 2019). The constitution called for the creation of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013 & OECD Development Centre, 2019). The Commission was created because of the resurgence of gender issues that were highlighted during the drafting of the constitution (Zimbabwe Gender Commission 2018 & OECD Development Centre, 2019). The main provisions from the 2013 constitution that guide the principles and goals of the Commission include; Section 17 which calls for the promotion of a gender balance in Zimbabwe with focus on ensuring the full participation of women in all spheres, Section 56 which speaks against non-discrimination on the basis of gender and Section 124 (1) (b) which stipulates a gender quota for National Assembly (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013). It is evident that for the work of the Commission to be fulfilled, the political parties are meant to complement their efforts by implementing internal changes that target their capacity to represent women in Zimbabwe. A research report compiled by the Research and Advocacy Unit highlights that the political parties are not making any efforts to rectifying this issue of representation with other literature pointing out that women are being demotivated to even enter politics because of political violence and a lack of campaign resources (Republic of Zimbabwe, 2013 & Research and Advocacy Unit, 2018). **Chapter 3**

Findings and analysis

Introduction

Over the years political parties have faced many controversies surrounding their treatment of their female counterparts and their attitude towards women in politics. The MDC in particular has faced a lot of criticism over the treatment of senior leader Thokozani Khuphe, a founding member of the party since 1999 who was forced out of the party after the death of founding leader Morgan Tsvangirai. This has been seen as reflection of how they treat women in the

party and their stance on women in politics in general. Recently however, the Supreme Court ruled that Chamisa's presidency was unconstitutional and ruled that the party has to hold fresh election in 3 months to determine his replacement in the party (Dzirutwe, 2020). An analysis of the MDC is necessary as the party continues to grow in influence in Zimbabwe. Despite the factions that have arisen from the main party, as a collective the MDC is the largest opposition party in Zimbabwe challenging the ruling party Zanu PF. The party has featured and played a role during important phases on these gender parity efforts in Zimbabwe. In their statement acknowledging International Women's day in 2012, the party said the following statement;

“To women of Zimbabwe, be assured the Movement for Democratic Change is ready to deliver real change, and that for the first time you will experience a new democratic Zimbabwe with jobs, food, upliftment and equal representation in decision making”. (MDC, 2012)

Context

The MDC was created during an important time in Zimbabwe when the country was experiencing many political, social and economic developments. During this time civil society and various organizations were advocating for gender parity at a national level through constitutional reform. Some of the key actors in these movements joined the MDC when it was formed as a result of the labour movement gaining traction during the time. In 2008 all women from the different political parties made up 16% of the National Assembly. The 2013 elections, first to be held under the new constitution, saw this number increase to 35% (RAU, 2019 & Tshuma, 2018). Over the years, political parties, to some extent, have met the requirements of the gender quota. The statistics of the current 9th National Assembly show that MDC's Alliance faction has a total of 25 women parliamentarians (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2018). 21 out of these 25 women entered parliament as a result of the proportional representation quota. Increases of women entering parliament were recorded between the 2008, 2013 and 2018 elections. These figures present positive results however, they disregard very important

considerations despite the increase in the presence of women in politics collectively, the number of women directly elected and contesting for positions has decreased. Fewer women are being directly elected by the electorate and contestation for positions has decreased (Tshuma, 2018). Political parties are using the gender quota as an excuse to not field women on the ballots arguing that women will be present owing to the gender quota (Tshuma, 2018 & Interview 17 September 2019). This goes against the goal of the gender quota which is to stimulate an influx of women in politics and normalize political parties' inclusion of women as their representatives (Interview, 22 September 2019). In the 2018 election the MDC won 63 constituency seats while Zanu PF won 145 seats (Kubatana, 2018). In total the party has 87 representatives in Parliament and from that number 23 are women who have entered Parliament as a result of the women's quota and only 2 women were directly elected to a constituency (Kubatana, 2018 & Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2020). Women, therefore, only make 28% of the MDC members currently in Parliament.

In 2008, the number of women directly elected to parliament was 34 and the number decreased to 26 in 2013 (Tshuma, 2018). The 2018 statistics show that only 25 women were directly elected to Parliament (Tshuma, 2018 & RAU, 2019). Experts have noted that, both the ruling party and the main opposition party have reduced the number of women they elect to run for office using the quota as an excuse. (Tshuma, 2018). The argument is that the quota already reserves seats for women therefore there is no need to elect women to run in other constituencies. In 2018, parties did not substantially increase the number of women they fielded as candidates. According to Research and Advocacy Unit's findings, out of the 51 parties that contested in 2018, only 27 of them deployed women to run (RAU, 2018). This made up only 53% of the total number of candidates who ran in the Parliamentary election (RAU, 2018). A breakdown of the statistics by political parties shows a much harrowing picture. The MDC had the lowest representation of women in the 2018 election with the ruling party Zanu PF performing second lowest by a margin of only 2% (RAU, 2018). MDC (A) only deployed a total of 13% candidates to run in the Parliamentary election and women only constituted 8% of that total (RAU, 2018). Zanu PF also yielded 13% total candidates and women made up 10%

of that total (RAU, 2018). The MDC faction led by former Vice President of the party Thokozani Khuphe fielded 7% total candidates in the election and 20% of that were women. These disappointing statistics from the main parties in the country sparked necessary commentary that we still have a long way to go with regards to women's representation in politics (Interviews 3,16 September 2019 & Interview 4, 19 September 2019)

While the mechanisms to trigger the influx of women in Zimbabwe's political space have been adopted, political parties have not been working to match the national agenda according to my findings. What interested me was understanding how the main opposition is operating in this area and my findings and the experiences of experts and women in the party have assisted in painting a picture of how the party has been working in relation to the gender quota and overall gender parity agenda. In this chapter I will detail some of these findings and also infuse some of the experiences that were shared during the process of data collection by experts in Zimbabwean politics and MDC affairs.

Role during constitutional processes and opinions about the constitutional amendment

The process of amending Zimbabwe's constitution was a participative process that called on collective effort from civil society organizations, the citizens, political parties and other stakeholders. Civil society played an active role in calling for amendments that took into consideration the gap that our constitution had on matters involving gender. At the forefront were civil society organizations and they launched several campaigns to advocate for a more gender sensitive constitution with special considerations for political mechanisms to influence the influx of women in politics. While these efforts alone were able to garner much support from organizations and the general public, progress would not be achieved without including the political parties as partners in making these provisions possible. In an interview I conducted with Ms Grace Nyatsanza (pseudonym), a gender and development expert who was instrumental in the gender parity efforts of the early 2000s, I gained insight about her personal experience of working with the political parties during the constitutional making process

behind the 2013 Constitution. According to her, the conduct of the parties during this period provided a tone for how the parties felt about the gender agenda and the future of women in politics. The gender agenda was a key uniting goal for many social activists, civil society and potential sponsors (Nyatsanza, 14 September 2019).

The act of putting together a singular voice to pursue constitutional reform saw women across political lines collaborating and investing in a joint purpose, making the gender agenda a constitutional responsibility. Gender and development experts like Ms Nyatsanza worked with organizations like WiPSU to offer training and capacity building for women in politics across several parties ((Nyatsanza, 14 September 2019). The foundation of constitutional reform efforts is why women in politics in Zimbabwe have a united voice when it comes to issues on representation and gender evidenced by the collaborative work of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus and the work it has embarked on across political lines.² According to Ms Nyatsanza, feminist ideals motivated their work as civil society agents and the end goal was to adequately support all women despite differing politics (Interview 3, 14 September 2019). The success of uniting women belonging to several parties for the gender agenda aligns with the feminist ideology that despite having different political ideas, the gender agenda is a feminist cause and feminism does not discriminate (Interview 3, 14 September 2019). What was needed during this process was a collaboration with the political parties because they represent the wants and needs of the people and are voted for to do that every election year. Political parties are key actors and a vehicle of legitimate change hence civil society movements had to push for engagements with the parties. Speaking specifically to her experience of working with the MDC, Ms Nyatsanza noted that the party and its leadership during this period presented some

² The Zimbabwe Women's Parliamentary Caucus launched in October 2001 with the aim of motivating women parliamentarians to address issues of common concern as women, across party lines. The Caucus' membership is made up of women members of parliament and former women parliamentarians who join as Associate Members. Some of the caucus' objectives are; to advocate for legislation on gender mainstreaming, facilitate effective implementation of the national gender policy, develop and establish norms and standards that promote the effective participation of women in Parliament and promote and help sensitize all parliamentarians to the principles of gender equality in the country, regionally and internationally (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2020).

problems for them as gender experts pushing for 50/50 representation in politics through their campaigns and advocacy work. The following is her personal account of an encounter with the late Morgan Tsvangirayi, founder of the MDC;

“I remember at one time when we were writing the Constitution, I would argue and say, the MDC is definitely better. So, we went to a meeting with Tsvangirai when he was still the President, writing the constitution and we complained about outreach teams only having 15% women. I think I asked Tsvangirayi point blank, ‘They’re saying you’re fielding very few women’. He simply said to me, that’s not an issue at all. We have addressed it.

(Nyatsanza, 14 September 2019)

Scholars who have written extensively about the national constitutional making process have highlighted these issues in their work. Chimedza and Chirimambowa highlighted that nationally very little effort was seen in trying to involve women in the constitution making process particularly from political parties (Chimedza & Chirimambowa, 2017). The idea that the constitution was lacking and needed review was nationally held however, there was a blatant disregard for women and the women’s agenda (Chirimadzi & Chirimambowa, 2017 & Interview 3, 14 September 2019). Currently, Zimbabwe is going through another constitutional amendment process and the lack of tangible success in increasing the number of women in politics has resulted in the gender agenda featuring again in the list of proposed constitutional reforms (Kubatana, 2020 & WiPSU, 2020). Clause 11 of the on-going Constitutional Amendment bill proposes the extension of the section 124(1)(b) of the current constitution so that the provision lasts for the duration of four parliaments that will be formed since the 2013 constitution came into effect and should expire before the general election of 2033 unless parliament is dissolved before then (Kubatana, 2020).

Patriarchy

Patriarchy was a recurring theme throughout my research process. While the rest of the world has shown commitment to learning more about the differences in gender and sexuality and unpacking the problem of gender assigned roles in our society, Zimbabwe is not there yet. As detailed in my literature review and the work other scholars have conducted, patriarchy continues to permeate the political space, and this has had an impact on the efforts towards gender parity and increasing women in politics. Nkiwane unpacks how socialization has impacted women's access to public office. He explains that the exclusion of women is rationalized through ideas that women are meant to be confined to the private space where they are wives and mothers and perform socially accepted roles that fulfil these roles (Nkiwane, 2010). The Zimbabwean society is aligned towards the subordination of women and this has resulted in the continuation of women's issues (Nkiwane, 2010). My research has shown that women's political activities or presence in politics is heavily influenced by patriarchy in Zimbabwe (SADC, 2008 & Hamandishe, 2018). Patriarchy is a form of political organization that results in an unequal distribution of power between men and women (Facio, 2013 & Vettel et.al, 2012). This impacts social systems which tend to subordinate, discriminate and be oppressive to women (Facio, 2013). In politics, relations influenced by patriarchy are maintained and reinforced by different institutions linked together to achieve a consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles (Facio, 2013). This can be relations between political parties, members, civil society and the political system. Overall, patriarchy has influenced the unequal benefits that women and men gain from social and economic development (Parpart, 1995). There is a trans-historical and transnational pattern of marginalisation of women in politics and the impact of this marginalisation also impacts other marginalised groups in society (Vettel et. al, 2012). Parpart writes particularly on how women have been short-changed with regards to economic development in Zimbabwe because of patriarchy. Historically patriarchy was strengthened during colonization and these assumptions continue to be a part of postcolonial society and limit women's ability to achieve in male dominated sectors such as with politics (Parpart, 1995 & Vettel et.al, 2012).

This was supported by Ms. Chirima, a Senior Electoral expert and Development Practitioner whom I interviewed. The discrimination that we see political parties promoting is a symptom of a bigger problem in Zimbabwe; the patriarchal structure of our society (Ms. Chirima, 20 September 2019). Political parties cannot be different from the environment they exist in, they should be catalysts of the change in society and when it comes to playing this role, political parties are found lacking (Interview 6, 20 September 2019). Parties have an obligation to participate in education programmes to demystify internal biases towards women (Olaleye, 2004). The general public will not easily change its socially conditioned responses in Zimbabwe that are a result of socialization and internalized patriarchy, Olaleye refers to this as an unrealistic expectation (Olaleye, 2004). I interviewed a female opposition party official who was active in civil society movements of the early 2000s and self identifies as a feminist activist. She had the following to say; “The political parties are upholding the problematic aspects of our society and the treatment of women has been a reflection of this” (Interview 6, 20 September 2019). While the opposition might be different from the ruling party on their founding philosophy, patriarchy is one thing that unites these two parties. Despite their many political differences, the two parties do not hesitate to unite when stifling the progression of women in politics (Interview 3, 14 September 2019). MDC practices have subsequently been scrutinised as being biased against women and influenced by patriarchal ideas and this will be discussed in this section.

A gender analysis of the 2018 election and public perception reviewed that men and women in Zimbabwe still view men as the ideal leadership and have hesitancy towards voting for women (RAU, 2019). These perceptions infiltrate the parties themselves or rather, the parties exhibit these ideals in their practices. Women tend to be placed in deputy or secretarial roles within political parties or as my research has identified, are influenced to run for those positions. According to experts, the MDC has often broken its own constitutional processes to remove women from running for senior roles in the party’s structures (Interview 5, 28 September 2019). The party has been identified as notorious in influencing which positions men and women run for. An example of this came up during my research process. The MDC has several

youth structures that make up the party and its different areas of work and in 2019, one of the structures was nominating candidates for the Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General positions (Interview 4, 17 September 2019). Three candidates were nominated by the Provincial Council, as per MDC protocol, and 3 men and 1 woman were competing for these positions. The current portfolio leaders' political activist experience and proximity to the leadership worked as an advantage to his nomination and the party's support for his candidacy as the head of that portfolio. The less experienced but equally ambitious female candidate, however, was encouraged to run for the Deputy Secretary position uncontested (Interview 4, 17 September 2019). This procedure probed me to question why the party thought that it made more sense for her to run for the deputy position. According to my source, the party believed that she would have lost if she contested the main position and she was a valuable member they hoped to retain hence they felt she was more suitable for the Deputy Secretary position (Interview 4, 17 September 2019). The fact that the female candidate was not awarded an opportunity to contest the senior position is reflective of a potential problem in the party. The female candidate was not given a chance to contest the position she initially had interests in, and the party played a role in persuading her against her ambitions. While the chances of her losing the nomination for this were present, it is a part of political contestation therefore, having a fair chance should have been part of the process. This account is similar to Mr Nyangombe's, a Political Analyst and Constitutional Law Expert's account of his experience working with the party and the conduct he observed regarding their handling of women candidates.

My research also revealed another way that the party actively attempts to stifle women's political ambitions within the party. Experts have noted that the manipulation of party lists to favour the inclusion of party men versus women in the House of Assembly is a common activity that the MDC participates in (Ms Chirima & Mr Nyangombe, 2019). At present, the constitution has only provided a number of candidates that the party must adhere to fielding for its campaigns however other systems in place are lacking in order to ensure that the political parties do not manipulate the political systems used in Zimbabwe to purposefully ensure that women do not make it into Parliament. The country uses a mixed electoral system consisting

of the First Past the Post (FPTP) system and the Proportional Representation system. Proportional representation is used particularly for the 60 reserved seats in accordance with the gender quota (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2019 & ZEC, 2020). FPTP is used for the National Assembly elections. In this system, candidates are nominated for each one of the country's 210 electoral constituencies and 1958 wards (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2019 & ZEC, 2020).

It is during this process that political parties have been accused of manipulating the process of fielding candidates. The use of these systems have been criticized for not being the most ideal processes to ensure the gender agenda is fulfilled and the quota has an impact in Zimbabwe (Interview, 22 September 2019). FPTP has made it easier for parties to place women in inconvenient places on the party list as a way of making sure they do not find an opportunity to enter parliament. MDC is notorious for fielding women in provinces typically won by Zanu PF as a way of systematically ensuring that these women do not make it into Parliament (Interview 3, 16 September 2019 & Interview 7, 22 September 2019). Women's position on party lists as well tends to be influenced by patriarchy and men protecting each other's positions or privileges (Interview 7, 22 September 2019). The nomination and recruitment processes in parties still rely heavily on parties and their own biases (Olayele, 2004). According to experts, the trend is that women and men are placed strategically on the party lists depending on what goal the party is trying to achieve in that particular constituency; to pacify a male candidate or to remove a powerful woman with potential to rise up the ranks (Interview 3, 16 September 2019 & Interview 7, 22 September 2019). This has social and political consequences at the ballot and is a systematic way of ensuring women are kept out and only occupying the positions ascribed by the quota (Chimedza & Chirimambowa, 2017). Considering the findings from RAU's gender audit of the 2018 election, both men and women are motivated by biases in how they cast their vote (RAU, 2019). A combination of this variable and political parties purposefully placing women in constituencies where they are less likely to win negatively impacts the number of women who enter parliament through direct election.

The pervasiveness of patriarchy in politics: the deployment of Amai, hure and muroyi (mothers, prostitutes and witches)

Patriarchy has also had a decisive impact on suppressing women's ambitions politically. Some women in Zimbabwe have demonstrated the capacity to overcome challenges and continue persevering in politics which poses a threat to the party machinery (Interview 5, 22 September 2019). Their ability to rise up the ranks is often seen as something that requires stifling by the men in their political parties. In this way we have seen patriarchy negatively influence women's political ambitions and development of their political careers. Patriarchal ideals have motivated critics to use social probity as a means of discrediting women in politics and simultaneously stifling their progression in their political careers. While women continue to make great strides in their professional lives and rise up the ranks, in Zimbabwe, women are labelled along their socially imposed ideals. Women in politics are the main people who face this issue. This is because they are in the public eye and as a result are more susceptible to scrutiny. It is important to note how the media also plays a role in this positioning of women and a critical study on how reporting on women in politics has influenced voting trends and perceptions of women politicians was conducted by Parichi in 2016 (Parichi, 2016). In this section I will be discussing two cases in the MDC where the party has projected social roles on women along gender biases and how this has reflected their ideas on women despite the national agenda being focused on addressing gender parity. While the MDC is the focus of this research, I will also be discussing cases in Zanu PF to derive similarities in the treatment of women in both parties.

Amai, *hure* and *muroyi* are titles that have been used to describe the women in politics during different phases in their political career. The word *amai* means mother in Shona and is often used to describe women in public and political spaces. Typically, this term has been used to address the First Ladies of our country referring to them as 'mother of the nation'. The late First Lady Sally Mugabe was referred to as *amai* and the same happened with Dr Grace Mugabe during her time as the First Lady. In Grace Mugabe's case, after she acquired her doctoral degree from the university of Zimbabwe, she started being acknowledged as 'Dr *Amai*' a term

she became affectionately and controversially known by. Other women in politics have also been called *amai* as we have seen in the case of Dr Joice Mujuru and Dr Thokozani Khupe. This term has served two purposes that are important to unpack in this research. Women are involved in 'public' spaces like politics, being called *amai* is seen as a way of maintaining the women's respect and dignity because they are involved in a male dominated space like politics (Interview, 14 September 2019). The term is meant to bring respectfulness but also plays another role in aligning women with simply that function of being a 'mother' to the people. It is this mindset that results in women being placed in more social ministries, gender related work and women's wings of political parties. In addition to this, the term almost limits women's capacity in these political spaces. It is almost a way to pacify their presence in politics and indirectly it speaks to how men in Zimbabwe believe women's primary role is to be a caregiver (Ampofo et. Al, 2004; Ranchod-Nilsson, 2006; Nkiwane, 2010 & Manyonganise, 2015). What has also occurred is that while women in Zimbabwean politics are still in good graces and playing their role according to how men envision it, they remain '*amai*'. This changes however when they fall out with men in their parties or begin to show ambitions to exceed the positions they are 'placed in'. The terms *hure* and *muroyi* have been actively used to address women who have shown political ambitions to rise through the ranks above men.

Hure is a Shona word which means 'prostitute' while *muroyi* means a witch. These two words are often used to degrade and defame women something we have often seen in politics. These two words were used to defame Khupe and Mujuru respectively when the two women expressed ambitions to pursue the presidential positions in MDC and Zanu PF respectively.

The treatment of Khupe reflected serious issues with the party's practices. As discussed in the previous section, succession issues in the party played out in a toxic way in the party resulting in Khupe's expulsion from the Alliance. She went on to form MDC T and she ran in the 2018 election as its presidential candidate. When the party became engrossed in a tug of war over the position of president, the youth wing and majority of the party's functions were in support of Nelson Chamisa. To show solidarity with their preferred leader, they became engrossed in a smear campaign labelling Khupe as a '*hure*'. Priscilla Mushonga notably appeared in

parliament to submit her nomination papers for the 2018 elections wearing an overall written “*HURE #METOO*” as a statement against the verbal abuse and sexist biases that often affect women in politics. In a similar case with the ruling party, Mujuru was subjected to name calling when she expressed an interest in the presidential position in Zanu PF during a time when the party was experiencing factionalism issues. Despite years of service in the party, spanning decades, Mujuru’s ambitions were met with active resistance by the men of Zanu PF.

What propelled the campaign against Mujuru is the fact that at the forefront of the smearing was former First Lady Grace Mugabe. The former First Lady had often taken a back seat in politics and only appeared to fulfil her role as the mother of the nation. That changed however when she was elected President of the Women’s wing within Zanu PF and when her interest in active politics grew. This resulted in more public appearances at Zanu PF rallies and more media coverage of her philanthropic work and entrepreneurial endeavours in an attempt to feed into her political image for the near future. When Mujuru expressed interest to take over Zanu PF as the president of the party, Grace Mugabe was active in dispelling these ambitions and used her newly created political platform to ridicule Mujuru and her efforts. The years that Mujuru served the party during the liberation struggle and the decades of Zanu PF rule were completely disregarded. In addition, the party itself also actively supported Grace Mugabe in her campaign against Mujuru. What is interesting to note is once Grace herself expressed potential interest in being part of the executive of the party, the same men who supported her campaign against Mujuru turned on her. Not only did this reflect how men tend to use women as instruments in their own political agendas, it also showed how quickly the labels attached to women change once they dare to expand their role in politics beyond the male prescribed roles.

What is similar in the case of Khupe and Mujuru is that both women have paid their dues in the parties they belonged to in several ways. Both women dedicated years of service to their parties through years of campaigning and politicking yet when they expressed ambitions to advance their political careers they were met with antagonism from their male counterparts. Zanu PF had already shown their ability and potential to do this during the first years of their administration in Zimbabwe. Women served an impactful role during the fight for

independence against the British and this did not translate into sustainable political careers in the new Zimbabwe for everyone. MDC's actions seem to be aligning with this disregard for women. In the case of MDC, the party actively went against its own constitution to bypass Khupe and remove her from the party. This reflects two issues with the MDC; the party is inherently patriarchal, and this has influenced the treatment of women in the party and they are willing to overlook their own constitution to push the patriarchal agenda and sabotage women's ambitions.

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems' (IFES) research states that discrimination and harassment are the biggest challenges for women in politics and particularly in Zimbabwe (Vogelstein, 2018). The majority of the initial attacks they face are on their moral probity (Vogelstein, 2018). IFES conducted an in-depth research assessing the nature of political violence faced by women in politics in Zimbabwe and verbal violence tied to women's social probity has been prevalent in these women's experiences with other politicians and the citizens. Public visibility that comes with their political participation results in women being labelled as social misfits encompassing several terms such as *hure* and *prostitute* and these labels are associated with belittling attributes in the Zimbabwean culture (IFES, 2018). Women in politics are seen as going against their feminine role in Zimbabwe and according to their research social media has been playing an active role in perpetuating these ideas (IFES,2018). This has also been experienced online, in the media and in political parties. The following is a quote from their report;

'Women candidates bear the brunt of political violence. These women are constantly being labelled as whores and prostitutes, and their marriages are publicly and grotesquely called into question Even once elected into office, women politicians cannot escape degrading commentary; "A woman still cannot question an MP in parliament without being [told] her thighs are too big." If a woman candidate is unmarried, she is accused of entering politics to find a husband and it is said "If she can't run a household, how can she run a constituency?" Participation in political rallies is seen as a demonstration

of 'loose morals' because politics is viewed as violent, male territory.'

(IFES, 2018: 14).

The basis of the use of the word *hure* is not only experienced by women but also by men. There is, however, a difference in the intended effect when this word is used to refer to women. Knowing that the society in Zimbabwe is highly patriarchal, men are aware that the use of this term is enough to question women's capabilities and as a result impact their political careers. Respectability politics features a lot in Zimbabwe and women are the victims of this. There are two kinds of women who are referred to as *hure* in politics; the unmarried woman and the married woman who exhibits political ambitions to exceed men or the subordinate role women are meant to occupy in politics. The point of using this term is to call into question women's abilities and also to tie their political participation to their proximity to men. This functions in two ways, women are seen to only be in politics as an act of goodwill and men making space for them in a 'typically male arena' on the other hand they are shamed based on this very excuse that they entered politics as a result of proximity to men. In Zimbabwe, many cases have occurred where women are accused of entering politics as a result of personal relationships with men in political positions (Interview, 22 September 2019). Ultimately, political parties are failing to act as vehicles of social change because they also perpetuate and utilise discrimination and marginalisation of women as a political tool to achieve their goals when women are proving to be a threat.

“The seven Ugly men”: Women's exclusion in top leadership positions

If one wanted a snapshot of the position that Zimbabwe has on women's participation in politics or the lack of acknowledgement of gender in politics, an assessment of the executive members of the two main political parties perfectly summarises the extent of the country's efforts to address gender parity in politics. The MDC and Zanu PF has over the years successfully uprooted any women in the executive bodies of their parties. Both parties over the years have shown how shallow their commitment to gender is given how they have treated credible women

in politics. Zanu PF's exclusion of women is something that was institutionalized a few years after independence. When one thinks of MDC women, the name Dr Thokozani Khupe does not go unmentioned. Khupe is a former trade unionist and prominent women's rights activist in Zimbabwe (The Zimbabwean, 2006). Khupe's track record speaks for itself. She was an official for the Zimbabwe Amalgamated Railway Union (ZARU) in 1987 and a member of the ZCTU general council and the women's advisory council (The Zimbabwe, 2006). She participated in the formation of the MDC which launched her political career (The Zimbabwean, 2006). She was elected as the National Executive member responsible for Transport, Logistics and Welfare and went on to be elected as the Member of Parliament for Makokoba Constituency in Bulawayo in 2000 (The Zimbabwean, 2006). Khupe went on to hold the following positions in the MDC and representing the party; member of the Budget, Finance and Economic Development Committee in MDC, Deputy Chief Whip of the opposition in Parliament, Deputy Chairperson of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus, member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of Defense, Home Affairs and National Security, member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee of Budget, Finance and Economic Development (The Zimbabwean, 2006). Her most notable roles were serving as the Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe from 2009 to 2013 and her position as MDC's Vice-President from 2005-2013 (The Zimbabwean, 2006). The exclusion of women in executive leadership, of women who are seen as a threat and have political ambitions, is nothing new. MDC has had a chance to ratify where Zanu has failed however, they have also followed the same trajectory in their exclusion of women. Khupe was one of many exceptional women who were present during the civic movement of the early 1990s. Just like the party's founder, Khupe was also a trade unionist prior to her embarking on a political career. Khupe joined the MDC and developed her political career over the years. She was also one of the two women actively involved in the Government of National Unity administration which saw the MDC and Zanu PF signing an agreement to collaboratively work together in the government.

"My election means women are now moving away from the corner to the centre, from the periphery to the centre. And the centre is where the whole game is

played.”- Dr Thokozani Khupe speaking after being elected Vice-President at MDC’s second national congress held in 2006.

Owing to Khupe’s track record of leadership, she was also able to rise up the ranks and serve as MDC’s vice president during Tsvangirai’s years in leadership. While Khuphe was in the top executive position in the party, Dr Joice Mujuru was also serving in the executive ranks in Zanu PF. For a while this presented a positive picture for the country having women in these top positions. This however, deteriorated quickly in both parties when these two women showed aspirations to go beyond their positions as vice president and started eyeing the presidency positions in the parties. The death of Morgan Tsvangirai resulted in a highly charged succession dispute in the party. The timing of this dispute hinted potential problems for the party because the 2018 elections were looming months away. According to sections 9.20.1 and 9.21 of the MDC’s constitution, Khupe was meant to stand as the Acting President until an Extraordinary Congress was held where the new President would be elected (MDC Constitution, 2014). The Congress had to take place within a year of Tsvangirai’s passing (MDC Constitution, 2014). Prior to his passing however, Tsvangirai had appointed two additional Vice Presidents which went against Article 16 of their constitution which stated he had the authority to appoint people but not create new positions particularly in the executive (Dendere, 2013& MDC Constitution, 2014). The new candidates had to be elected by the party’s congress and the next party congress was to be held in 2019 (Dendere, 2018). Considering that the party had three sitting Vice Presidents, the council was supposed to vote for an Acting President amongst the three which did not happen (Dendere, 2013). The party, however, chose to override the constitution in favour of Nelson Chamisa (Interview 5, 22 September 2019). I pursued a line of questioning with regards to this with an active party member within one of the youth wings. According to him, the succession dispute involving Khupe and other senior male politicians in the party did not represent the party overriding their constitution but was a reflection of ‘careful politicking’ (Interview 4, 17 September 2019). This downplayed the events leading up to her eventual expulsion to the party and the smear campaign she was subjected to. A current MDC member

and activist who I interviewed used the Khupe example as a perfect summation of the way the party treats women (Interview 1, 1 August 2019). While she herself is a member of the party, she acknowledges its shortfalls and areas needing improvement. In her words, “Politicking in the MDC is a men’s game and women are just complementary partners and an audience to this” (Interview 1, 1 August 2019). Tendai Biti, on his Twitter social media account once stated that the country ‘is being run by 7 ugly men’ hinting at the fact that in both leading parties, the top executive is filled with men (Biti, 2018).

In my analysis of the events within the MDC during the months before Tsvangirai’s passing, I noted that the President’s failure to create an ideal foundation for his succession was a potential problem for the party with the 2018 election looming (Mudimu, 2017). The appointment of two Vice Presidents, from my interpretation, seemed to be a stance against the potential of Khupe’s Presidency of the party and was a public statement towards the idea of having a woman as the party’s presidential candidate given the 2018 election which was scheduled months away (Mudimu, 2017). After Tsvangirai’s death, the youth branch of the party grew in vigour as they pushed support for their preferred candidate Nelson Chamisa, to become the new leader of the party. This went against the party’s constitution however ageism and patriarchy combined to result in the dramatic push out of Khupe from the top executive of the party overall. The issue of the MDC leadership continues to plague the party. The Supreme Court’s March 2020 ruling has ordered the party to revert back to the 2014 structures of the party and ruled that Chamisa is an illegitimate leader (Kunambura & Chingono,2020). The ruling states that the appointments of Chamisa and Elias Mudzuri in 2016 were unlawful and subsequently Khupe has been granted interim control of the party in line with her election at the MDC 2014 congress (Kunambura & Chingono,2020).

The factor of ageism in Zimbabwean politics

Age or ageism is one factor that has had an interesting influence on political activities in Zimbabwe. Ageism is defined by the World Health Organization as stereotyping, prejudice and

discrimination against people on the basis of age (WHO, 2020). It has been classified as an everyday challenge that has resulted in older people being overlooked for employment, restricted from social services and stereotyped in the media, ageism marginalises and excludes older people in their communities (WHO, 2020). In Zimbabwe however, the ageism we have witnessed in political spaces has been the discrimination of young people in favour of older and more seasoned politicians. Young people of voting age are seen as too young and inexperienced to participate in politics. Zanu PF has been especially at the forefront of pushing this narrative and this was done to secure political power for war veterans and other party members for a long period of time. This culture of discriminating against young people with political ambitions has been institutionalized in Zimbabwe and seamlessly a part of our culture. This is a problem that affects both men and women in politics however, in this chapter I will be discussing the age politics within the MDC affecting women. I will discuss the division between young women and older women within the MDC and how this division has impacted the party in pursuing the gender quota. Furthermore, I will discuss some of the concerns that have arisen amongst young women in the party with ambitions to prosper in their political careers.

“Young women have raised various opinions on why they shy away from political participation on a number of platforms I have attended. Issues raised include sexual harassment in political parties, where they fail to make into the structures if they haven’t provided sexual favours, being elbowed out by the older women in the parties, patronage and lack of internal democracy in political parties’ rank and file” (Masarira, 2018).

According to an opinion piece written by political activist Linda Masarira and MDC T member, young women with political ambitions have complained about being elbowed out by older and more seasoned women (Masarira, 2018). In addition to this, a lack of internal democracy within the MDC has contributed to friction between the older and younger women in the party. Masarira writes that political parties should have a gender sensitive youth agenda because even in student unions, young women are disregarded and given Deputy positions (Masarira, 2018).

This point was discussed in previous sections of this research. Within the MDC, clashes between the new and seasoned politicians have occurred particularly regarding the 2018 election. At the peak of the succession dispute between Khupe and Chamisa, MDC Youth Activist and coordinator of the SheVotes campaign Maureen Kademanga came out in the media complaining of Khupe's conduct and likening it to that of former First Lady Grace Mugabe. Kademanga is an active young politician in the party and in 2013 she was designated as the party proportional representative candidate for Mashonaland East (New Zimbabwe, 2018).

According to Kademanga, Khupe is an example of older and more privileged women who have not been of assistance to young women in the party (New Zimbabwe, 2018). In her opinion older women have become an extension of patriarchy in and outside of the party and have been very aloof of the struggles young and less privileged women are facing in the party (New Zimbabwe, 2018). More seasoned politicians have had opportunities to expand their education and acquire extra disposable income which has put them in a position of authority and removed their vulnerability (New Zimbabwe, 2018). A divide seems to be present in the party between the older women and younger women. From Kademanga's interview, we see that in her opinion the younger women lack the capacity and support to properly participate in the party's politics. In the issue with Khupe's fight with Chamisa for the presidency, Kademanga highlights that as young women supporting Khupe was something they were not eager to participate in because she had not been representative of the issues they face within the party. In addition, she disputes that Khupe was being discriminated against because women were still placed to compete for her vacancy in the party's executive. The seasoned women in the party have risen to privileged positions and have held an assumption that gender upliftment is only reserved for them (New Zimbabwe, 2018). In addition, Kademanga laments that the women who benefited from the women's movement have been monopolising the space and operating as patriarchy's gatekeepers (New Zimbabwe, 2018).

“But it would be wrong to completely ignore it. There is no doubt that the younger generation should be allowed the same opportunities, which the foregoing

generations had. Most of those who became ministers in the first independent Zimbabwe government in their '30s with a few more in their '20s. So, it shouldn't be an anathema for younger people to take over the reins of control of institutions as we trudge as a nation.” – Nick Mangwana

In 2018 drama also unfolded between a young female politician in the MDC and one of the women who have been members of the party for a longer time. The conflict between the MDC, Jessie Majome and Joanah Mamombe concerning the Member of Parliament nomination for the Harare West constituency was another conflict that unfolded after Tsvangirai's death in February 2018. This particular case featured a lot during my research process, and I will unpack the several ways in which my research participants used it as an example of how the party operates. The case between Mamombe and Majome has been seen as a refusal by the seasoned politicians to make space for your politicians in the party. Mamombe was nominated by the party to run in the Harare West constituency which the party had fielded to Majome in previous election cycles. Majome protested against this stating that the fielding of Mamombe was unconstitutional because one had to be a member of the party for 5 years before being nominated to run representing the party. Secondly, Majome's argument was that Mamombe had submitted her nomination papers with a false address located in the constituency, it was not actually her home address. Lastly, Majome called out the close relationship the party leader had with Mamombe stating that he purposefully positioned Mamombe in a way to remove Majome from this seat. Mr Nyatsambo shared a similar interpretation of the activities surrounding the Harare West seat. He states that MDC has been notorious in using male and female candidates to pacify powerful women (Interview, 22 September 2019). The act of using another woman to counter a candidate that the party is trying to pacify is, according to his words, a tactic to remove the women who have potential to pose a threat to the leadership in a way that does not trigger concerns about gender discrimination (Interview, 22 September 2019). He explains that Majome is a seasoned politician and was viewed as one of the powerful women in the party owing to her track record in the party and her contributions to transforming the political space for women. Second to Khupe, Majome was a potential threat to the

leadership which had bypassed the constitution after Tsvangirai's death (Interview, 22 September 2019). Therefore, in order to seamlessly oust Majome the MDC supported Mamombe's candidacy for the Harare West seat (Interview, 22 September 2019). Despite these claims, the MDC has framed this case of Majome and Mamombe as the older politicians attempting to push out the younger women in the party. In addition, Majome and Khupe have been framed as being ageist and against the party's intended trajectory of attracting the young population.

“The problem is that they don't want young people like you active in politics because they believe your business is to be getting married and having children. They are more welcoming to older women because we are seen as having surpassed the age of bearing children and focusing on marriages therefore, we are not subjected to these societal roles. However, our contributions are downplayed and we often take on rather ceremonial motherly roles in these parties. This is why I could never be a politician. Not only do I want to shake the table I want the entire table removed and rebuilt” (Ms. Chirima Interview, 15 September 2019).

MDC women vs Zanu PF women

One recurring conversation in my research was the comparison of MDC women's experiences versus Zanu PF women's'. From the interviews I conducted, my research participants continued to mention that between the two parties the Zanu PF women had better experiences with their party with regards to the gender quota and overall inclusion in the political space. While Zanu PF has been the forerunner of the patriarchal heteronormative discourse in the country, in some aspect they have shown action to support the national commitment to gender parity in politics and the gender quota. In this section, I will be discussing some of my findings

about the experiences of MDC women juxtaposed with Zanu PF women with regards to the gender quota and gender parity in politics.

The main point that my research subjects highlighted was that MDC women's political activities have been continually limited by the limited funding they have access to. The party, over the years, has experienced shortfalls in funding available for electioneering. According to several news reports, the MDC has very limited funding with many donors pulling out of their financial support for the party for many reasons. Senior party Douglas Mwonozora spoke out in public agreeing that compared to its counterpart the party had less resources to assist its election campaigns (Zimbabwe Independent, 2018). Zanu PF has more financial capacity to finance their campaigns, a factor that has been attributed to their control over the country's resources and misdirection and mismanagement of funds meant for national projects (Mail & Guardian, 2014 & Zimbabwe Independent, 2018). In the 2014 budget, Finance Minister Patrick Chinamasa through the Political Parties Finance Act of 2002, dedicated funds to political parties that had accumulated 5% of the vote in the elections held in 2013 (Mail & Guardian, 2014). This, however, has not adequately addressed the MDC's funding issues.

The issue of funding plays an important role in the potential success or failure of the party's efforts to ensure the gender quota is met and women in the party are provided adequate support to participate in elections. Dr Tafadzwa Chikani, a Development expert and Political Analyst highlighted that over the years, the political careers of MDC women have been sabotaged by the party's failure to release adequate funding for their political campaigns and projects (Interview, 20 September 2019). In his experience of working with the party and some of its members, the departments led by women have been a low priority to the party and tend to not get much support financially and this is a stark contrast to the male led departments which receive large cash injections in the party (Interview, 20 September 2019). This issue of funding was also highlighted by Ms Nyatsanza as a factor that has limited women's progress in the party. In our interview she highlighted that Zanu PF women have better financial capital to finance their political careers and they also gain support from the party (Interview, 14

September 2019). This has allowed them to grow in influence in the party. According to her, these women have had years of experience working and accumulating wealth particularly as a result of their affiliation to the ruling party (Interview, 14 September 2019). The impact this has is that Zanu PF women have more capacity to revolt and negotiate with their male counterparts in the party (Interview, 14 September 2019). On many occasions the women in Zanu PF have revolted against the party and collectively pushed their gender centered agenda. The MDC women unfortunately lack this capacity, and these are factors that have affected their negotiating power. For younger women in the party, this means their abilities to successfully launch political careers are stifled by some of these factors. This is something that has pushed the conversation of supporting young women entering politics at the forefront of political discourse and constitutional reform efforts currently underway in Zimbabwe.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

Research continues to be conducted with the intention of attempting to understand the issues plaguing women's political participation globally and in Africa. The research has detailed the understanding of representation and the necessity of gender quotas. It has also unpacked the issue of patriarchy and its impact on legislature and environment stifling women's political participation in the broader global society and in Zimbabwe. In addition to this, this research has also unpacked conversations about why women need to be included in the political arena for the benefit of development agendas. The literature has also unpacked the concepts of representation from a feminist point of view. In addition to this, bringing it back to Zimbabwe, the review has unpacked the history of the gender parity efforts since Zimbabwe achieved its independence in 1980. The historical background on the issue of women's role in politics has provided context for some of the issues that were present after Zimbabwe got its independence, in addition to this civil society and activist group efforts in addressing women's political participation issues in Zimbabwe have been documented extensively. The one theme that has continued to recur in the literature has been the necessity of complementing structures in

assisting women and increasing their political participation. Many authors that I have noted have stated the importance of political parties in assisting the cause for women and stimulating their political participation. While the authors I have mentioned are aware that researching how political parties affect women's political participation and how they function to make the gender quotas effective is important, no scholars have begun researching this. Furthermore, as stated throughout the literature, there has been very little academic literature specifically focusing on the MDC. As a result, this research combined these two under-researched topics in the overall conversation on women's political participation.

Zimbabwe continues to show its understanding that gender parity is a necessary part of political transformation in the country. The incorporation of this in the national constitution started in 2013 and some progress has been made. Many experts in Zimbabwe's politics believe that the removal of Robert Mugabe as President of the county symbolized an opportunity to campaign for all necessary reforms in the country. In addition, this was seen as the beginning of potential opportunities for the MDC to be instrumental in Zimbabwe's political reform and cement itself as an opposition representing all changes that are required in the county. Given this outlook that most people have of the party, their policies and procedures surrounding the aspects of political reform are necessary to analyse and understand. Gender parity continues to be a problem facing Zimbabwe despite its efforts spurred on by the new constitution. Women are key actors in Zimbabwe's politics and their inclusion and their support structures in institutions are necessary. Based on this research, as an addition to research conducted by others, my findings show that the MDC has fallen short in making a significant contribution to the national gender parity efforts. The party, which has grown in strength and influence over the years, has fallen short of using its position to assist in ensuring positive political transformation and advocating for gender parity through their politics and action. As this research has detailed, the MDC is not showing signs of attempting to fully assist the national gender parity efforts despite the constitutionalization of the gender quota. The party's treatment of its own party members has reflected a shallow commitment to addressing gender parity and advocating for it through its own practices. What this research has discovered is that, the MDC has continued the legacy,

created by the ruling party, of using women in political tokens and not providing adequate support for them to significantly contribute to politics in Zimbabwe.

The occasional disregard for their constitutional processes in their operations as an attempt to quell women in the party is an area of concern. The succession issues in the MDC and the constitutional disregard seen during this period are a reflection of a party that will not actively engage in gender parity efforts or attempt to ensure that the women of the party are supported and provided adequate opportunities to be representatives of the party. In addition, MDC as a party is reflective of the work that still needs to be done in Zimbabwe's society to include women in politics. While we look for political parties to be agents of change, in Zimbabwe they continue to be vehicles of patriarchy and in some ways reflect the ideas of the electorate in Zimbabwe. Unfortunately, this means that the work that civil society continues to do to advocate for gender parity and the inclusion of women in politics will continue to fall short without the support of political parties. Currently, Zimbabwe is involved in a constitutional amendment process with the extension of the gender quota as one of the proposed amendments. The extension of the quota for an additional 10 years is necessary but will not make any significant differences without the inclusion of other reforms. Political parties need to be monitored to ensure that they are adhering to the national agenda and have aligning constitutions. One of my recommendations would be to empower the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Gender Commission to work actively during every election season to ensure that political parties are not participating in biased practices that hinder the inclusion of women in their parties and running in the elections. The MDC is a party with much potential to create a new status quo in Zimbabwe because of its growing influence. Under the leadership of Nelson Chamisa, MDC has an opportunity to engage the youth and with issues that matter to the young electorate, which includes gender parity and the inclusion of women in politics. Women make up over 50% of the country's population and the majority of the electorate in Zimbabwe is between the ages of 18-35 (ZEC, 2020). MDC has an opportunity to adequately represent this intersection in Zimbabwe's population by showing more commitment to gender parity and significantly including women in politics.

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