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1.Summary of Research

This research examines the media's treatment of women in politics over the past five years. Beginning with an evaluation of the predominant approaches and research conducted on media coverage of women in politics, the paper draws on appropriate methodologies to investigate how the media reported women and gender issues during the 1994 National Elections. Following this the research analyses the media's treatment of women in politics, the problems they face and the media coverage they receive. The case of Dr Zuma, the current Minister of Health is studied and the results of this contextualised within the patriarchal discourses prominent in our society. Drawing on the views of journalists and some politicians the research proposes certain goals and actions that should be taken, in order to transform media coverage of women in politics.

A variety of different approaches have been employed in studying the media's treatment of women. These are most frequently content analysis based, although discourse analysis, social semiotics and sociological approaches, which look at the structures within which people work in the media are also used. These approaches share common elements and conclusions, most notably that the media both structurally and culturally discriminates against women, providing them with limiting and stereotypical representations which reinforce the hegemony of patriarchy in our society.

Although there has been little available research on women in news, existing research attributes the inadequacy in the coverage of women's issues by the news media to news being a structurally masculine narrative. This approach argues that the distinction between 'hard/soft news' and ' serious, important news' has institutionalised a gendered division of news, with the hard, serious or important news being more masculine, and 'human interest, lifestyle news' more frequently targeted at women (Rakow & Kranich, 1991). Hence the statement "News is about men, by men, through men's eyes." Since news is a masculine narrative it carries the mythological objectivity, prestige and authority afforded to dominant patriarchal discourse, as opposed to the emotive, subjective and "soft" characteristics which patriarchy associates with femininity and the female sphere.

Although there is a reasonable amount of research done on media representation of women, particularly on subjects like advertising; soap operas and violence against women, there has been very little research done on the media's treatment of women in politics. Consequently this study provides the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to the area.

Our monitoring and analysis of media election coverage in the 1994 National Elections, reveals that women - related issues were of marginal importance in the media. The coverage of women politicians was also very low.

The inadequacy of reporting about women and the marginalisation of women - related issues in the media contributed to the treatment of gender equality as of secondary importance in the elections. The restructuring of gender relations is an essential part of South Africa's democracy and the media failed in ensuring this by not reporting on female politicians and probing gender-related issues.

This has continued in the five years since then. Like an obstacle course, society has thrown patriarchally created structures in the way of women's entry and success within the political sphere. These structures are linked by a common hegemony – that the public sphere of politics is the domain of men and the private sphere of "domesticity", that of women. Challenging this hegemony requires application, courage and drive, the same characteristics of all our most successful women politicians. Women who wish to succeed in politics are forced to define themselves outside of patriarchal definitions of femininity in order to be taken seriously. Consequently the media and our society represent these women as unfeminine, as "iron women", ruthless, belligerent and doggedly determined. These are positive attributes in men, in fact the media frequently call for "strong" leadership, yet when this leadership emerges from women in cabinet and parliament, they are criticised and vilified in the media.

Our monitoring of coverage of women politicians, and Dr Zuma in particular, reveals very clearly that women who enter the political sphere are prone to a greater quantity of criticism than their male counterparts. Furthermore, this criticism is often tinged with sexist discourses of femininity and discrimination.

To reverse and transform media coverage of women in politics requires that the communication relationship between the media and women in politics be changed. Women politicians need to be proactive in their media strategies. Women politicians and civil society need to hold the media accountable for the representations that the media produces. Importantly, the media must be forced to recognise and institute a conscious effort to report on women in politics in a fair and accurate manner, where the gender of the politicians does not impinge in any way on the quality, or quantity of the coverage afforded to them. This requires dedicated training for journalists as well as a shift in editorial thinking. The media must become conscious of the role they play in maintaining and legitimating sexism through the values that their reporting represents. The media's treatment of women in politics signals to its audiences that women should not participate (that they disrupt the fabric of our society by doing so), and that they are incapable. This must be opposed.

It is inescapable that male leadership still dominates South African political life, however, the media has a responsibility to represent the society fairly. The media's role is not simply a reflective but a critical one. Its responsibility lies in challenging patriarchy by drawing attention to it in media content, by challenging conventional news reporting of women and recognising that this is fundamental to its role in our society.

2. Survey of Media Research Methods

It must be noted at the outset that there has been very little research done on women politicians and even less on women politicians in the media. There is however a wealth of information dealing with the presentation of women in the media. The aim of this section is to look at existing literature and theoretical debates surrounding the representation of women as news sources and the treatment of women's issues by the media.

Different approaches have been employed in inquiring into the media's treatment of women. These include content analysis; discourse analysis; social semiotics and sociological approaches. The following is a survey of existing literature on the media coverage of women in politics.

The most popular method used for evaluating has been a content-analysis approach. This approach examines media representations by analysing information in a systematic and quantitative manner, to measure variables in the actual content of the coverage (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994: 164). Quantification is very important for content analysis as it provides statistical tools that are used in analysis and interpretation. For example, if in television only 30% of news items are of concern to women, it could be concluded that women's issues are under-represented on TV news.

Discourse analysis also uses statistical information, however it leans heavily on the quality of the information presented for analysis. Discourse analysis looks at the manner in which information is presented and what implication that has for the subject or topic concerned, in other words how the media constructs the subject (Van Dijk, 1997: 30). For example, if women are often represented as victims of violence and always in need of government aid, this could be interpreted as a negative representation of women which undermines, their self-confidence and reinforces social attitudes about women as passive and helpless.

A fairly common method of media research used to examine the treatment of women in the media is semiotics. Semiotics is the study of signs and symbols and how meanings are attached to them. In this case, women are viewed as carrying a culturally and ideologically loaded sign - that of being a "non-man", the opposite of that which is masculine. Women's clothing, appearance and behaviour are signs of their "non-maleness". What semioticians therefore suggest in their research is that before women are viewed as politicians, experts in different areas, they are viewed first and foremost as women. For example in the media there are often TV programmes or newspaper articles which offer advice to working women about balancing their careers and their families. They exist as women first, although they are business people, lawyers, doctors or bankers. Men are never identified as men before they are identified as being lawyers, doctors or bankers. There are no TV programmes that offer advice to men on how to balance their families and careers.

For social semiotics the starting point is that news is a narrative genre. It is a means of circulating meaning that in general confirms existing economic and social relations (Rakow & Kranich, 1991: 10). This method sees power relations reflected in the signs and symbols evident in the news. For them, news is a masculine narrative. Women function not as speaking subjects but as signs, that is, they are not meaning-makers but meaning-carriers. It asserts that news is "for men, by men and through men's eyes" ((Rakow & Kranich, 1991). The implication this has for women is that their appearance in news is bound by a symbolic order. In past analysis of news by MMP it was found that women most frequently are symbolised as victims in news (MMP, 1998 Vol. 3 no 2).

Sociological approaches look at power relations in the media and its structures, and how this affects the content of the media. For example they would look at

the invisibility of women in the newsroom as an explanation for the under - representation of women's issues and negative reporting on women in the media. Media ownership is also considered an important factor. For example, the under-representation of women and women's issues could be attributed to the fact that media is mainly male owned and that chief editors of 'mainstream' media are men.

All the above-mentioned methods have been used to evaluate the treatment of women in the media and women's issues. These studies have repeatedly shown that women are under-represented in the media. For example, a study conducted by Holland (cited in Rakow and Kranich, 1991: 12), to examine the use of women as news sources showed that men outnumber women news sources. This falls into a masculine narrative in which women exist as objects and not subjects. In other words women are meaning carriers and not meaning - makers.

Another investigation done by Whitney et al. (Cited in Rakow & Kranich, 1991:14) examined the use of women as news sources found that women were mostly used as mere public sources affected by crime, disasters, public policy, or actions of their families, that is, as victims. They rarely play an interpretative role. A total of 1,203 news items was collected from CBS, NBC, and ABC and it was discovered that only about 181 news items used women as on-camera sources (where gender was identifiable). These women sources were coded into seven categories, that is as experts/authorities, spokespersons, candidates and politicians, celebrities, private individuals, political activists, and unidentifiable. It was found that most women fell under the private individuals/ public sources categories.

A global study initiated by Canadian Watch in 1995 also revealed that women only make up 17% of interviewees in news coverage (Australian Report, 1995: iii). This study was more substantial in examining women as news sources. It divided the news into different topics and looked at the use of female sources in those topics (gender issues were excluded). The study showed the following:

Politics and Government	7% of interviewees were women
Economics and Business	9% of interviewees were women
War	10% of interviewees were women
Sports	18% of interviewees were women
Environment	16% of interviewees were women
Arts and Entertainment	31% of interviewees were women
Science	22% of interviewees were women

Also notable in this study was the patriarchal construction of womanhood as feminine and passive. This was revealed by the thin distribution of women in 'hard news' and the more frequent use of women in lifestyle stories (so- called soft news).

The treatment of women's issues or issues of importance to women has also been given inadequate coverage as shown by different studies. For example the Media Monitoring Project's study of media coverage of South Africa's National Women's Day showed that the coverage of issues of concern to women was inadequate (Media Monitoring Project, 1998 Vol.3 no2). A comparison of two

weeks, the week before Women's Day and the week after, showed an increase in the coverage of women towards Women's Day and a drastic decline afterwards. The increase in the news coverage of women's issues was aided by newspaper supplements as a result of the 'special day' and feature writers on women's issues. This research also showed that reporting on women was mostly about their status as victims in a crime-ridden society and on gender inequality.

This research coded the coverage into 12 topics: business; politics; education; violence against women; health; human rights; media; arts & culture; gender equality; crime; beauty contests and other. It was found that there were more news items about gender inequality and violence against women than any other issue. This did not only show the low coverage of women's issues but also the lack of diversity in coverage of issues that concern women in the media.

An article written by Helen Moffet (1994), was the only article found on women politicians in the media. Moffet's article examined the treatment of women's issues in the pre-1994 election period and criticises the media for failing to represent women fairly and equitably. She cites an incident where angry letters were written to the Weekly Mail, pointing out that an earlier issue of the Weekly Mail (which had contained an 'A-Z prospective election candidates') barely represented women. She pointed out that no attention was paid to the gender discrepancies in the lists.

3. Media Coverage of Women in Politics during the 1994 National Elections

This section comprises an evaluation and qualitative analysis of reporting on gender issues and women in the run up to the 1994 first democratic elections in South Africa. The aim is to reveal the relative importance accorded to gender issues and women in politics by the media.

Negotiations between the then government and the ANC in 1990 brought a gradual end to extra-parliamentary politics and gave birth to an interim government, followed by a democratically elected government of National Unity.

The institutionalised racism during apartheid led to other forms of social oppression, such as gender, not receiving the same level of attention as race during the period of political reform. For instance, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) was set up three years after South Africa's democratic elections.

The question of female emancipation has been largely tied to the needs of the state as perceived by 'political leaders'. Comments on the question of women's subordination in South Africa have always been within the broader context of historical racial oppression. The woman question has often been marginalised. It became one of the issues to be addressed by the new government.

Following is a list of the media monitored:

PRINT MEDIA	ELECTRONIC MEDIA	
	TELEVISION	RADIO
Sowetan	CCV news	Radio Metro
Business Day	TV1 news	Radio Xhosa
Die Burger	Current Affairs	Radio Zulu
Citizen	Newsline	Radio Lotus
Daily Dispatch	Agenda	Radio seTswana
Natal Mercury	Future Imperfect	Radio seSotho
Natal Witness	Election special	Radio 702
The Cape Times	GMSA	Radio Lebowa
City Press		Radio South Africa
Sunday times		Radio Highveld
Weekly Mail		Radio Good Hope
Sunday Nation		Radio Ciskei
The Star		Radio Transkei
Rapport		Radio Bob
Beeld		Radio Port Natal
Daily News		Afrikaans Stereo
The Argus		

The data for this research was collected from the above - mentioned media. This was done over a period of four months, from the 1st of January to the 30th of April.

The sample was taken every third day over the four-month period. This made it possible to draw recurring election themes and to characterise the election coverage.

Analysis of this data was two-fold. The first section looked at the use of women politicians as news sources and the second looked at the treatment of gender related issues by the media.

3.1 Women Politicians as News Sources

In the research it was found that women were rarely used as news sources or as party spokespeople. The tendency of journalists was to focus more on the leaders of political parties and people in the highest ranks of the parties. This undermined the roles played by other members of the political parties, even more so to women, as men tended to dominate the highest ranks of the political parties. Comments on issues of policy were mainly from men.

Another noticeable aspect of the election coverage by the media was its concentration on the four major political players: -

* The NP as the former government,
* The ANC as the major contenders for ruling the country,
* The IFP with its demands for international mediation,

- The FF with its demands for security of the rights of the 'white' minority,
- The bomb threats by right wingers to destabilise the country.

This put women's parties and minority parties at a disadvantage as far as coverage was concerned.

3.2 Treatment of Gender Issues in the Election Period

Female subordination was not thoroughly discussed, as the main thrust of South African political work dealt with the racist past, its historical emergence, mechanics, and repercussions. This silenced critical analysis of power relations between women and men. Examining the position of women and challenges to gender relations was seen to fit into the liberation of 'the nation' as a whole.

Anything said about women tended to be slotted into the need for development and reconstruction of the whole country. For example, housing, land restitution, provision of health facilities and education were represented as priorities that appeared to displace gender equality as an important, separate issue. This led to women's emancipation being viewed as a sub-discourse to the 'mainstream discourse' of racial oppression.

The central focus of the media during the period before the election was on the 'actual and ideal' political systems (The transition from an authoritarian and undemocratic government to an ideal democratic one), their incipience, operation, and decay. Generally a state in transition is weak thus there were fears that the country's transition to democracy would be highly unstable. Importance was placed more on voting, violence, national reconciliation, and on the economy.

The uproar, unrest, and threats of civil war that threatened South Africa's democracy, were the centre of the media focus as the concern was more on preserving the South African political climate or to guard against its decay.
The following are examples of topics that dominated the media:

-The bomb threats
-The Shell House 'massacre'
-The AWB intervention in the former homeland Bophuthatswana
-The adoption of the Interim Constitution
-Fighting between the IFP and ANC
-The violence in KwaZulu-Natal

From the above discussion it can be deduced that the concern in the media was about 'basic' political stability. The emphasis in 1994 was on guarding against the decay of the political climate. In Current Affairs programmes there would occasionally be discussions on issues like taxation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. However the programmes were dominated by party political activities. Discussions on women's subordination were rarely featured.

3.3 Conclusions

The monitoring and analysis of media election coverage has shown that women-related issues were of secondary importance in the media. The number of women politicians and the coverage of them was also very low.

The inadequacy of reporting about women and the marginalisation of women related issues in the media contributed to the treatment of gender equality as of secondary importance in our society. The restructuring of gender relations is an essential part of South Africa's democracy and the media failed in ensuring this by not reporting on female politicians and probing gender-related issues during the run up to the 1994 elections.

4. The Media's Treatment of Women in Politics since 1994

To evaluate the media's treatment of women in politics over the past five years requires examining and revealing the obstacles which work together to prevent and hinder the participation of women in the politics of our country. Like an obstacle course, society throws patriarchally created structures in the way of women's entry and success within the political sphere. These structures are linked by a common hegemony and discourse – that the public sphere is the domain of men and the private sphere that of women. Challenging this hegemony requires application, courage and drive, the same characteristics of all our most successful women politicians. Consequently the media and our society represents these women as unfeminine, as 'iron women', ruthless, belligerent and doggedly determined. These are positive attributes in men, after all the media constantly call for 'strong' leadership, yet when this leadership emerges from women in cabinet and parliament, they are criticised and vilified in the media.

4.1 Women and society

Women's role in society is ideologically defined in the sexist and often limiting discourses of domesticity, motherhood and passivity. Women are constructed as the objects and possessions of men. Father's 'give away' their daughters upon marriage, women are seen as sexual objects, whistled at, ogled and harassed. Marriage and motherhood is defined as the ultimate goal of any woman, which is ironic for as mother and wife she becomes dependent on the male, to clothe, comfort and feed her. Her domain is the private one, that of the home where violence, oppression and patriarchy is hidden behind the curtain of comfortable domesticity.

But while the discourses of domesticity and motherhood embrace a powerful sexism, the material conditions in which women live their lives in our society provide more of an obstacle. Widespread poverty makes political activism impossible for many women as they face a primary struggle in staying alive and feeding their families. Violence against women, including rape, femicide, domestic violence and sexual harassment are at very high levels and present a real threat to women's safety and confidence.

Sexism in the workplace continues and despite new labour laws and employment policies women are still far too often the victims of sexism in employment. But if it is difficult for white women it is even more difficult for black South African women to progress. Held back by sexist myths, stereotyping and tradition, black women are constantly obstructed in the progress of their lives.

It is a credit to the government that it has recognised the importance of gender equality and reflects this (to some extent) in its party representation in parliament and in the structures it has established to challenge gender discrimination. But considering all the above women's success in the political sphere is a considerable achievement.

4.2 Women and politics

Any analysis of the media's treatment of women in politics and the treatment of gender issues in politics must begin by recognising that political discourse is, due to a history of gender discrimination which affects all of society, intrinsically biased both against the participation of women, and gender issues. A few examples demonstrate this: women in parliament have complained frequently of the late hours and lack of support including child care facilities for working mothers which parliament provides. Certain political parties stand accused of being sexist, of limiting and hindering women (M&G 19/2/1999). Women entering any professional career are viewed with the suspicion that they are damaging their family's wellbeing by doing so. This is even more so in the world of politics where political commitment is seen as valued in men, but a criticism of women. Further, women who become too committed and focused on their political careers are viewed as being 'unfeminine'.

It is therefore not surprising that media reporting of women in politics is contaminated by the same patriarchal discourses. But this does not mean that the media simply reflects, as a mirror would, the society. Rather the media presents a complex view of the world, which is governed by conventions, and discourses of news and entertainment that have sexism imbedded within them, both as structures and as cultural practices.

4.3 The Media and Women

Women in the media are represented most frequently in sexist, limiting and disempowering ways. From the housewife selling washing powder, the damsel in distress, to the woman as victim in news, women are most often represented within patriarchal discourses. Research clearly indicates that news functions as a masculine narrative, and as prominent media theorists (Fiske, Hartley, Cowie) have revealed, it is the authority which news media gives to men, and which is absent when women are represented in news, that makes this difference. At the core of this lie sexist values of newsworthiness, which govern the functioning of both South African and international news media.

Of primary importance in newsworthiness are the sources that are used. Journalists always seek the most powerful sources for their stories, the elite

leaders and powerful controllers of our society. Because women occupy fewer of these positions in our society, they feature less prominently than their male counterparts. All the journalists interviewed for this research made this point. It was also borne out by monitoring conducted by the Media Monitoring Project of TV news on SABC and e-tv for two weeks in the month of Janauary1999 (Media Mask: Vol. 4 No. 2 1999). Research revealed that only 15% of all news sources were women. But as Rakow and Kranich point out, the media tend to use sources that reflect the attitudes that the journalist or medium wish to be accessed (Rakow & Kranich, 1991). One of the ways in which this can be challenged is by providing journalists with a resource through which to contact a wide range of women as sources. The CGE is leading the development of a Gender Directory that will provide journalists with up - to - date contacts of women from a wide cross-section of South African society. Improving access to women sources was cited by several journalists as an important element in improving media coverage.

The use by the news media of women as newsreaders is often cited as a positive step. Ironically though, it is on the basis of their looks – as attractive women, that women newsreaders are often chosen, while their male counterparts are usually older and chosen for their journalistic skills. Furthermore, the conventions of TV news are fundamentally ideological in this respect. Why should the attractiveness, male or female, of the news reader be of any relevance in the reporting of news unless it is to validate an image of what does and doesn't constitute the elite in our society, the powerful from the powerless?

In radio where, in theory, looks cannot count, the female newsreader is often sexualised by the male Disc jockey. Indeed this has become something of a convention itself and one radio station has even incorporated the sexually connotated dialogue between the two into their morning format (Radio Highveld's "Rude Awakening").

It is not so much as news sources, newsmakers, or newsreaders, that women feature in the news, but mostly as victims – victims of crime, drought, disaster and war. Women are victim*ised* by the media, their role in news being the opposite of men - the elite and powerful. This is marked in the discourses in which they are reported and represented. As Fowler notes, (1991) women are frequently identified according to their marital and family status, furthermore, their experiences are personalised and romanticised. MMP research into media coverage of violence against women revealed that women who are the victims of domestic violence are often depicted as being involved in 'lovers' disputes' or 'love triangles' (Media Monitoring Project, 1998 Vol 3 no 3). An article in the Sunday Times (28/3/99:5) reported the intimate femicide of a woman by her husband as being a result of her "addiction to television". It is also remarkable how often women who are victims of domestic violence are pictured on their wedding day in the media.

Most significant about the ways in which women are featured in the media is that news constructs women as being passive, as signifying the opposite of the masculine values of strength, leadership and action.

Women entering the political sphere therefore provide the news media with a problem. As women they embody a challenge to masculine authority. Further, as

active women they defy easy categorisation and consequently the media attempt to contain the threats to patriarchy that they pose.

The media does this by attempting to place women politicians within certain discourses of femininity. The news media begins by attempting to treat them as it does all women – as objects, largely ignoring their skills, abilities and achievements. Jessie Duarte, Gauteng MPC stated in a news-paper article (P18, 1999)

> "I have yet to read an article which describes in derogatory terms a man's appearance. It is what the man says that's important, not the colour of his teeth or the thrust of his chest"

Duarte notes that her own experience demonstrated that the media "still judge women by their looks and their morals, rather than by their intellect." Dr Zuma's appearance is also referred to in a negative manner:

> "Zuma, who is alleged to have thrown her considerable weight (no pun intended) around at the hospital when she went to see her brother ..."
> (Independent on Saturday, 26/12/1998)

The statement that the pun is not intentional is ironic for by making it, this editorial immediately alludes to her appearance rather than the weight of her political power. The sexist nature of this discourse is evident, her political role devalued by an underhanded comment on her appearance.

But as Duarte makes clear, the media prefer it when women,

> "Speak softly, braid their hair and wear clothes where the labels can become a riveting point of discussion. Added respect can be gained if a woman knows how to dance for her leaders ... survival can translate into how successful she is at hiding her independent mind."
> (Sunday Times, 28/03/99:18)

Dr Nkosazana Zuma, the Minister of Health is the very antithesis of the 'obedient' woman. Her position and her role have brought her into frequent and turbulent contact with the media. Zuma embodies all the qualities that are frequently admired in male politicians. She's a "tough nut" (M&G, 14/11/1998) but her commitment to her job is only very rarely recognised. Indeed her resilience, which is recognised in her male counterparts as a positive attribute is described in extremely negative terms. She is "obstinate" (Business Day, 19/11/97), "arrogant" and has "a disregard for logical debate"(Citizen, 19/10/1998). She is "stubborn" (Citizen, 9/10/1998) and according to the Star (13/5/1998) she is guilty of "consistently creating negative vibes." The subjectivity and lack of self-awareness of this last statement is remarkable. It is the media who "create negative vibes" not the minister.

But this lack of self-awareness is common. Instead the media focus on the women. Duarte explains: "assertiveness in women is frequently regarded as abrasiveness"(Ibid.). An Independent on Saturday editorial even admits:

> " ... Zuma has been one of the most effective cabinet ministers in the Mandela government. It is precisely because of her strong character, and the fact that she feels very passionately about her job, that Zuma has attracted the kind of negative publicity that surrounded her."
> (1/8/98)

This statement is interesting because male politicians with the same commitment and passion don't arouse the same levels of "negative publicity". It is also worth noting how the article distances the media's role in the distorted coverage of Zuma by labelling it as "publicity" rather than news reporting.

Land Affairs Minister Derek Hanekom, is praised for the same resilience, for which Zuma is condemned (Cape Times, 24/2/1997). His pressure on the US over trade barriers is applauded: "the minister has twisted my arm". A personal profile of Hanekom is similar – he's labelled an 'activist with a love for farming' and he 'likes to eat boerewors, says rugby appeals to his most basic macho instincts ...' (Cape Times, 2/9/1998). For the media then, Hanekom is the typification of masculine authority - macho and forceful. He is also the positive male stereotype – sport and food loving, with a strong emphasis on being a farmer.

Zuma on the other hand is often described as 'matronly, frumpy...' (M&G, 14/11/1997) and most commonly as a 'nanny'. Her depiction as a nanny is disturbing both for the gender stereotyping it represents and the racial undertones linked to the many black domestic workers in the society.

Zuma's portrayal as a nanny in the media included an item in a pornographic magazine (Hustler) that carried derogatory comments about her abilities. The link between Zuma as nanny and domestic workers belittles her status as a medical doctor and cabinet member – she is represented within the confines of domesticity, and at the same time patronising of domestic work and domestic workers. In a Citizen editorial, (22/10/1998) Zuma is labelled a "walking disaster who has bungled every project she has touched". It argues that to therefore,

> "lampoon her as an underpaid 'domestic worker' is an affront to the millions of worthy women without whom so many South African households could not have flourished."

Zuma, according to this statement is no role model for success. Rather comparing her to "worthy" domestic workers is an insult to them. It is the worthy, obedient and exploited domestic workers who are the real role models for women. The ideology is clear, women belong in the domestic sphere, but within the context of our history and our society it is clear that it is black women who should be kept domesticated, exploited and silenced. For while the black women remain in the homes allowing the households to 'flourish', the men (usually white) are free to enter the political sphere unhindered by the chains of domesticity.

Not only are women politicians poorly treated in the news, they suffer patriarchal representation within political cartoons as well.

5. Women Politicians in Cartoons

Political cartoons deliver a specific cultural purpose, that of humourous social commentary on pertinent issues. They are about individuals involved in politics. They rely on stereotypes that are part of our shared culture. Humour in cartoons comes from the recognition of these shared stereotypes.

A stereotype imposes a rigid mould on the subject and encourages repeated 'mechanical' usage, which usually leads to prejudgement. Stereotyping converts the real person into a constructed person - hence the mechanical usage of that person's image whenever needed (McLoud, 1993).

Cartoonists also rely on caricature. Caricature has two characteristics, exaggeration and individualisation. Caricature typically exaggerates the features of its subject as to differentiate it from fellow politicians. When abstracting an image through cartooning some details are eliminated and the focus is on specific details that characterise the subject. For example, in the Sowetan (3/11/97: 17) Dr. Zuma is depicted as a doctor offering a dose of ANC policy. The exaggerated lips and the gap between her front teeth are what identifies and differentiates her from other women politicians. These established characteristics allow for the mechanical usage of Zuma's image in other cartoons.

The other characteristic of caricature is individualisation. The satirist draws mostly from individual characteristics and not those of a group. For example the characterisation of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki smoking a pipe is unique to him, and is frequently used in political cartoons.

It is interesting to note that in the satirising of women politicians the media in South Africa doesn't only draw from individual behaviour but also draws from stereotypes of female behaviour, which are based on patriarchal discourses. The recurrent themes in the political satirisation of these women include passivity, emasculation, demonisation, and infantilisation.

The passivity of women is often marked. Women are frequently given a muted position by cartoonists. This was often the case with former Gauteng MEC of Safety and Security, Jessie Duarte. She was depicted consistently as comatose and dead to the world of politics. Her ineptness was depicted through her silence in most of the cartoons, and she was always accountable to men or a man. An example of this was found in The Star (25/02/98: 15). The context of the cartoon was when Duarte had a car crash and claimed that someone else was driving the car and not her. The cartoon has three face-less men prominent on its right hand side and Duarte at the corner of the left side of the frame with a policeman behind her. The policeman is asking Duarte whether her chauffeur is amongst the three men. Duarte puts her finger on her mouth and there is a look of contemplation and guilt on her face and she does not say anything. The ultimate message is that she is lying but it is interesting to note that she is only the object of the cartoon not the subject. She only carries meaning, whilst the policeman behind her makes meaning by questioning her.

The emasculation of women surfaces when women politicians act beyond the confines of 'natural feminine innocence', when they liberate themselves from the limits imposed by masculine discourses of female subjectivity. When women are

vocal and powerful, their power always has a negative connotation and they are seen as ambitious, confrontational, and stubborn. An example of this was found in the Sowetan (3/12/97). The cartoon shows Winnie Madikizela-Mandela dressed like a cowboy with two guns shooting at hands that are pointing at her. This was in the context of her TRC hearing.

The demonisation of women occurs when women's alleged malice and evil nature is expressed through witchcraft. Ideas of witchcraft have always been associated with the feminine. Here we find the theme of a woman as a purveyor of evil. Because of the institutionalised discourse of female subjectivity there is no room for the expression of active impulses. Thus we find imputations of covert mystical aggression on women (Weitz, 1977: 5). ANC MP, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela was often depicted in this manner during her TRC trial. An example was found in the Sowetan (16/09/97). She is standing near the tombstones of the people she was accused of murdering and her hands are dripping with blood. There are hands pointing at her whose whole bodies are not shown. Her head is slightly turned towards the hands that are pointing at her. These concur with the stereotypical characteristics of witches. She operates unseen; she is cunning, violent and blood sucking.

The infantilisation of women in political cartooning is rampant. Women are constantly depicted as little girls who are naïve and incapable of making decisions. An example of this was found in the Sowetan (8/3/98) in a cartoon about Dr. Zuma. She is dressed up as a little girl in a nice little dress and she has a bow on her head. She is smilingly giving a 'sweetie' to a child with the words 'accessible health care' on it whilst pushing away a boy wearing a cap labelled 'pharmaceutical companies'. The accompanying words to the cartoon come from a nursery rhyme. The dressing up of Zuma as a little girl and the nursery rhyme that accompanies the cartoon serves to infantilise her and belittle her political status

From the above examples it can be noted that the scrutiny of women's work in our society is closely tied to their strictly defined roles as 'women'. Their images fit in well with prevailing cultural perceptions of women. These images also help to maintain the patriarchal structure by inculcating restricted and limited images of women.

6. Conclusion: The Way Forward

What was clear from our interviews with journalists was that the position of women within political parties and government determined the extent to which they would receive coverage by journalists. They also highlighted accessibility as the other chief factor influencing the coverage of women politicians. Most of the journalists interviewed demonstrated a common attitude towards coverage of women in politics – that coverage of women politicians was something that fell under the control of political parties and that there was very little they could do to alter the situation. Most of the journalists felt that coverage of women politicians wasn't qualitatively different, something which this research refutes.

Improving the situation lies in making changes in both the political parties and political structures and in the media newsrooms. Unless both areas are addressed, there is little chance of there being an improvement in the quality and quantity of coverage afforded to women in political positions. The following guidelines have been developed by the Media Monitoring Project and are based on the interviews we conducted with journalists, as well as recommendations that came out of a workshop carried out at the Commission on Gender Equality's Media and Gender Symposium, in May 1999.

Guidelines for reporting on women politicians

1. Conscientisation

The media and political parties need to be conscientised about gender inequality in general, this is no easy task as both groups are often resistant to conscientisation programmes and workshops. To persuade them the following must be undertaken.

1.1   Research needs to be done to highlight the negative representation and invisibility of women as news sources.
       The research needs to be followed by workshops on gender sensitivity. There needs to be a continuous relationship between research, workshops, and the monitoring of gender issues. Too often good initiatives are not followed up with supplementary evaluations.

1.2   The development of gender and media curriculum at tertiary institutions should be encouraged.
       Gender Sensitivity training for practising journalists needs to be conducted by the various media.

1.3   Conscious strategies to challenge the current perception of "News Worthiness" need to be adopted.
       There should be a conscious effort to mainstream issues of concern to women.
       There should be no discrimination on the basis of gender in the allocation of assignments to journalists.
       There should be a conscious effort to include women writers in political commentary.
       The media should provide more columns for women.

1.4   The media needs to avoid using language that excludes women e.g. Chairman, Spokesman, Newsman, etc.

1.5   Reporters should refrain from making any reference to the appearance of women politicians unless it is necessary to do so.

2. Accessibility

Accessibility is the key to effective media relations:

2.1   Women Politicians need to be as accessible as possible for comment.
Women Politicians need to form relationships with journalists.
Women politicians need to undergo training on effective media strategies
(a similar suggestion was made in the SADC guidelines, as can be seen in
the Appendix).
Political parties should also be encouraged to delegate women
spokespersons to speak on policy issues as well as other issues.

2.2   The use of the CGE's gender directory to access women for comment
should be encouraged.

3. Public Pressure

Individuals, organisations, and public bodies should place pressure on the media
and political parties to change, this requires more than simply writing letters to
the editor:

3.1   These groups need to be frequent vocal critics on the representation of
women politicians in the media.

3.2   This collective effort to change gender representations in the media
should be guided by statutory bodies whose missions are directed at
achieving gender equality.
There should be recognition of pressure groups, which advocate for
change in the way women are represented in the media e.g.
Transformation for Women in the Media (TWM), Women's Media Watch
(WMW) etc.

3.3   The diversification of the newsroom should be ensured through
employment equity and accountability.

3.3   Gender and media network groups should be formed.
Pressure groups should also form good relationships with SANEF.
The IBA's Code of Conduct does include equitable treatment of women in
the media, however this needs to be followed up by monitoring.

3.4   The adoption of the SADC guidelines by the media should also be
encouraged.

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Appendix

SADC International Conference
Using the Media to Promote Gender Equality
Port Louis, Mauritius, 5- 8 March 1999-06-17

The media's role in influencing policies and attitudes towards equality between men and women must not be underestimated. Mass media are the most powerful transmitter of information. Instead of perpetuating gender stereotypes, media can become an essential tool for promoting equality. To deconstruct the misleading stereotypes and prejudices we suggest a number of steps towards a more gender sensitive media and a more constructive dialogue between parliamentarians and media. This dialogue will help facilitate the access of women to the media, increasing their effective participation in the economic ad political lives of our countries.

Gender Guidelines for the SADC Media

Objective 1
Encouraging women to take up media professions

Through:
- Career guidance
- Providing non-discriminatory working environments
- Enabling male and female practitioners to combine professional life and parenthood
- Encouraging the development of national, regional and international media and training networks for women (for example, the Tanzania Media Women's Association)
- Preventing sexual harassment and intimidation at the workplace and in the field

Objective 2
To ensure the participation of women in media at all levels

Through
- Research on the advantages of diversity and employment equity to the media
- The adoption of gender policies by media encompassing internal and external transformation
- The establishment of immediate minimum quotas for the representation of women at all levels of the media, with the ultimate target of achieving gender parity
- Distributing lists of suitably qualified women to media institutions
- Providing internships and on-the-job training courses for women in the media
- Non-discrimination in the allocation of assignments to male and female journalists
- Encouraging the ownership and transformation of media enterprises by women

Objective 3
To ensure the fair portrayal of women in the media

Through
- Conducting research on how gender issues are covered both quantitatively and qualitatively; determining the extent to which target markets are being reached, and making recommendations on how this can be improved
- Ensuring that the voices of women and men are equally heard o all issues
- Adopting codes of conduct on the fair portrayal of women
- Using gender sensitive vocabulary and images
- Establishing awards for journalists who promote gender sensitive coverage
- Coverage of projects in which female artists, directors, journalists r writers demonstrate their talents and creations
- Reviews of books by women and films about the lives of leading women
- Distribution of lists of women able to comment on issues to the media
- Giving women equal opportunities to appear on Tv and radio, and in the written press (especially during election campaigns), not as victims, objets or consumers but as a active commentators, experts and participants in debate programmes on current affairs
- Establishing frequents talk shows on gender equality on radio and TV
- Blocking a percentage of general air time and space in newspapers for women presenters, experts, commentators, etc
- Promoting the recognition of tasks traditionally associated with women as equally important to tasks traditionally associated with men
- Presenting men and women in non-traditional roles
- Reporting violence against women in a way which is sensitive, but does not detract form the gravity of this crime nor serve to encourage it
- Refraining from giving information about sexual attributes of women and men
- Avoiding description of women and men's physical appearance or clothes where this is not relevant.

Objective 4
Cover gender issues as an integral and equally important component of the mainstream news

Through:
- Encouraging open debate on the often controversial issues that surround gender equality
- Stories which show how gender inequality affects everyday lives
- Integration of gender perspectives in all national debates

Objective 5
To engage men and women in policy formulation and practices that promote gender equality I the media

Through:
- Providing gender training to male and female media practitioners
- Holding workshops with media owners, editors, producers of television and radio programmes on gender issues

- Developing programmes that redefine manhood and womanhood; and demonstrate the mutual benefits of gender equality

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SADC International Conference
Using the Media to Promote Gender Equality
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Recommendations on Parliamentary Action for Gender-Sensitive Media

Objective 1
To provide constitutional and legal frameworks that foster gender-sensitive media

Through:
- Enshrining gender equality in the constitutions of countries where this has not yet happened
- Ensuring that our governments honour their commitments on women and media in the Beijing Platform for Action
- Adopting laws which promote the balanced representation of men and women by the media, including drawing from experiences of other countries which have achieved less gender bias in their media
- Ensuring that gender is stipulated as a specific criteria in the Codes of Conduct and regulations of regulatory bodies like the press ombudsman, advertising standards authority and broadcast monitoring authority
- Allocating budgetary resources for public information campaigns on gender issues, and for increased access by women to the media

Objective 2
To improve the awareness, understanding and commitment of media professionals to gender issues

Through:
- Promotion of the Gender Guidelines for the SADC Media
- Use of gender sensitive language in legislation, debates and reporting
- Encouraging and supporting participation by national media in the coverage of international discussions on gender inequality
- Disseminating research findings on the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes

Objective 3
To improve the relationship between parliamentarians and media professionals

Through:
- Regular media briefings
- Dialogues of gender issues
- Circulation of updated lists and developing contacts with gender sensitive media practitioners

- Circulation of updated lists of watchdog institutions who can take up complaints of gender insensitive reporting
- Being proactive in contacting the media and packaging information for them in user friendly formats
- Designating media spokespersons within women's caucuses in parliament and ensuring that the media machinery of political parties prioritises the coverage of gender issues

Objective 4
To increase co-operation with bodies monitoring media coverage of gender issues

Through:
- Encouraging the establishment of independent monitoring groups, strengthening these where they exists; and encouraging them to undertake routine monitoring of gender coverage by the media
- Publishing, circulating and debating the results of such research and putting it on the parliamentary record
- Inviting representatives of these bodies to relevant parliamentary meeting
- Establishing gender and media policy 'think tanks' involving parliamentarians and monitoring bodies

Objective 5
To improve the media liaison skills of parliamentarians

Through:
- Training on holding interviews and press conferences, giving presentations, preparing press kits and communiqués, writing opinion pieces and letters to the editor, as well as participating in talk shows.

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