



**Faculty of Social Sciences**  
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**TOPIC**

**DISSERTATION TOPIC: REPRESENTATION OF GRACE MUGABE'S  
POLITICAL CAREER: A CONSTRUCT OF HER GENDER? A CASE OF THE  
HERALD AND NEWSDAY.**

**BELONGING TO**

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## **Abstract**

The study explores the role of The Herald and NewsDay in the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct. Globally although there have been conventions, constitutional amendments and numerous advocacy movements channelled towards equal representation of both genders in social, political and economic spheres, the gap between the genders continues to exist. Although strides have been made in facilitating equality on issues to do with domestic abuse, education and so forth, when it comes to the political arena women remain underrepresented and marginalised. There has been considerable research on a global scale channelled towards unearthing why women remain underrepresented. However most research that has been carried out has been done in western countries. Africa continues to rely on this research albeit the fact that reasons for political underrepresentation of women are diverse and cannot be generalised to all cultures and contexts. This study thus analyses the representation of the political career of Zimbabwean first lady and politician Grace Mugabe who has made the news for mostly the wrong reasons in the past few years. Grace Mugabe has had her name thrown into the succession nexus which is a result of her husband's old age and ill health but Zimbabweans have not warmed up to the idea of her running for office. The study is based on the assumption that gendered representation by the media of her political career influences the way Zimbabweans regard her. The study will use content and discourse analysis to analyse relevant articles covered on Grace Mugabe in The Herald and NewsDay in order to find out how she is represented and the likely effects this has on her prospects as a candidate if she decides to run for office. The data will be presented through the use of a thematic approach.

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## **Chapter one: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Marginalised and often stereotyped media representation of female politicians is a global phenomenon that has greatly impacted the likelihood of female politicians to get elected as candidates and to even dream of thriving political careers such as those of their male counterparts. Ryan (2013) posits that media representation is one of the major factors that have resulted in the marginalisation of female politicians in the US, an apt reflection of the wider terrain of global politics. Dube (2013) further asserts that despite the fact that women constitute an average of 52 percent of the world's population and form the majority of the electorate, they remain underrepresented in parliaments and political leadership positions in Zimbabwe and across the globe. Female politicians thus remain disadvantaged and do not have equal opportunities and exposure as compared to their male counterparts because of numerous factors, media representation included.

This study seeks to find out how Grace Mugabe's political career is represented as a gender construct in *The Herald* and *NewsDay* and the impact thereof. The discussion of this dissertation is necessitated by the portrayal of Grace Mugabe's political career in the press and how this representation is a reflection of how female politicians are represented in Zimbabwe, Africa and to some extent in the global sphere and the impact of such representation on the success or failure of their political careers.

### **1.2 Background of the study**

Dube (2013) posits that Zimbabwe is a signatory to various regional and international protocols on gender equality and especially in the area of political representation. Nzomo (1994) however argues that women are not elected into political office whilst very few are put up as candidates. According to an MMPZ report (2012), the underrepresentation of female politicians in Zimbabwe mirrors the marginalisation of female politicians which exists in the two major political parties in Zimbabwe namely Zanu PF and MDC-T. The report further asserts that although there has been a lot of rhetoric towards the empowering of women in Zimbabwe, it has not translated into any substantial action. Examples of Zimbabwean female politicians whose careers have not thrived as expected include Joice

Mujuru and Oppah Muchinguri. Previous research thus makes it quite clear that female politicians are greatly underrepresented in the political sphere.

The unequal and otherwise underrepresentation of women in politics is a phenomenon that goes beyond Zimbabwe and Africa but affects the world. Markstedt (2007) argues that despite legal barriers to equal political representation having been removed, British politics is still far from achieving equal political participation of the genders. Unequal representation of women in politics is thus of global concern although there is no uniform treatment that can be prescribed to the problem because of the diverse nature of factors that influence such underrepresentation which differ from culture to culture.

Unequal political representation of women is a result of several factors. Bari (2005) notes that structural and functional constraints faced by women limit their individual and collective participation on political and socioeconomic forums. He postulates that patriarchy is an ideological tool used to place women within the private arena of the home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere of politics and economics. Bari argues that these socio-cultural factors that restrict women from exercising their political freedoms are embedded within the socially constructed subordinate status of women upon men. As a result there is low resource allocation to women's human development which ultimately contributes to varying degrees of gender disparities in education, health, employment, ownership of productive resources and most importantly politics in general.

Notwithstanding patriarchy and legislative obstacles which have however been amended to ensure gender equality, media has been pinpointed as a major obstacle standing between women and equal political representation. Markstedt (2007) hypothesizes that media representation remains one of the obstacles to equal representation in the political terrain. Morna (2006) further posits that in Southern African countries only 21 percent of women were quoted as news sources and the majority of the stories analysed confirmed that gender stereotypes were mostly used in the stories. In agreement, Geertsema (2008) further postulates that women remain underrepresented in the media as news sources, reporters and audiences. Hence in Africa the marginalisation and stereotyped representation of women by the media is the norm as far as the content is concerned. Research specific to the political sphere with reference to Southern African countries is however scarce.

Morna (2002) stresses that in Zimbabwe since 1980 female politicians have been underrepresented in the press. Dube (2013) further argues that there is still a lot for

Zimbabwe to do to bring to parity the political representation of women to that of men in parliament. Most prominent names of female politicians which were and are constantly covered by the media include the late first lady Sally Mugabe, wives of late Zanu PF bigwigs, Oppah Muchinguri, Joice Mujuru and of late Grace Mugabe. It is however important to note that these female politicians are not recognized as thriving politicians in their own right but are rather celebrated as motherly figures who are leaders in the domestic sphere and supporters of their husbands' masculine ideologies. Although Joice Mujuru was the first and perhaps only female vice president in the country at the time the research was carried out, her political career was destroyed and took an unexpected turn in 2014. It can thus be noted that to date, Zimbabwe has no history of prominent female politicians who had thriving careers accredited to them.

Grace Mugabe's political career is the focus of this study and is of interest because as a first lady and politician she has had her name thrown into the succession discourse that has contributed to the factionalism that has rocked Zanu PF. Smith (2014) asserts that Grace Mugabe was a lowly member of Robert Mugabe's typing pool in the early 90s when she caught his eye. This research seeks to analyse Grace Mugabe's political career in the context of the current political situation in Zimbabwe. Grace Mugabe rose to political power and a position of influence when she was nominated to be the first secretary of the Zanu PF women's league at the 2014 Zanu PF people's congress. Prior to then, she had already made news and was a major influence on the ultimate dismissal of Joice Mujuru from Zanu PF and government. Since then she has not made her political ambitions a secret. From such a background this study seeks to find out whether media representation of Grace Mugabe's political career is gendered and the impact thereof.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

The thrust of the study is to analyse and critique media representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct. This study thus seeks to find out how the media has influenced her political career and the way she is regarded by the bulk of Zimbabweans and her colleagues especially now that her name has been thrown into the succession debate. The study critiques and analyses these issues from a gender perspective in order to ascertain how Grace Mugabe's gender has influenced the way she is represented in the media and ultimately the growth or dwindling of her political career.

#### **1.4 Significance of the study**

Parichi (2016) posits that female politicians in Zimbabwe are marginalised in the press, not regarded as newsworthy and are also affected by party ideologies and media ownership patterns. Braden (1996) also postulates that the press will always treat female politicians differently from their male counterparts. She further argues that journalists perpetuate stereotypes of women politicians as weak, indecisive and emotional and also hold them accountable for the actions of their children and husbands, whilst men are not held to the same standards. The representation of female politicians in academia is thus an already established field which has been central in the field of gender studies and political communication.

This study seeks to take the study further and situate it in the African context where there is a dearth of research and literature on the research problem, as postulated by Parichi (2016). While previous research has discovered that female politicians are marginalised and not regarded as newsworthy, this study argues that Grace Mugabe is one of the most newsworthy politicians in Zimbabwe for the last three years. Both the private and state media constantly cover and track her career thus quantitative omission and marginalisation are not necessarily a key factor influencing her political career. With that in mind this study seeks to carry out an in-depth analysis of her representation in order to find out how her gender influences the coverage she is given and the impact thereof.

This study is the only research in the Zimbabwean context to analyse one specific political career of a woman in the current political situation in the country. Previous scholars have analysed media representation but only on a broader and non-specific context of all media, both genders combined and not on a specific case study of an individual. The most recent study on the representation of female politicians in the press was carried out by Parichi (2016). Her research exposed findings that are key for this study. While Parichi (2016) researched the representation of several female politicians during four election periods between 2000 and 2008, it is important to note that her research was limited to female politicians who had already been in politics for a long time and who were not very prominent. In contrast this study seeks to analyse the political career of Grace Mugabe, a first lady who has had her name thrown into the succession debate, a phenomenon which is quite new for Zimbabwe and in the African context.



This study is relevant to the social sciences field because seeks to uncover the glass ceiling for female politicians which is solidified by the media. The study finds out how and why it is difficult for women to excel politically and how their relationships with men can ultimately end up restricting them through the analysis of the first lady connotation and how the media has used it to influence and restrict Grace Mugabe's political career.

The analysis of The Herald and NewsDay makes this study relevant because it ensures a balanced and neutral analysis of the research problem without being influenced by different political ideologies or issues to do with the political economy of the newspapers. Both newspapers have different owners and have different editorial policies which guarantees a balanced research. The period under study is relevant because for the first time in Zimbabwe, a female politician of influence is tipped to be a presidential candidate. It is thus important to analyse how her gender and how she is represented in the media can end up influencing her success or failure.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

- To find out the role of The Herald and NewsDay in the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a construct of her gender.
- To find out how the two newspapers construct Grace Mugabe as a person in relation to her gender and political brand.
- To find out audience perceptions of the frames through which she is represented in the two publications.

#### **1.5 Main research question**

- What role is played by The Herald and The NewsDay national daily newspapers in representing the first lady's political career in the current Zimbabwean situation?

#### **1.6 Sub research questions**

- How does The Herald and NewsDay construct Grace Mugabe as a human being and a woman and how does it influence her political brand?
- What kind of audience perceptions are cultivated by the representations of Grace Mugabe in the two publications?

#### **1.8 Assumptions**

- The press negatively represents Grace Mugabe's political career through gender connotations.
- The press' framing of Grace Mugabe as a person and woman are structured to negatively affect her political brand.
- Audiences' political choices are influenced by media representations of Grace Mugabe.

## **1.9 Limitations**

This study is limited by the fact media representation of Grace Mugabe's political career and its impact cannot be generalised. Another limitation of the study is the fact that media representation might not necessarily be responsible for how Grace Mugabe's political career turns out as this could be influenced by her mistakes and political decisions. This study is confined to the representation and framing theories so its findings will be limited to content analysis and archival methods of data collections.

## **1.10 Delimitations**

The study relies on data from The Herald and Newsday. The stories which will be analysed from the two newspapers will be selected from articles published between January 2016 and October 2017. The study is strictly limited to the media representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct and how audiences are influenced by it. The study is not concerned with factors that have an impact on Grace Mugabe's political career other than media representation as a gender construct.

## **1.11 Definition of key terms**

According to Hall (1997) representation is an essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. He adds that it involves the use of language, signs and images which stand for and represent things.

Framing can be defined as a process in which some aspects of reality are selected, and given greater emphasis or importance, so that the problem is defined, its causes are diagnosed, moral judgments are suggested and appropriate solutions and actions are proposed (Entman, 1993).

Zimmerman and West (1987) define gender as the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one's sex category.

Christian (2016) defines political communication as the role of communication in the political process which occurs formally or informally, public and private venues, and through various media.

### **1.10 Structure of the study**

In the first chapter of this research the reader is made aware of this study's background, what the research problem is and the issues that the research seeks to provide answers for. In the second chapter the reader will interact with the literature review and the theoretical framework which informs the study. The third chapter will enlighten the reader on the research methodology used to conduct the research. The fourth chapter consists of a detailed analysis of the two publications whose content will be used in the study. The fifth chapter of the research is concerned with data presentation and analysis. The sixth and final chapter consists of conclusions and recommendations of the study.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter introduced the study, provided the background and outlined the purpose of the study. It also explained the importance of carrying out this research and provided the structural framework of the study. The next chapter is comprised of a systematic review of the relevant literature of prior research in the area of the study. It also provides the theoretical framework in which this study is premised in.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a systematic and in-depth review of previous research and literature about the study area of this research. It is a detailed debate on what is already known about media representation of female politicians, conflicts in the area and the gaps which are yet to be covered. The themes under the literature review are the global, African and Zimbabwean perspectives on the political representation of women, in society, governments, political parties and the media. The chapter also provides the theoretical lenses which were used to approach this study.

### **2.2 A global perspective on the representation of female politicians in the media**

According to Braden (1996), in 1916, pioneering American Congress woman Jeannette Rankin essentially received no press coverage because society deemed her chances of success next to nil in this male preserve. Braden further elaborates that in so doing, the newspapers reflected the views of many people, who refused to believe that a woman could be capable of serving in Washington. Braden clearly reflects on a global dilemma in which the genders struggle consciously and unconsciously to maintain and grasp to hegemonic and masculine power in the domain of public leadership. Political communication has become a terrain of conflict at which men and women have conflicted and battled over who gets to out-power the other as far as discourses are concerned. The media are the channel through which the struggle plays out, and through representations they discriminate one gender over the other. In light of this, this study seeks to find out how Grace Mugabe has been represented as a politician and whether such representation is influenced by her gender.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 21(1) globally adopted in 1948 states that everyone has the right to take part in the government of their country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. Dube (2007) posits that despite the fact that women constitute on average, 52 percent of national populations and have attained the right to hold political office, they remain underrepresented in most parliaments and political positions across the

globe. Nzomo (1994) adds that by their numbers women have the capacity to decide on political leadership but they are not elected into political office whilst very few are put up as candidates. This study thus acknowledges that women have all the advantages in terms of numbers and advocacy but still remain underrepresented and seeks to question the role of media representations on the political underrepresentation of women.

Braden (1996) argues that a publication's decision to be biased or balanced when it comes to the issue of gender depends less on the society within which that publication exists but on that publication and reporter's chosen worldview and value system. She further postulates that media attitudes towards female politicians are due to deeper and durable value systems not political ideologies. Braden thus is of the view that newspapers' biases when it comes to gender-related coverage are a result of those media houses editorial policies more than political ideologies.

Chang and Hitchon (1997) however argue that media coverage for female politicians is owed more to the sustenance of structural factors that are already far more restrictive for women than for men. Ryan (2013) submits that there are numerous factors which contribute to the marginalisation of female politicians which include policies and cultural factors. Gallagher (1981) concurs with this and submits that feminist scholarship alludes to the fact that global structures of power systematically subordinate women through politics of representation and production of knowledge which regard women as objects rather than active subjects. A report from the Organisation for Co-operation and Development (OCED; 2016) states that barriers which prevent women from finding their way to the top in public leadership include patriarchal leadership structures, gender stereotypes, limited work-life balance, absence of leadership training programmes for women, and a lack of monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure the sustainability and policy-effectiveness of gender equality measures. Although the above dialogue agrees that societal and cultural factors contribute to the political underrepresentation of women, this study seeks to unearth the contribution of the media as a restriction to women's success as politicians.

Gallagher (1981) asserts that the media are highly responsible for the oppression of and discrimination against women. Tuchman (1978) concurs with Gallagher (1981) and propounds that the absence, trivialization or condemnation of women in media content amounts to their symbolic annihilation. Ryan (2013) further identifies media representation as one of the major factors in the marginalization of female politicians in the US. Spears et al

(2000) illustrates that in a study carried out in February 2000 in 70 countries on a specific day, women accounted for only 18 percent of global news subjects.

Therefore previous scholarship concurs that the media discriminates against women. This study however is not interested in generalisations of women from all walks of life into one basket. It focuses on female politicians with the aim of finding out how as a specific category of women they are represented in the media and how this implicates their political careers.

Frieden (1963) asserts that the media endorse myths of fulfilment through domesticity after observing that the image of the suburban housewife with an up and coming husband and a station wagon full of children which is created in women's magazines, advertisements and movies shapes women's lives today and mirrors their dreams. In agreement to the domesticity frame through which women are viewed, Braden (1996) observes that journalists describe women politicians in ways and with words that emphasise women's traditional roles and focus on their appearance and behaviour and in this manner stereotype them as weak, indecisive and emotional. She further argues that women politicians are held accountable for the actions of their children and husbands, though they rarely hold men to the same standards. Shvedova (2002) concurs that women find it difficult to enter into politics because once a woman makes up her own mind to do so, she has to prepare her husband, children and her family also. Previous research thus agrees that the media limits women to their homes. It however misses the fact that even in the domestic sphere media representations of female politicians are not innocent.

Khan (1994) stretches the argument further when she highlights that representations of female politicians in the media are more prone to focus on gender based evaluations of dress and demeanour than on the substance of decisions and actions. Therefore all scholars agree that media representations of female politicians are more likely to make political careers of women dwindle although they propose different ways in which this happens.

It is important to note that studies carried out within the field of feminism have highlighted the ineffectiveness of using one approach to address gender related problems faced by women worldwide. Gallagher (1981) notes that although the question of how women are spoken for and about is at the heart of feminist critique of media content, western feminism is to be criticised for the irrelevance of its analytical frameworks to the lives of most women around the world. She further elaborates that there is need to reposition the feminist debate within the broader social, economic and cultural contexts of analysis. There is thus a need to

critique media representation of female politicians in different cultures and contexts in order to come up with findings that apply to specific contexts, hence why this study is necessary for the African and Zimbabwean context.

Carter et al (1998) posits that feminist scholars have focused on gender representation in the news and other forms of journalism. Norris (1997) however bemoans that until recently the interrelationships between genders, politics and communication have received little attention. This study is thus necessary because it goes beyond the quantitative analysis of women in the news but does an in-depth analysis of what media content says about female politicians and how it is likely to influence their careers.

### **2.3 Media representation of female politicians in Africa**

According to United Nations Women statistics (2016), whilst globally there are 38 states in which women account for less than 10 percent of parliamentarians, in sub Saharan Africa women constitute an average of 25 percent in parliament seats. The statistics also postulate that as of 2016 Rwanda had the highest number of women parliamentarians standing at 63.8 percent in the lower house in the world. These statistics thus suggest that when it comes to representation of women in public leadership in Africa the numbers are still low, with slow progress being made.

Galston (2001) postulates that whilst political participation is good for democracy, most democratic systems are plagued by systematic inequalities as far as participation is concerned. Andersen (1975) further posits that these inequalities in participation are gender related because women have been observed to participate less than men, implying that half of the global population's interests are less well represented.

Coffe and Bolzendahl (2010) however elaborate that research on gender gaps in political participation is dependent on patterns occurring in western industrialised democracies which makes their applicability to developing countries and especially Africa problematic. Previous research thus does not justly address the concerns of African female politicians as far as representation is concerned, a gap which this study seeks to fill.

Inglehart (1997) asserts that the modernisation approach to issues of women's political empowerment argues that as incomes rise, women gain economic resources, egalitarian sex roles emerge and cultural values change leading to increasing levels of female participation in political life. Inglehart and Norris (2005) further argue that based on these assumptions, it

would be expected that gender gaps should be larger in sub Saharan African nations than those in western nations because sub Saharan African nations lag behind in their economic and political development and associated cultural attitudes.

In agreement, Coffe and Bolzendahl (2010) posit that the limited research on gender gaps in political participation in sub Saharan African nations is evident enough that the gender gap is significant across these countries. McEwan (2003) also elaborates that despite impressive improvements and formal political representation in African countries, women still face inescapable oppression and are blocked by many factors from participation in political life. Bratton (1999) asserts a study conducted in Zambia revealed that whilst both women and men had equal opportunities to register and vote, men were more likely to vote and had access to people in high political offices as compared to women. Thus lack of female political participation in Africa exists on different levels. This study focuses on the participation of women in public leadership as candidates not as part of the electorate. Previous research has tended to lean on technical issues of women's political participation whilst this research is concerned with the participation of female politicians in relation to media representations of their political careers.

Geisler (2004) argues factors that prevent African women from participating in public leadership include exclusion from leadership roles, lack of resources to mobilise themselves, private patriarchy and male control over female spaces. Although there has been little research on the impact of media representation on the political careers of female politicians in Africa, global research has handpicked the media as a factor that has reinforced male domination at the expense of their female counterparts. According to an MMPZ report (2012), media represent female politicians as political ornaments, party support structures, victims of negative politics and power struggles.

Morna (2006) postulates that in 2005, South Africa was ahead of 13 Southern African countries with 26 percent of news sources being female. Steyn and De Beer (2004) postulate that in South Africa women remain underrepresented in newsrooms across the country, as the majority of newsrooms remain white and male. Although there has been little academic research on the effects of media representation of female politicians in Africa, previous reports suggest that African media segregates against women as news sources, journalists and audiences. This study is interested in finding out how segregation of women in the media plays out in the political arena.



## **2.4 A Zimbabwean perspective on the representation of female politicians in the media**

Morna (2002) propounds that since 1980 female politicians in Zimbabwe have been marginalized in the press. Woods (1994) also posits that the media is in the business of omitting narratives of women and trivialising issues considered feminine in the pursuit of the more 'male' which require issues of governance, political power and ideology and the economy.

Cheater (1986) submits that worldviews that determine perceptions of women's empowerment vary from culture to culture, country to country and continent to continent. It is therefore imperative to deduct findings and prescribe recommendations to specific cultures, classes, continents and backgrounds following research on those specific contexts, keeping in mind that female politicians are influenced by factors dependent on their diverse situations. This study is focused on the predicament faced by Zimbabwean female politicians in relation to the way they are represented by local press.

In Zimbabwe the media has been highly polarised. Mamdani (2008) asserts that polarization has infiltrated all areas of the social, cultural and economic fabric of Zimbabwean society. Mawarire (2009) argues that the media gives attention to major political parties and their leaders especially during elections whilst marginalising female politicians who are usually not part of the executive in most political parties. This explains the dearth of scholarly information on the marginalisation of female politicians in the media as postulated by Parichi (2016). This study seeks to find out how media representation of female politicians amidst political rivalry, factionalism and opposition politics has impacted their political careers, all factors being equal.

Parpan (2011) propounds that the 90s ushered in the issuing of pro-women legislation by the Zimbabwean government which include inheritance laws, the domestic violence law, affirmative action measures and gender mainstreaming in most sectors of the economy. Some of the protocols as listed by Dube (2013) are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the SADC Gender and Development Declaration, which envisioned 50% women representation in Parliament by 2015.

However, national gender equity targets which are constitutional and global ones set by supranational bodies which Zimbabwe is a member are yet to be achieved. Dube (2013)

contends that despite the fact that Zimbabwe has ratified regional and international protocols that push for women empowerment, women continue to be underrepresented in the political realm in the country. In both the private and public sectors men still hold senior managerial positions, ultimately limiting any form of influence women can have in Zimbabwe's public economic and socio-political sectors. According to *The Herald* (29 January 2015) only 22 percent of women held cabinet posts by 2014.

Mashingaidze (2003) posits that Zimbabwean women have had to protest through non-governmental organisations and political parties for equity, protests which resulted in the promotion of Joice Mujuru to the post of vice president of the country in 2005. In agreement with Mashingaidze, Essof (2013) argues that women have had to pressurise government to review oppressive legislation and include women in decision making positions. It is important to note that for the past four years women have not been represented in the presidium, which negatively influences equal political participation of women in the country. It is in the interest of this study to find out how equal political representation appears to be a failing project despite constitutional amendments and international covenants which have sought to guarantee equality in public leadership.

It is however important to note that in Zimbabwe although women are politically underrepresented, culturally they hold authority and influence which is however restricted to the domestic sphere in which they don't have to necessarily be in the way of male domination. Manyawu (2012) hypothesizes that the power and authority of *tete* (sister in-law), *vamwene* (mother-in-law), or *amai* (mother) are derived from the ancestors and are therefore spiritual and incontestable. This explains why prominent women such as Joice Mujuru who was once the country's vice president were constantly referred to as *amai*. Although they have authority in this manner it is important to note that culturally the same powerful women are still dominated by men which is why Joice Mujuru sometimes professed to be Robert Mugabe's daughter which was a way to return the respect and authority to Robert Mugabe as the rightful father and authority (Parichi 2016). Although culturally as argued above women hold important traditional authority, it is in the interest of this study to critique why the same authority is not reflected in the media and the impact this has on women's political careers.

According to Fowler and Lawless (2009), the media wields a powerful influence over the type of political information that reaches the electorate. Ryan (2013) further adds that, the

media reflects what the public has established as its norms and when a story breaks those norms, the subject will most likely receive negative or less coverage. The media therefore has great influence and the power to influence political careers because it controls the information that reaches audiences and also choose to exclude or include facts depending on the societal values in that community. Kittilson and Fridkin (2007) further argue that for female politicians, the higher the political office they run for, the more negatively dramatic their coverage becomes. Thus, for female politicians the further their political careers grow, the worse the negative gendered connotations in the form of media coverage they receive becomes. This study therefore seeks to unearth how exactly the media rattles female politicians from campaigning for executive office such as the presidency in light of the argument that media content has effects on voters' perceptions, cognition and political decisions.

Sanbonmatsu (2012) points out that for women to progress the media has to be fair to both genders as this has immense influence on the electorate in times of political campaigns. When it comes down to getting public confidence, seats and ultimately candidature the media has great influence on whether one convinces the public that they are worth of the position they are campaigning for or not. Fowler, Lawless, Kittilson, Fridkin and Sanbonmatsu thus all agree that media content directly or indirectly influences the decisions made by the electorate towards a political candidate.

Mawarire (2009) brings forward the idea that journalism is masculine in nature, which reflects the patriarchal situation in Zimbabwe and the media. He postulates that newspapers would rather associate female politicians with topics of a social nature at the expense of political issues which resulted in women being allocated with posts that are traditionally allocated to women in the country. In agreement Gallagher (1989) postulates that in the media to think 'professionally' is not compatible with thinking as a woman. Mawarire (2009) further argues that the media reflect that objectivity, value-freeness and neutrality are offsprings of masculine ways of thinking, a notion which ignores women's ways of knowing. Parichi (2016) also supports this argument when she postulates that the nature of news and the way journalists determine what is newsworthy, is heavily reliant on an approach which is masculine, a principle which needs to be deconstructed if ever media products are to be gendered.

Dube (2013) propounds that the underrepresentation of female politicians should not be regarded as suggesting lack of interest in politics by Zimbabwean women because of the well documented participation of women in the liberation struggle and the existence of women's wings in most of the political parties in Zimbabwe. Parichi (2016) further argues that the struggle of women for political empowerment, ongoing since independence and even before then, was relegated to the media backburner as a national socio-economic struggle and crisis unfolded and took centre stage in both the private and public spaces. This suggests that the struggle between the two genders for equal representation in the media was side-lined in the media because there are greater socioeconomic and political issues that took centre stage resulting in the neglect of the plight of female politicians for equal political representation. This study however seeks to address the gap that despite the power struggle and socioeconomic issues which are prominent in the country, female politicians receive coverage from the media which influences their political careers as women. Through the case study of an individual female politician the study will unearth how media representation affects the careers of female politicians.

From the above discussion it can be noted that whilst scholars agree that women are underrepresented in the political terrain, their arguments on the likely causes of this situation differ. Media representations however have been handpicked as a factor that negatively influences political careers of female politicians. There has however not been adequate research on the effect of media representations on female politicians' careers. In Zimbabwe the few studies carried out on the area have been general and have not done in-depth qualitative analysis of a specific medium and for a specific case study. Parichi (2016) is the first Zimbabwean scholar to analyse the press representation of female politicians in the country but in her research she focused on articles from almost a decade ago which makes her research slightly outdated. Hence this study is necessary to find out how female politicians are currently represented and to analyse if there are any shifts in media representation in the Zimbabwean context.

## **2.5 Theoretical framework**

This study is premised on the representation theory with particular emphasis on media gendered representation and its influence on the identities of female politicians. The research will also borrow from the framing theory as it seeks to find out the frames through which

Grace Mugabe has been represented by The Herald and Newsday and whether these are gendered or not.

## **2.6 Representation theory**

Hall (1997) states that representation is an essential part of the process through which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. He adds that it involves the use of language, signs and images which stand for and represent things. Wallis (2012) hypothesizes that as a meaning making process representation primarily works through language and is mostly informed by gender, ideology and background. Language can be used to create bias or distort issues in representation (Hall 2007). Representation is thus concerned with the use of language, images, signs, stereotypes, naming, classification and objectification to represent meaning which influences audiences' perceptions, cognition and choices. This study is interested in media representations from a gender perspective otherwise known as gendered representation. This study is concerned how the press uses gender-based distinctions in their framing and construction of female politicians with focus on the case study of Grace Mugabe's political career.

Hall (1997), proposes three ways of approaching the theory of representation. These include the reflective, intentional and constructivist approaches. The reflective approach proposes that meaning is constructed through the portrayal of ideas as mirrored with events, objects or individuals. This can be illustrated by the way language reflects what is embedded within culture. This approach suggests that representations in the media are imitations of reality and life. The second approach is the intentional representation approach which proposes that the power of definition lies with the individual portraying the meaning. This approach alludes to the influence of journalists who are firstly responsible for the representation and explores whether their intended meaning, ideologies and assumptions are portrayed in the production process. The third approach is known as the constructivist approach to representation. It contends that although meaning is constructed by individuals, it is normalised in societies. In other words people normalise meaning by means of understanding themselves and their existence from the way they are portrayed. This study is not interested in the background through which meanings from representations are produced but rather on how the meaning is constructed and its likely impact.

Media representations include the use of stereotypes, naming and classifications of people, groups or ideas. Bhabha (1983) defines a stereotype as an oversimplified and clichéd image

repeated many times until seems to have established a pattern. Lippman (1922) suggests that closely tied to stereotyping are classifying and naming. Hoijer (2011) describes stereotypical naming as being fraudulent as it takes negative characteristics for granted which ultimately end up naturalised. He further argues that naming creates an illusion that the names are realistic because audiences seize to regard them as social constructions, especially if it is used repeatedly. Lippman (1922) posits that naming someone as a foreigner or deviant, or naming a behaviour an act of madness or a terror attack are not neutral classifications but are loaded with preferences, immersed with either affection or dislike. He further postulates that stereotyping is specifically related to the naming of social groups and to questions of inclusion and exclusion, discrimination, power and domination. Stereotyping creates the illusion of precision in defining and evaluating other people, and they are then fixed into marginal positions or subordinate status and judged accordingly (Lippman, 1922). This study seeks to find out how stereotypes, naming and classifications have been used as far as Grace Mugabe is concerned in the publications and the effects they have.

Hoijer (2011) postulates that representation specifies a number of communicative mechanisms explaining how ideas are communicated and transformed into what is perceived as common sense or rather how the media naturalizes social thinking and generates collective cognition. According to Preziosi (1998) there is no unmediated access to the real because it is through representations that we know the world. He adds that it cannot be said that a representation reflects, distorts or stands in place of an absent reality or that it bears no relation to any reality whatsoever but rather reality is a matter of representation whilst representation in turn is a matter of discourse. The theory of representation is thus key for this study because it seeks to critique how ideas in media texts on Grace Mugabe are naturalised and turned into reality.

Selectivity is another important aspect of the theory of representation. According to Wallis (2012) a combination of agenda setting, framing and representation establish the selectivity of issues in the media which in turn establish prioritisations and trivialisations of events, situations, and individuals that potentially constitute news stories. For the purpose of this study, focus will be on the included and excluded facts concerning Grace Mugabe and the impact of these filters on audiences and her political career.

Hall (1997) propagates that meaning is constantly being produced and exchanged in every personal and social interaction in which we take part and translates into culture which

organises and regulates social practices, influences conduct, sets rules and norms and has real practical effects. Although meaning is produced and exchanged through personal and social interaction, media is especially responsible for the production and exchange of meaning and its capability has been further fortified by the invention and use of complex technologies such as the internet by mass media entities. As propounded by Hall (1997), meanings are what those who wish to govern and control the conduct and ideas of others seek to shape. He argues that meanings are always being negotiated and adjusted to resonate with new situations which is why they are contested and fought over. In other words representations of meanings are not innocent and neither are they solid. Representation is a terrain which is contested over especially by the powerful who wish to control what society thinks and the choices it makes.

The theory of representation is thus key to this study because the research seeks to find out the role of gendered media representation in the construction of Grace Mugabe's political career and the impact thereof. Representation or the production of meaning by the media in this study is especially concerned with the critique of frames used to construct Grace Mugabe's political career through the use of stereotypes, naming, inclusion, exclusion and so forth and the ultimate impact of this on the concerned society in the formulation of texts. Theory is however limited by the fact that other scholars have criticised it for regarding citizens as passive receivers of text. Audiences are active and choose whether to accept texts or reject them depending on their worldviews.

## **2.7 Framing theory**

Entman (1993) defines framing as the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation. Shaw and Weaver (1997) further propound that framing is an extension of agenda setting and can be described as second level agenda setting to describe the salience of characteristics of media coverage on audiences' interpretations of news stories.

McQuail (1994) submits that the framing theory is one of the media effects, a conception which is premised on the idea that the media have a strong impact by way of constructing social reality or by framing images of reality in a predictable and patterned way. Gemson and Modigliani (1989) assert that media discourse is part of the process through which individuals construct meaning while public opinion is part of the process through which

journalists develop and crystalize meaning in public discourse. According to Tuchman (1978) mass media actively set the frames of references which readers and viewers use to interpret and discuss public events. Powers et al (1995) further suggests that the framing and presentation of events and news in the mass media can systematically affect how recipients of the news come to understand these events.

Neuman et al (1992) contend that journalists give news a spin taking into account their organizational and modality constraints, professional judgements and certain judgements about the audience. Kosicki and McLead (1980) submit that people's processing and interpretation is influenced by pre-existing meaning structures or schemas. According to Neuman et al (1992) the constructivist media effects model submits that audiences rely on a version of reality built from personal experiences, interaction with peers and interpreted selections from mass media. Media frames are thus dependent on the above-mentioned factors while individual audiences' frames are also influenced by other factors. The argument is that frames are not independent but are influenced by other factors which determine whether they can influence public opinion and actions or not. While previous research has addressed frames from an angle of being independent, this study is interested in analysing the media frames on Grace Mugabe's political career, the factors influencing it and the impact of such frames on individual frames which go on to shape public opinion and actions.

The framing theory has both strong and limited effects as propounded by Entman (1993). While as a media effect the theory regards the media as being influential in shaping audiences' world perceptions, cognitions and actions, theories such as the uses and gratification theory suggest that audiences are not passive and actively engage with media content, selecting what to believe depending on several other factors such as their social systems. Gitlin (1980) however acknowledges that frames organise the world both for journalists who report it and to some degree for audiences who rely on their reports. The framing theory is thus central to this research because it is through the analysis of media frames used to portray Grace Mugabe's political career that the study will be able to uncover whether her portrayal in the press is influenced by her gender or not and the impact thereof.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the literature review and theoretical frame which informs this study. The next chapter focuses on the methods and methodology used for the purpose of addressing the questions raised by the study.



## **Chapter 3: Research methods and methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This section discusses and justifies the methodology that was adopted for this study. Marshal (1998) posits that research methodology is concerned with methods that influence data collection and analysis. This study makes of the qualitative research approach because the study is not necessarily concerned with the question how much but rather involves samples which provide descriptive information about thoughts, feelings and beliefs and answer the question why. This chapter explores the qualitative research design, purposive sampling as a sampling technique, archival collection and use of the internet as methods of data collection, content and discourse analysis as methods of data analysis and finally the ethical considerations which were referred to in the methods of data collection and analysis in this study.

### **3.2 Research design**

Cheek (2009) asserts that a research design is the fashion in which a research idea is transformed into a project or plan that can be carried out by a research team or researcher. Bryman (2004) argues that the decision to choose a specific methodology should always be based on its appropriateness to address the research problem. This study employs the qualitative research design which has its value better illuminated by Albert Einstein's quote

which stipulates that not everything that can be counted counts and not everything that counts can be counted.

Creswell (2007) postulates that qualitative research addresses the questions why and how. Weil and McGill (1989) state that qualitative research helps to expose a new language, the language of genuine lived experience. Qualitative analysis has been tested as a research method that deeply explores and interprets issues (Arora and Stoner, 2009). It is often particularly based on field observations analysed without statistics (Dooley, 1984). Muranda (2004) points out that, 'qualitative research is research that cannot be meaningfully quantified. Ethnographic research, case studies, interviews and discourse analysis are all part of qualitative research.

This study makes use of the exploratory case study qualitative design which enables the study to critically probe and analyse the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct in The Herald and NewsDay. The research is reliant on observations.

A case study design focuses on a phenomenon to be studied, the case, unit of analysis and focus of the study (Gall et al, 2007). In this study the phenomenon is the role played by the media in the construction of the careers of female politicians, the case in point is the political career of Grace Mugabe and the focus of the study are the stories covered on her in The Herald and NewsDay. The study critiques audiences' comments posted on the two newspapers' websites. Thus, the study will use a case study research design which will be largely exploratory and observational. Advantages of using a case study as a research design are that it allows for in-depth research that would otherwise not be possible and the design is most suitable for a rare phenomenon which in this case is Grace Mugabe and her political career which is unique in Zimbabwe's political context. Disadvantages of using a case study are that the results cannot always be generalised to a wider population and since the study is being carried on one person by one researcher there is bound to be subjectivity.

### **3.3 Population**

Welman et al (1994) describes population as the object of the study. Kotler (1991) defines population as a group of study objects from which a researcher desires to collect data. In this study the population consists of all newspapers published in Zimbabwe and female politicians in the country. The study specifically focuses on the representation of Grace Mugabe in The Herald and NewsDay because the publications have a wide audience which will ensure the applicability of the findings to Zimbabwe and Africa as a continent. The two newspapers also

have different political ideologies which will ensure that the findings of the research are balanced regardless of the partisan nature of the publications.

### **3.4 Sampling**

Alvi (2016) defines a sample as a group of relatively smaller number of participants selected from a population for investigation purposes. He further postulates that sampling is the process through which a sample is extracted from a population. For the purpose of this study the purposive sampling technique is used to select participants for the study.

Tashakkorri and Teddie (2003) define purposive sampling as the selection of participants based on a specific purpose as opposed to random selection. It is a nonprobability sampling procedure in which the researcher purposely chooses participants who are relevant to the research topic (Schutt, 2009). Hence purposive sampling allows me to use my personal judgement determined by the research questions to select participants or units that are relevant to the research whilst excluding units that will not address the research problem.

Purposive sampling enables me to select stories and texts to analyse on the basis of how informative they are to my research problem, which in this case is concerned with the construction of Grace Mugabe's political career in relation to her gender in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. Using my own personal judgement, I will select stories relevant to this study and exclude other stories which are not necessarily relevant. The study will also use purposive sampling to select only relevant comments from readers which address the questions raised by the study. Disadvantages of purposive sampling include the fact that the study is vulnerable to errors in judgement by the researcher and there is bound to be bias.

### **3.6 Methods of data collection**

#### **Archival data collection**

Data used in the study has been obtained from operational websites belonging to *The Herald* and *NewsDay*. Online archival data collection was relevant for the purpose of this study because for the period under study, both websites efficiently and consistently uploaded all their articles and readers' comments online. It was therefore easy to access the data. Although accessing the data was easy, collecting it was a tiresome task because I had to write the data in a notebook to be able to analyse it later.

Secondary sources were key to this study. I referred to national policy documents and literature obtained from the internet which was the major source of information for the study. Archival data collection is cost effective and allows the research to spread for a longer period of time. Its disadvantages are that as a researcher I have no control of how the information was archived and the data might also be substandard.

### **3.7 Methods of data analysis**

#### **Qualitative content analysis**

Ncube (2010) postulates that content analysis is a class of research methods at the intersection of qualitative and quantitative traditions. Holsti (1969) defines content analysis as any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages. Qualitative content analysis is thus most suited to this study because the study is concerned with the analysis of texts in the form of stories covered on Grace Mugabe in *The Herald* and *NewsDay* and how these construct her political career from a gender perspective.

Patton (2002) argues that qualitative content analysis enables in-depth exploration of newspaper reports. Content analysis is thus the most suitable method of data analysis for the purpose of this study because the study is centred on the analysis of data collected from newspaper stories from the two newspapers in order to find out whether the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career is a construct of her gender and the impact thereof.

Busha et al (1980) posits that qualitative content analysis is used to determine the presence of certain words, concepts, themes, phrases, characters or sentences within texts or sets of texts to quantify this in an objective manner. In this study I will use qualitative content analysis to analyse and critique words, sentences and characters within texts of the selected stories which represent Grace Mugabe's political careers in the two newspapers under study. I will also use a thematic approach to analyse the stories, words and sentences to be able to answer the research questions of the study.

Creswel (2007) is of the view that content analysis is particularly relevant in studies that deal with textual and discourse analysis, power related issues, authority and domination. The study is concerned with the power relations between men and women, how they play out in the media and the influence of these factors on the media representation of female politicians.

The study uses textual and discourse analysis through the analysis of texts and ultimately the findings from the study will be based and deduced from these analysis.

### **Discourse analysis**

Stubbs (1983) states that discourse analysis is concerned with the use of language beyond boundaries of a sentence or utterances, interrelationships between language and society and the interactive or dialogic properties of everyday communication. Slembrouck (2003) postulates that it refers to attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence or above the clause, and therefore to study larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written texts. Richardson (2007) describes discourse analysis as an interpretative, contextual and constructivist approach whose concern is the use of language based on the view that language is active and used meaningfully in a particular context. He further postulates that it is partly responsible for the production and reproduction of social differences.

Critical discourse analysis offers interpretations of the meanings of texts rather than just quantifying textual features and deriving meanings from this and situate what is written or said in the context in which it occurs rather than just summarizing patterns or regularities in texts, (Richardson, 2007). Discourse analysis thus is a necessary framework for this study because it analyses how certain words in a particular language have been used in a specific context and to refer to a particular person or phenomenon. I will use discourse analysis for this study through analysing the sentences and utterances used in the specific contexts they have been used and to analyse why those particular discourses were necessary for those stories on Grace Mugabe in *The Herald* and *NewsDay*.

Foucault cited in Hall (1997) defines discourse as a group of statements which provide a language for talking about a particular topic at a particular historical moment. He argues that discourse constructs the topic thereby defining and producing our objects of knowledge and that nothing has any meaning outside of discourse (Hall, 1997). The analysis of discourse is thus important for this study as it will allow me to locate how discourses used relate to Grace Mugabe's gender and how they ultimately influence her career.

### **3.8 Ethical considerations**

The methodology for this study is safe from ethical breaches because the data in consideration is already public. There are thus no issues of confidentiality or consent seeking prior to the process of data collection and analysis.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methods and methodology used in the study. The next chapter is comprised of the organisational analysis of The Herald and NewsDay in relation to the political economy theory and its influence on the study.

## **Chapter four: Organisational analysis**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is concerned with the organisational analysis of the two newspapers under study, namely The Herald and NewsDay. The section includes historical backgrounds, ownership patterns, organisational structure and an analysis of these factors in relation to the political economy of both publications.

#### **The Herald**

### **4.2 Historical background**

The Herald which is owned by Zimpapers traces back to the 19th century. According to Nyarota (2006) the paper was originally launched on 27 June in 1891 by the Argus group of South Africa. Initially the publication was issued on a weekly basis and was written by hand.

The following year in October 1892, the paper was officially named the Rhodesian Herald and that was also when printing of the publication commenced. Karen (2010) postulates that the main purpose of The Rhodesian Herald was to serve and usher Cecil John Rhodes' ideologies and desire of white empowerment and supremacy.

Moyo (2005) posits that the Argus Group later founded the Rhodesian Printing and Publishing Company (RPPC) whose main purpose was to see to the day to day running of the Rhodesian Herald. The paper was highly censored to the extent that it would publish pages with blank spaces reflecting stories that would have been purged. This was especially so when the Rhodesian Front was in power post 1965 and consequently the paper continuously served the interests of the minority Rhodesian front government (Saunders, 1999).

When Zimbabwe attained independence in 1980, the new government acquired all publications from the Argus group and changed RPPC to become Zimbabwe newspapers (Zimpapers). Saunders (1999) asserts that government was not supposed to have direct control over The Herald when Zimbabwe gained independence as illustrated by the then vision of the publication which read "Zimpapers belongs to the people of Zimbabwe; we are a newspaper that supports the progress of people of Zimbabwe as a whole." The paper was to later function as a community mobilisation tool which would aid the processes of nation building, development and unity. Currently Zimpapers is still a publicly owned company which owned several papers, radio stations and a television station in the pipeline.

### **4.3 Company profile**

The Herald is a national daily newspaper published in the English language. Its target audience is the whole of Zimbabwe although it is mostly circulated and easily accessible to urban audiences as compared to their rural counterparts. The newspaper is also available online to global audiences.

### **4.4 Vision**

To be the leading Newspaper, publishing, printing and packaging company in Zimbabwe and beyond.

### **4.5 Mission**

To Produce Newspapers, Print and Package Products and offer publishing services that add value to our customers, employees and shareholders

#### **4.6 Core values**

- Customer satisfaction
- Good corporate governance
- Equal opportunity employer
- Profitability
- Quality products and services

#### **4.7 Objectives**

All the company (Zimpapers) branches are guided by the following, to:

- Produce newspapers of the utmost operable quality on a profitable basis, serving the best interests of the community and the company.
- Give fair and balanced presentation of each day's news which adequately reflects the principal happenings in all parts of the world.
- create new markets and seek to continually expand the existing ones
- Maintain good relations with commerce and industry and foster the company's reputation for fair dealing, prompt service, dependability, integrity and courtesy.
- Provide working conditions and opportunities for advancement which will attract and retain the best type of employee.
- Build through planned selection, development and training, a climate conducive to co-operation, goodwill and loyalty among all staff.
- Maintain within sound financial limits the highest possible levels of modern technical production in the face of competition from other newspapers and media, offer readers and advertisers the best facilities possible.

#### **4.8 Editorial policy**

The Herald is a state owned and controlled publication. Its editorial policy is thus reportage which is pro-government and pro-Zanu PF, although in the past two years the newspaper's editorial policy has been affiliated to Lacoste, an alleged faction within the ruling party which rival of Generation 40, a faction allegedly led by Grace Mugabe.

#### **4.9 Funding mechanism**

Government remains the major shareholder in The Herald as it owns 51.09 percent shareholding at Zimpapers. The publication operates from Harare with the rest of its sister papers. Government owns 51.09 percent shares which are managed under the ministry of



information. Old Mutual Life Assurance Company of Zimbabwe owns 19.10 percent followed by National Social Security Authority (NSSA) which has 2.79 shares. EFE Security Nominees owns 2.79 percent shares followed by Waughco Nominees (Pvt) Ltd which has 1.28 percent shares. F.S Nominees (Pvt) Ltd has 0.91 shares. The rest of the shares are owned by the rest of the shareholders. The Herald is largely owned by the government which implies that it is largely state controlled. The Zimbabwean government is largely Zanu PF. As a result, the ruling party has control on content, hiring and other key issue in the operation of the newspaper. This explains why content or stories published in The Herald always supports and publicizes Zanu PF ideologies and political campaigns. The polarisation of the publication is important to consider in this study because it explains why stories covered on Grace Mugabe in the paper do not openly denigrate her as would other private publications because she is the wife of Zanu PF leader Robert Mugabe.

The publication is largely funded by government and the rest of the shareholders. Shareholders automatically have control over the content and can use the newspaper for their public relations work because otherwise it risks shutting down if they decide to pull out. Other important stakeholders in the day to day operations of The Herald are the advertisers who bring in revenue into the company. The newspaper is heavily reliant on advertising revenue for its income. Therefore, advertisers end up influencing the content and protecting their interests by imposing self-censorship within the publication in a bid to ensure the continuous flow of advertising revenue in the country.

#### **4.10 Organisation structure**

See appendix list for organogram for Zimpapers and The Herald.

#### **4.11 Work roles and responsibilities**

Caesar Zvayi is the current editor in chief and directs everything at The Herald as far as content is concerned. During the period under study he reported to the minister of information, media and broadcasting services who by then was Christopher Mushohwe. The current deputy editor is Joram Nyathi. His duties are mostly similar to those of the editor and include standing in for the editor in his absence and helping to process the stories before they go for publication. He is relevant to this study because he is partly responsible for the stories covered on the first lady and the frames which were used to write them. Victoria Ruzvidzo is the current managing editor at The Herald. Her position is mostly administrative and is concerned with hiring of staff, managing of editorial stuff and other administrative duties.

She is of relevance to this study because sometimes she is part of the decision making team when it comes to frames and angles used to portray sources, which the first lady is part of. Takunda Maodza is the current news editor. His task is to organise the process of gathering news and the writing of all news. Reporters are responsible for covering and writing of stories. Political reporters are the most relevant for this study because they are responsible for political stories in the newspaper and are thus the ones who cover and write most of the stories on Grace Mugabe. Photographers are responsible for capturing all pictures which appear in the newspaper. They are supervised by the chief photographer who normally captures the most important pictures in the publication.

#### **4.12 Contributions of other departments**

Other departments at Zimpapers which influence the operations of The Herald are the editorial, transport, accounts, circulation, security, marketing, advertising and printing departments. The diverse departments collaborate as a group to ensure that the final product is efficiently produced and reaches the market. The marketing and advertising departments elaborate and look for advertisements which are part of the newspaper's content and thus bring revenue into the company. The transport departments ensures that staff from the editorial make their diaries on time and thus ensure efficient gathering of content to be published. This department closely works with the circulation department which is responsible for distributing the people from printing to the vendors who in turn sell to the audiences. The financial department is responsible for financial decisions and transactions within the company.

#### **4.13 Links with other organisations**

The Herald is closely linked with the Zanu PF government. Government is the largest shareholder of Zimpapers and through the ministry of information controls the organisation's editorial content in its publications. This explains why the newspaper is highly polarised and partisan with content that is mostly in support of the Zanu PF regime and anti-opposition parties. Because of its close ties with government the newspaper monopolises parastatal advertisements.

The newspaper is closely linked with sister papers and broadcasters within Zimpapers. These include Sunday Mail, The Chronicle, H Metro, Star FM and Diamond FM among others. These publications and broadcasters are all owned by Zimpapers and normally exchange stories and diary information.

The publication also has a working relationship with other media houses especially the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation which is also polarised by Zanu PF. Because both media houses are polarised by the Zanu PF government they are closely linked and share information if need be. The Herald also has a working relationship with the private media despite the differences in editorial policies. This explains the way reporters from The Herald network with other journalists from the private media to source and exchange diaries.

The newspaper is linked to non-governmental organisations especially those who are pro-government. Aside from NGOs, The Herald is closely linked to advertisers; especially large corporations whom they largely depend on for revenue. As a result the newspaper sometimes does gatekeeping work for these corporations to protect their financial interests.

These links are evident that the people who hold the purse call the shots. Advertisers, shareholders and government are important to The Herald because they own the paper and through revenue they can determine its survival.

To conclude this segment of the study, The Herald does not openly denigrate Grace Mugabe in most of their articles. However, through content and discourse analysis the study found some of the stories published in the newspaper to be relevant in addressing the questions raised by the study.

## **4.2 NewsDay**

### **4.2.1 Historical background**

Alpha Media Holdings (AMH) is a private media organisation operating in Zimbabwe and is the largest independent media house in Zimbabwe and publishers of NewsDay, among other papers. It was co-founded in 1996 by Trevor Ncube who is the chairman of the company and he is also the executive deputy chairman of the Mail and Guardian Media Group (South Africa). It started as Zimind Publishers Limited with only one weekly paper for circulation, the Zimbabwe Independent. Due to serious political instability in the country the company did not enjoy much of its profits as a result of shortages of newsprint and unprecedented inflation between 2008 and 2009. In 2010 the company launched NewsDay which was regarded as the voice for the voiceless because of its balanced reporting and was well received by audiences.

### **4.2.2 Company profile**

NewsDay was launched on 4 June 2010. It is positioned to use "multimedia platforms to provide daily accurate news to the public in a professional and responsible manner". NewsDay provides a credible source of news on issues that matter to Zimbabweans every Monday to Saturday. It has been seen as the most influential daily newspaper in Zimbabwe which is competing with The Herald, Daily News and H-Metro. With its motto "Everyday News for Everyday People". It is anti- Zanu PF.

#### **4.2.3 Vision**

To be the most successful media group in Zimbabwe, with each operating division in the top three of its sector in terms of: -Market share, Profitability, Brand recognition and Turnover

#### **4.2.4 Mission**

To provide effective leadership to the group for the provision of world class multimedia products and services.

To serve and inform the public, which we strive to do professionally, courageous and responsibly while enhancing stakeholder value and upholding press freedom, human rights and cultivating democratic values.

#### **4.2.5 Core values**

Professionalism Accountability Team work Profitability Courage Diligence innovation

#### **4.2.6 Objectives**

- To produce newspapers of the highest, practicable quality profitably serving the best interests of the society.
- To give a fair and balanced presentation of each week's news which adequately reflect the principal happenings in all parts of the world
- To operate profitably.
- To service existing markets and to continually search for new ones, both locally and internationally.
- To maintain cordial relations with customers, people in commerce and industry and to promote a good group image.
- To ensure the most efficient use of (materials, capital etc.) manpower through planned production, cost effectiveness, training and development.

- To develop and maintain fair labour practices through the application of constructive personnel policies.
- To maintain, within sound financial limits, the highest possible levels of modern technical production.
- To provide suitable working conditions and opportunities for advancement in order to: a) attract and retain the best employees and  
b) Engender their goodwill and loyalty.

#### **4.2.7 Editorial policy**

The privately owned newspaper is a commercial publication which is anti-Zanu PF and pro MDC-T and sympathetic to other opposition parties. Its content constantly attacks government, ruling party officials, projects and also mobilises support for opposition.

#### **4.2.8 Funding mechanism**

Trevor Ncube owns 61 percent shares at AMH whilst Econet owns 31 percent of the shares. The main source of income for NewsDay comes from advertisers who flight their advertisements in the newspaper. Advertising contributes at least 60 percent of the publication's total revenue and is thus the most important income generating department at the company. Jain and Sharma (2014) state that funding is the backbone of any organization as all operations stand on it because every person that gets into business is doing so to make a profit.

#### **4.2.9 Organisation structure**

See appendix list for AMH and NewsDay organogram.

#### **4.2.10 Work roles and responsibilities**

NewsDay's editorial section comprises of the editor, line editors, sub editors, reporters, photographers and cartoonists. Just like The Herald, these roles ensure that the final publication as far as the stories, pictures and so forth are perfect for sale. For the purpose of this study this department of the publication is the most important because it produces the stories which this study is analysing. The editor of NewsDay is

#### **4.2.11 Contributions of other departments**

NewsDay is complimented by several other departments at AMH which elaborate to ensure the successful running of the publication and company at large. These include the advertising, production, technical, editorial, information technology, accounts, transport and the circulation departments and subsidiary printing companies such as Munn Marketing and Strand Print.

The advertising department at AMH is responsible for securing advertisers and making attractive advertisements for the publication. This department is important because it ensures the continuous inflow of revenue which sustains the company. The department closely works with the editorial team to ensure that advertisements are consistently flighted as per their worth in order to attract audiences and in turn more advertisers. The circulation department is in charge of the distribution of newspapers. It ensures that newspapers get to the vendors who in turn are in charge of selling the newspapers to audiences. This department is important as the second largest contributor of revenue in the company. The department connects audiences to the product and closely work with the transport department which is responsible for the physical transportation of the product and reporters from one diary meeting to another. The production department is responsible for the production and printing of the newspapers. The accounting department is responsible for accounting for the company's financial records. It ensures the efficient use of resources and the allocation of funds in the organisation.

#### **4.2.12 Links with other organisations**

NewsDay is closely linked to several organisations which it enjoys good working relations with. The publication has close ties with opposition political parties who trust it to publish their stories with balance and accuracy unlike state media which always attacks them. There is excellent journalist-source relations between the two as their political policies agree.

The publication is also closely linked to its sister publications under AMH which include Daily News and The Standard among others. The publications sometimes shares stories, sources and staff where need arises.

The newspaper enjoys a good relationship with corporations which include Econet, Telecel, Zimra, food chains and to a limited extent the government through advertising. The newspaper is trusted by advertisers for being fair and accurate which attracts large audiences. This explains why the company is able to sustain itself from advertising revenue.

The NewsDay is a privately owned newspaper. It is anti Zanu PF and its content is mostly oriented with publicity and advocacy for opposition political parties. It mostly depends on advertisers for its revenue. Advertisers thus have great influence on its content. The study chose the publication for the purpose of this research because the publication has numerous articles covered on Grace Mugabe. It is thus rich on data which is requisite for the study. The newspaper also ensures a balanced research because unlike The Herald which is pro-Zanu PF, NewsDay is anti the ruling party. The inclusion of publications with different political agendas allows a balanced and neutral study whose findings will not be influenced by the political stance of both publications.

### **4.3 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the organisational structure of The Herald and NewsDay and carried out an analysis of the two newspapers with reference to the political economy theory.

## **Chapter five: Data presentation and analysis**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents and analyses the findings on how The Herald and NewsDay represent Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct and the possible impact of such representation on her political career. The findings are presented in relation to the research objectives, questions, literature reviewed and theories highlighted in chapter one and two. The study used a thematic approach to present and analyse the data. The approach enabled

the study to formulate themes through connecting the research objectives and questions to the findings. The study analysed several articles published in the two newspapers on Grace Mugabe which relate to the main research question. The study also used discourse analysis to interrogate audiences' comments on the two publications' websites to find out how audiences react to the stories and how they are likely to be influenced to react on the idea of Grace Mugabe as a politician.

The themes which are central to the findings of this study are the representation of Grace Mugabe as a human being in relation to her brand as a politician, the construction of Grace Mugabe as a politician and lastly audience perceptions in relation to specific stories covered on the first lady.

## **5.2 Representation and framing of Grace Mugabe's personality and brand**

In their framing and representation of Grace Mugabe as a person which has effects on her brand as a politician, both the Herald and NewsDay have downplayed her integrity as a human being. Through the representation of her characteristic traits, relationship with her family, frames based on her position as a first lady, name calling and framing as a victim both papers have framed Grace Mugabe as a terrible human being whose failures and flaws as a person point to the idea that she is not capable of holding any political office or to gain trust from the electorate.

The NewsDay has many articles which frame Grace Mugabe as a bad mother whose personality has influenced her children to misbehave. Parichi (2016) identified the motherhood frame as a method used by the media to restrict female politicians to their motherly and feminine roles. She however did not analyse how the frame could also be used to represent female politicians as failures who have failed in the domestic sphere and could thus have trouble being successful in political office.

In several articles published in the newspaper Grace Mugabe has been framed as the main influence on her sons' wayward behaviour. In an article published on 25/07/17, NewsDay quotes Grace Mugabe admitting that her sons are wayward and stressing her. The quote is followed with a comment in which the reporter suggests that Grace Mugabe is on the verge of a breakdown owing to her sons' behaviour. In another article published on 19/08/17 the reporter describes Grace Mugabe as an influence that does not stabilise her family and supports that by referring to an assault case in which Grace Mugabe was recently accused of bashing Gabriella Engels, a friend of her sons. In another article published on 18/08/17 Grace



Mugabe is accused of influencing her sons to rebel through her authoritarian methods of parenting.

Could their rebelliousness be a reaction to authoritarian parenting? What else can explain a mother striking so much fear into her adult sons?

She has also made repeated visits to Johannesburg to settle her sons. But she is not exactly a stabilising influence. She burst into the headlines again this week when she was accused of assaulting Gabriella Engels, a 20-year-old model, in a hotel room rented by her sons.

Nowadays there are spirits attacking our children. The spirit of drinking, drug abuse and doing other abnormal things way beyond their age,” Grace said, indicating she could be on the verge of a breakdown

NewsDay appears to also use every opportunity they get to associate Grace Mugabe with family dysfunctionality and scandals. In a story published on 22/09/17 Grace Mugabe is mentioned in a scandalous headline in a story she is not part of and in which the reporter provides no proof that she is related to the man who is alleged to be her cousin.

A MAN believed to be First Lady Grace Mugabe’s cousin based in Chivhu, has been granted bail pending his appeal against a 12-year jail term for raping his teenage daughter from 2012 to April this year.

The above-mentioned articles clearly represent Grace Mugabe as a failure as far as her motherly duties are concerned. The articles do not refer at any point to the father of the children or any other factors as the causes of the sons’ wayward behaviour. This shows that the press generally represents female politicians as failures in their respective families and relationships. As Braden (1996) submits, women who decide to enter into politics do so together with their children and husbands whilst men are not framed in the same dependent filter. The impact of this is that the electorate lose trust in female politicians because they feel that since they cannot operate and organise their families and relatives they are likely to fail to put their interests at heart if they are to occupy any political office.

As a strategy to frame Grace Mugabe as a terrible human being NewsDay uses name calling and insulting juxtapositioning as a way to associate Grace Mugabe with negative traits and represent her identity in that manner. In an article published on 18/08/17 in The NewsDay, Grace Mugabe is compared to a runaway train which crashed into her sons’ hotel room in a

way to describe the event in which is alleged to have assaulted Gabrielle Engels. Another article published on 22/02/17 refers to Grace Mugabe as a disgrace, a term which the newspaper has on several occasions used to restructure her name and associate her with embarrassing behaviour which is opposite to her name.

That runaway train came crashing into a Jo'burg hotel room. Every picture tells a story. The pictures of the young woman battered and bruised by Grace said it all.

Grace is a disgrace to our people, the worst thing to have ever happened to our country

The article mentioned above suggests how the press with specific reference to NewsDay openly insult and denigrate female politicians through name calling and insulting comparisons. Female politicians are represented through headlines and articles that generally insult them and compare them to symbols which portray them as cruel and chaotic people. Such representation does not in any way improve the prospects of careers of female politicians. Instead it fortifies images of dislike and hatred towards them by the electorate as they are generally associated with the features of the bad things which they are compared to. As Hoijer (2011) submits, naming naturalises negative traits associated with those names and seizes to be seen as social constructions but as realities by audiences. The insulting names given to Grace Mugabe have become part of her identity and form certain perceptions towards her.

Whilst previous research has indicated that women are framed as weak politicians, this study has discovered that the media and press in specific plays around with the personalities and traits of female politicians in order to denigrate them as human beings. Markstedt (2007) postulates that the media frame women based on their dressing and how they look but this study has gone further to deduct that despite physical appearance the press manipulates personality traits in order to frame female politicians as non-equals with their male counterparts. Findings from this study have revealed that once a woman decides to enter into politics the media does not focus on her policy ideologies and political endeavours but rather focuses on negatively portraying personal traits which ends up negatively tainting the politicians' reputations and creating emotional dislike for them in the minds of the electorate.

In an article published on 09/03/16, the headline suggests that Grace Mugabe is uncultured and ruinous. The same article goes further to refer to her as a national disaster who is vulgar and is solely responsible for destabilising Zanu PF. The article even insinuates that had she

not been in Zanu PF the party would have been a success story. Other terms that have been used to describe Grace Mugabe's personality are attention-seeking and obnoxious referring to a headline of an article published on 22/02/17. In another article published on 09/03/16 in the NewsDay Grace Mugabe is represented as a person whose personality is short of integrity, compassion, reasoned convictions, wisdom, trustworthiness and so forth. Such representation clearly implies that Grace Mugabe is in no capacity to run for any political office and let alone to convince any electorate to vote her into power.

Her character is antithetical to many of the qualities necessary in a political leader: integrity, compassion and reasoned convictions, wisdom and prudence, trustworthiness, a commitment to the moral good.

Uncultured and ruinous; grace Mugabe a national disaster- Her behaviour in Chiweshe recently seemed unfathomable, partly because she used language excessively vulgar, but largely because she has destabilised a party that should be one of the success stories of independent Africa.

I am responding to remarks (identified above as obnoxious attention-seeking behaviour) made by Zimbabwe's First Lady, Grace Mugabe. She has suggested that her husband is irreplaceable and that in the event that he died, Zimbabweans would enthusiastically and heartily vote for his dead body.

The manner in which Grace Mugabe's personality and character is portrayed shows that the press is generally not positive when it comes to how it regards female politicians. Whilst previous research has posited that the media are confused on how to represent female politicians and that newsrooms are generally masculine in nature as asserted by Gallagher (2001); this study found out that the press has criticised personal decisions female politicians make and manipulate their weaknesses to relate them to negative characteristic features. Male politicians do not have their personal traits highlighted as much as those of female politicians and this ultimately influences the prospects of their political careers.

Another important finding made by this study is the fact that women who are married to men in powerful political positions find it more difficult to have prospering political careers. From the content analysis carried out by this study on articles in both The Herald and NewsDay the study found out that Grace Mugabe is constantly referred to as a defender and wife of the country's president whilst as a first lady she is likened to first ladies from history who had bad social, political and personal reputations in a bid to disqualify her both as a first lady and

political candidate. In a feature article published on 24/09/17 headlined “when Grace got angry” in NewsDay, the writer traces the history of several first ladies who were known to have bad reputations which implies that first ladies are generally not regarded as good people and thus will not make good politicians or candidates. Initially providing an analogy of historical first ladies the article frames Grace Mugabe as a wife who wants to run the country because her husband is too old to do so himself. The story clearly states that first ladies are scandalous and an unnecessary addition to the politics of any nation and goes further to suggest that Grace Mugabe is popular for being violent.

In Zimbabwe, it has long been held as a view and observation that Grace Mugabe, the infamous First Lady, is taking advantage of President Mugabe’s old age and is effectively running the country to the irritation of powerful politicians who believe she is not cut out for that work.

There have been other scandals that have painted the office of the First Ladies as an unnecessary addition to the politics of any nations.

She was often referred to as the most violent First Lady but Grace Mugabe might have that moniker for now, given the recent reports of her physical and verbal confrontations.

This research found out that The Herald does not openly vilify Grace Mugabe as a person but however restrict their representation of the first lady from any potential to campaign as a political candidate in her own right. The paper repeatedly emphasizes Grace Mugabe’s motherly role as a first day not as a politician. The publication has in several articles constructed Grace Mugabe as a victim who always needs saving from scandals she gets herself into. An example is an article published on 01/09/17 in The Herald which stated that Grace Mugabe had not invaded Manzou farm as insinuated by the private media.

First Lady Dr Grace Mugabe has not invaded Manzou Farm in Upper Mazowe Valley as claimed by sections of the private media, and such insinuations reflect a sinister agenda to tarnish the name of the First Family, Government has said.

This is evident that although the Herald cannot openly vilify Grace Mugabe because of its political economy, the newspaper does not hide its masculine dominated ideology which is why its coverage on Grace Mugabe appears to be clean up jobs for problems the first lady gets herself into. Both publications thus use the first lady frame to either denigrate Grace

Mugabe as an underperforming first lady and in the case of The Herald to restrict her to the first lady feminine roles and present a glass ceiling which she as a politician cannot surpass. This discussion points to the fact that female politicians with particular reference to those who are married to people in high political offices have an even more difficult time trying to advance their political careers because they are overshadowed by their husbands and also spend most of their time fulfilling their wifely duties as required by their husbands' positions which makes them appear to be too preoccupied to run for political office.

### **5.3 Framing of Grace Mugabe's political career: prospects versus challenges**

The construction of Grace Mugabe's political career in both The Herald and NewsDay is diverse but similar in the sense that both newspapers do not accept her as a politician who can campaign for any high office. Content and discourse analysis of articles in both publications revealed that the newspapers frame Grace Mugabe's political career as a limited one which has a glass ceiling which it cannot break through. Both publications portray Grace Mugabe as being financially reckless, a law breaker, lacking political ambition, a failure as a politician, a national motherly figure whose role is to defend her husband and a first lady who is confined to softer feminine roles which do not translate to any executive political office.

In articles published in both The Herald and NewsDay, Grace Mugabe's personal financial decisions are mentioned. The NewsDay openly criticises her for a supposed extravagant lifestyle at the expense of suffering Zimbabweans even though she operates several personal businesses and does not always borrow from the national coffers. In an article published on 01/11/17 NewsDay reports that Grace Mugabe bought a ring worth \$1.4 million. The same story indicates that such an amount of money can help Zimbabwe's struggling economy even though Grace Mugabe and her personal finances are not part of government. The writer associates the purchase with government looting and abuse of state resources regardless of the fact that Grace Mugabe does not directly influence decisions taken in the ministry of finance. Another article published on 17/08/17 again brings Grace Mugabe's personal spending in the spotlight by breaking the news that she purchased a 45 million mansion in South Africa. The Herald is also in the habit of publishing articles that highlight Grace Mugabe's personal financial decisions with reference to an article they published on 18/09/17 which reports on a court case between the first lady and a foreign Lebanese and highlights that she spend \$1.350 000 on a ring for her wedding anniversary.

Zimbabwe's first lady, Grace Mugabe, has reportedly bought a R45-million mansion in Sandhurst, in Johannesburg, sources close to the sale have confirmed.

The First Lady in April 2015 approached Mr Ahmed, who was in the business of diamond-cutting and polishing and ordered a 100-carat special ring worth \$1 350 000 for her wedding anniversary.

These stories clearly represent Grace Mugabe as a financially reckless and selfish person who cannot be trusted to cater for the needs of Zimbabweans in any political office. Although The Herald is subtle in its meaning the fact that its article on the ring saga made special mention to the worth of the ring and decided to make the court case a breaking story shows that the publication also subtly suggests that Grace Mugabe as a woman is more concerned with her luxurious jewellery and cannot thus be concerned with issues of national concern. Financial responsibility is an important ability which is prerequisite for any politician who wishes to run for office. The publications are thus hell bent on trying to associate the female politician with reckless financial decisions which disqualify her as a suitable candidate for political office. The personal financial decisions made by women are highlighted by the press as evidenced by the articles which make an issue of Grace Mugabe's personal finances as a woman. Thus, this study has critiqued media framing of Grace Mugabe as an extravagant person to reflect how the media generally represents female politicians focusing on what they wear, where they go shopping and so forth. This trivialises female politicians and represents them as people who only know how to spend money wastefully. Grace Mugabe's businesses are seldom mentioned by the two publications and when they are mentioned it is normally to associate them with scandal and greed.

There has been effort by NewsDay to construct Grace Mugabe as a shrewd politician whose main concern is to acquire wealth for herself at the expense of poor Zimbabweans. Such portrayal of the first lady ultimately ends up convincing the electorate that she is greedy and cannot abide by the laws of the country which implies that she cannot keep rules and will be inspired by personal gain at the expense of Zimbabweans if she is elected into power. For example, in an article published on 18/08/17 in the publication, the writer accuses Grace Mugabe of lacking any moral, political and legal traits which are prerequisite for any politician with aspirations to run for office. The publication also ran several headlines which accused Grace Mugabe of causing the illegal evictions of Mazowe residents and quoted the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZimRights) condemning her actions. The framing of

the manner in which Grace Mugabe received diplomatic immunity after she allegedly assaulted a model in South Africa also shows how the publication is focused on framing Grace Mugabe as a criminal who thus is not suitable for any political office

There is no moral ambiguity about it — what Grace did was wrong. There is no political ambiguity about it — what she did was shockingly undiplomatic and scandalous. And, last but not least, there is no legal ambiguity about it — what she did was brazenly criminal.

The Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (ZimRights) has condemned the police's use of brute force in the recent eviction of 15 villagers from Arnold Farm in Mazowe to pave way for First Lady Grace Mugabe.

FIRST Lady Grace Mugabe yesterday reportedly evaded arrest in dramatic style in South Africa following her violent attack on a model who she had found partying at an upmarket hotel with her two sons,

Whilst The Herald does not necessarily openly denigrate Grace Mugabe due to its political economy, several articles from the publication have represented an impression that there are no political ambitions on the side of Grace Mugabe at all. Whilst she is already into politics the articles have portrayed a situation in which she is satisfied with what she has and does not have any ambition at all to campaign for any higher office. An example is an article published in The Herald in which a Zanu PF official is quoted as saying that Grace Mugabe has no ambition to be the vice president of Zimbabwe;

First Lady Amai Grace Mugabe does not have any ambitions to be the Vice President of this country and she remains content with her position as the secretary for Women Affairs in Zanu PF, a top Women's League official has said.

The Herald has also implied through its articles that Grace Mugabe is only a supporter and defender of her husband's post and has no political ambitions other than that. In an article published in The Herald on 29/03/16 the writer reports that Grace Mugabe has no wish to be the next Zimbabwean leader but is only defending her husband from people who want to remove him from power.

As the Women's League, we are going to support you. Some want you to be life President, but we say you are irreplaceable to the Presidency.

FIRST Lady Amai Grace Mugabe has no ambition to succeed President Mugabe as Zimbabwe's next leader but is only standing in defence of her husband against people who want to force the President to step down before the end of his term of office, a senior Zanu-PF Women's League official has said. March 29 2016

The Herald thus construct Grace Mugabe as a politician who has no intention of running for any higher office than she already has, a frame which will affect how she is regarded as a politician. The press is in the habit of creating glass ceilings for female politicians by means of fortifying masculinity and the fact that female politicians cannot dream of replacing the current executive leadership in the country which is comprised of men only.

The Herald further filters any hope for Grace Mugabe to campaign and convince the electorate that she can be a good candidate by emphasising her portfolio of softer feminine roles which are not aggressive and challenging as those said to be masculine. The majority of articles on Grace Mugabe in the publication focus on her philanthropic work, donations to schools, acquiring of new Zanu PF regalia and poultry projects and do not emphasise on her political ideologies or relate her to masculine portfolios. The order of adjectives in the following excerpt from a story published in The Herald on 30/08/17 is proof that the publication emphasises Grace Mugabe's motherly and feminine roles and lastly mention patriotism and traits as a politician;

Loving mother of the nation. Loving mother, compassionate philanthropist, astute businesswoman, perceptive politician, remarkable patriot, these are all adjectives that can be used to describe the First Lady Dr Grace Mugabe.

The publications, with particular reference to NewsDay always seems to associate Grace Mugabe with negativity and failure even when she has nothing to do with a story. An example is a headline for an article published in the paper on 29/08/16 in which her name was in the headline of a story about a Zanu PF primary election candidate allegedly aligned to her who lost;

Grace Mugabe ally loses Zanu PF primaries.

#### **5.4 Analysis of audience reception to the representation of Grace Mugabe in The Herald and NewsDay**



This part of the chapter is concerned with the analysis of audiences' direct comments to specific stories published in the two publications. Analysis of audience comments on the websites of the two newspapers revealed that although the greater part of audiences are generally anti Zanu PF they dislike Grace Mugabe. Audiences do not regard Grace Mugabe the same way they regard other Zanu PF politicians. As a woman and first lady she is insulted and looked down upon. The study found out that although the audiences' responses were inspired by the stories, they were also fortified by preconceived perceptions about Grace Mugabe and female politicians in Zimbabwe. The study found out that readers from both The Herald and NewsDay are hostile to the idea of Grace Mugabe as a politician

From the discourse analysis of audience' comments posted on the websites, people who read the stories published in the newspapers do not think that women can ever successfully participate in high political offices in the country. Whilst previous research has stated that women have been restricted from successfully running for political office due to factors which include patriarchy and socioeconomic factors, this study discovered that the way in which the media constructs reality through the production of meaning as propounded by the representation theory also influences what audiences regard as reality. Thus the continuous denigrating of Grace Mugabe in the two publications could have resulted in audiences generally having negative perceptions towards female politicians in the country. Readers agreed with the articles on the fact that female politicians cannot be in the executive of the country until the president who is male says so. An example of such a comment was posted on 04/03/16 which implies that because Robert Mugabe said so, no woman can ever be a leader of Zimbabwe.

*Hamenowo ikoko. nyika ino haife yakatongwa nemunhukadzi* (this country shall never be ruled by a woman), the president said this kuChinhoyi when Joice Mujuru was booted out. This statement will remain binding until his Excellency reverses it.

Just like the manner in which articles in the two publications, especially NewsDay insulted Grace Mugabe, readers also tended to insult the first lady which shows that the content of the articles had an effect on readers' feelings and perceptions on female politicians. In response to the articles published by the two publications, audience comments were dominated by insults being hauled towards the first lady. It is important to note that while many people might insult Grace Mugabe because they are antiZanu PF, even those who claim to be Zanu PF supporters denigrate her and refer her to be disciplined by her husband. A comment

posted in response to an article published on 17/08/17, is from a reader who accused Zanu PF supporters of being foolish but also specifically accused Grace Mugabe of being a thief whilst Zimbabweans did not have money.

*Hure iri feve richatinetsa mhani. Masupporter e zanu ndiwo madhokonono chaiwo, mubank hamuna kana cent asi munhu wese kuna amai mbavha.*

This prostitute is going to be a big problem. Zanu PF supporters are the foolish people. Whilst they don't have a single cent in their banks they still say everyone to the mother who is a thief.

Similarly, readers also seemed to agree with frames in the two publications which represented Grace Mugabe as a dependant on her husband and a political force which amounted to nothing without him. The study thus found out that female politicians are represented as politicians who should always have the support of their male counterparts, families and husbands, without which they are bound to fail. An example is a comment posted on 18/08/17 which shows how the reader feels offended as a result of what they have read and how they wish only bad things for Grace Mugabe especially if she loses the support her husband.

*Vachitionesa nhamo maZimbo, ivo vachioneswa nhamo nevekubereka. Chatunga na Rob, more fire! Urayayi mai neBP tapota. Chinobhururuka chinoimhara chete. Does Grace ever think what will become of her when her ghost husband is gone? Ask Mrs Gbagbo from Ivory Coast. Hatimbomunzwiri tsitsi, bodo. One word is enough for the wise*

Whilst they make us as Zimbabweans suffer, their children are also making them suffer. Chatunga and Rob, more fire! Kill your mother with high blood pressure please. What flies will eventually land. Does Grace ever think about what will become of her when her ghost husband is gone? Ask Mrs Gbagbo from Ivory Coast. We won't feel pity for you. Not at all. One word is enough for the wise.

Another observation deducted from the research is that in reaction to the publications, readers do not credit Grace Mugabe for her philanthropic work and feel that she is not worth mentioning at all. This study thus found out that despite media representation of female politicians, readers already have their own readings and opinions on female politicians which they use to interpret and understand articles with. Even though the Herald constantly covers

Grace Mugabe's philanthropic work, readers still think it amounts to nothing and is not worth talking about. The study interpreted this to mean that despite media representations readers who are part of the electorate already negatively regard female politicians. On a comment from an article published in the NewsDay a reader asks the reporter why he refers to Grace Mugabe as a doctor. In another comment from a reader on 30/08/17, the reader expresses that George Charamba who belongs to Zanu PF is chiding Grace Mugabe through publishing meaningless articles of her "good work"

Charamba got a rotten egg thrown into his face over not covering the "good works" Amai Disgrace is doing, now he is surely calling her bluff by writing meaningless articles especially at this moment knowing no one is on Amai's side after the Gabrielle Engels drama. Manheru just wants to trigger the public to ridicule her so that she can see for herself that the people don't fancy her at all.

## **5.5 Discussion**

The main findings of this study have revealed that whilst there are several other factors which affect and influence the success or failure of careers of female politicians, media representations are a significant factor which influences how the electorate views female politicians, feels about them and whether they ultimately choose to vote them into office or not. Both The Herald and NewsDay frame Grace Mugabe's personality as a failure, thief and an unbecoming first lady. These frames have tainted Grace Mugabe's brand as a politician by framing her as a person who lacks credibility, honesty, trustworthiness, stability and other key features which are suitable for a person with high prospects of winning over the electorate.

As a politician Grace Mugabe is represented as an irresponsible politician who is greedy, extravagant, cruel and void of political ambitions. These frames have killed her prospects as a politician and have limited her to the domestic sphere. The press thus creates a glass ceiling which limits female politicians from proceeding to higher office. As a woman the press has concentrated more on including stories in which she is a victim who constantly needs saving and who depends on her husband for protection and stability. Female politicians therefore have their political careers killed in the media before they get the opportunity to campaign and try to advance their political careers.

Readers who are exposed to articles covered on female politicians are also influenced by the content they read which affects their perceptions of reality as far as their knowledge of

female politicians is concerned. Although readers are already affected and influenced by other factors which influence the way they read and interpret content, media stories also affect how they regard female politicians.

This chapter presented the data findings and analysis. The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## **Chapter six: Conclusion and recommendations**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the last one of the study. It consists of the summary, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further study. The summary briefly states what the study set out to find out, the issues investigated, theories and methods used and the findings of the study. The conclusions will deduct the conclusions of the study as a result of the findings and challenges faced and lastly it indicates areas that need further study after this research.

### **6.2 Summary**

The study set out to find out the role played by The Herald and NewsDay in the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career as a gender construct. The study investigated how Grace Mugabe is represented as a human being in the two newspapers as this is influential in the prospects and challenges of her brand as a politician. The study also investigated the construction of Grace Mugabe's political career in the two newspapers. Lastly the study investigated the reactions of readers to the articles which were analysed in order to deduct how the representation in the analysed articles are likely to impact audiences' perceptions on Grace Mugabe's political career.

The theories used in the study are the representation and framing theories. Representation was a key theory to this study because the study was interested in the meaning making process and the construction of reality in the texts of the stories published in the two newspapers. The study was premised on the concept that media representations are responsible for how audiences produce meaning and how they ultimately react. Thus the representation of Grace Mugabe's political career in the two newspapers is influential in how the electorate perceive her as a politician, hence why the representation theory was key for this study. The second theory used in the study is the framing theory which is interested in the exclusion and inclusion of certain aspects of reality. The study used this theory to find out how the two newspapers frame Grace Mugabe as a human being and a politician and how these frames are likely to influence her political prospects.

The study used a case study qualitative research design to study the role of The Herald and NewsDay in the construction of Grace Mugabe's political career because the study was not interested in numbers but rather in the in-depth analysis of the effects of media texts on her

political career. Purposive sampling was used as a sampling technique and the data was gathered online through the use of archival data collection. Content and discourse analysis were used as methods of data analysis.

The study found out that whilst the way Grace Mugabe is represented in both The Herald and NewsDay is influenced by the fact that The Herald is pro Zanu PF whilst NewsDay is anti Zanu PF, both publications used negative connotations to construct Grace Mugabe's political career. The NewsDay in particular thrives by negatively representing Grace Mugabe whilst The Herald subtly suggests that she cannot campaign for any political office but should confine herself to philanthropic work and first lady duties. Both newspapers constructed Grace Mugabe as an average human being whose character, family, financial decisions and actions as first lady do not make her deserving of being in any higher political office.

The two publications also constructed Grace Mugabe as a politician in ways which are bound to influence the electorate against voting for her if ever she decides to run for any office. She is portrayed as a criminal, extravagant and greedy person who cannot have the interests of people at heart. The Herald specifically paint Grace Mugabe as a victim who needs to be constantly rescued and is thus too weak to be in any political office. The publication also seems to emphasise that Grace Mugabe is a mother figure whose portfolio includes philanthropic duties, donating to the poor and other such soft roles which do not largely concern national governance.

Lastly the study found out that audiences who are anti Zanu PF hate Grace Mugabe. However there is a segregation in their treatment towards her as compared to how they talk about other male Zanu PF politicians. Pro Zanu PF readers also do not like her and prefer male Zanu PF politicians as compared to her. This was seen by the way readers insulted Grace and constantly commented that without her husband she amounts to nothing. Thus in a nutshell the study found out that although there are other factors at play the fact that Grace Mugabe is a female politician has resulted in negative representations of her political career and as a human being. The study also found out that as a result of being exposed to such texts, audiences also share the same sentiments as those echoed in the various articles from the publications which were analysed.

### **6.3 Conclusions**

With reference to the findings mentioned above, the study reached the conclusion that gender generally influences the way in which female politicians are represented in the press. Whilst

there are many factors which influence representation of women generally, when it comes to female politicians there are several factors which are emphasized in texts relating to women which are not necessarily mentioned when it comes to male politicians. Whilst this study was not concerned with the representation of male politicians in the press, it is important to note that when it comes to male politicians the press seldom focuses on characteristic traits. When it comes to female politicians however their characteristic traits are emphasised, repeated and formulate most of the headlines in the publications.

The study also reached the conclusion that there seems to be a glass ceiling promulgated by history and traditional factors such as patriarchy which is reflected by the media and ultimately limits women from aiming for higher political offices. The Herald constantly mentioned that Grace Mugabe was not interested in taking over Robert Mugabe's position or the vice presidency which on its own is something that might limit Grace Mugabe from having bigger political ambitions than those set for her by the media.

Another conclusion from the research is that female politicians are constantly portrayed as victims by the press, a fact which makes them appear as weak people who cannot handle political office. The Herald constantly does publicity work for Grace Mugabe and continuously seems to save her from disarrays which she finds herself tangled in. the victimisation frame thus restricts women from being trusted by the electorate which ends up influencing their prospects as politicians.

Lastly the study came to a conclusion that audiences who are ultimately part of the electorate are largely influenced by the way in which media texts in the press construct political careers of women. Through analysis of readers' comments in relation to several articles relevant to the study, the research deduced that the same sentiments echoed in the articles are the same sentiments.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

As per the findings of the research, the study recommends that the media is guided by policies and constitutional requirements of gender equity when they report on female politicians. I also recommend that governments find ways of educating journalists and media houses against gendered representation of female politicians. In light of the impact of media representation female politicians on their careers, my recommendation is that female politicians make use of new media to control how they reach the media and to directly interact with the electorate without the media mediating and choosing how to frame them.

They can use websites, their own publications and social media sites to directly represent their identities to the electorate.

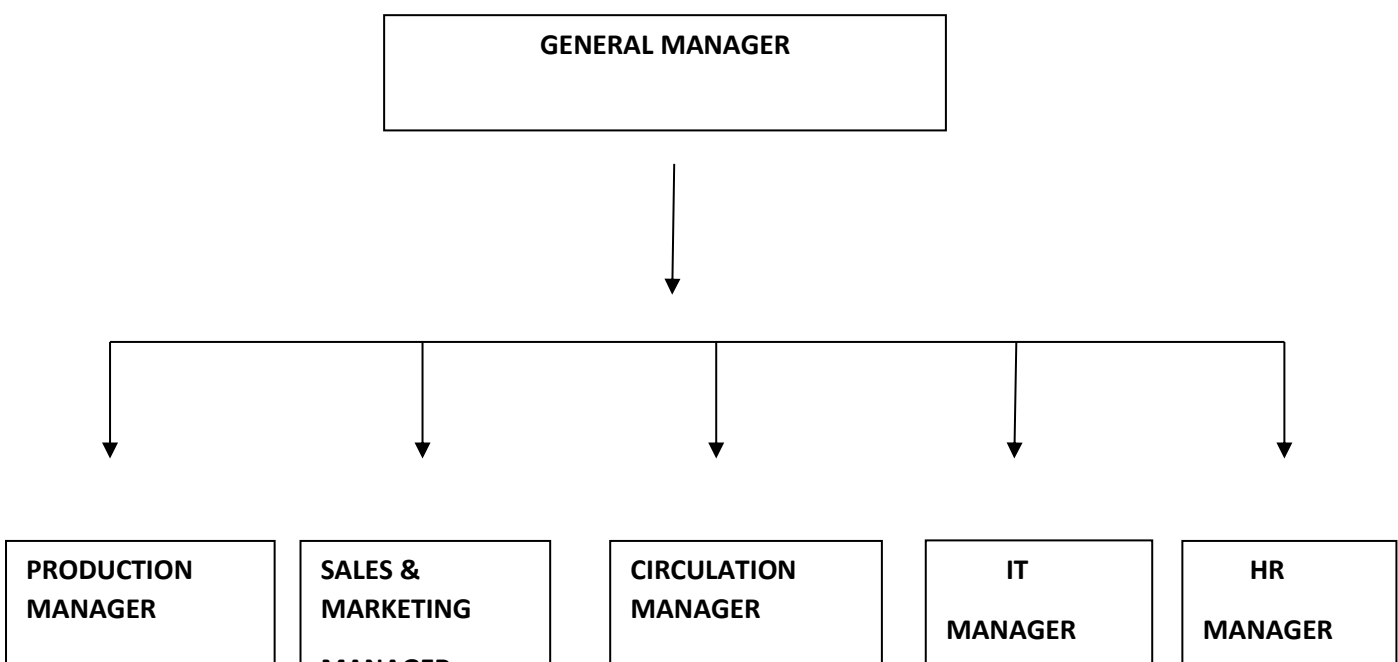
### 6.5 Areas for further study

This study focused on how the press in Zimbabwe represents the careers of female politicians and the impact thereof. Future researchers can research on how female politicians have made use of alternative media to represent themselves and whether these are effective in regaining the trust of the electorate. Instead of focusing on the press, future studies can broaden the study further to broadcasting media to understand the role of the media in the representation of female politicians on a broader scale.

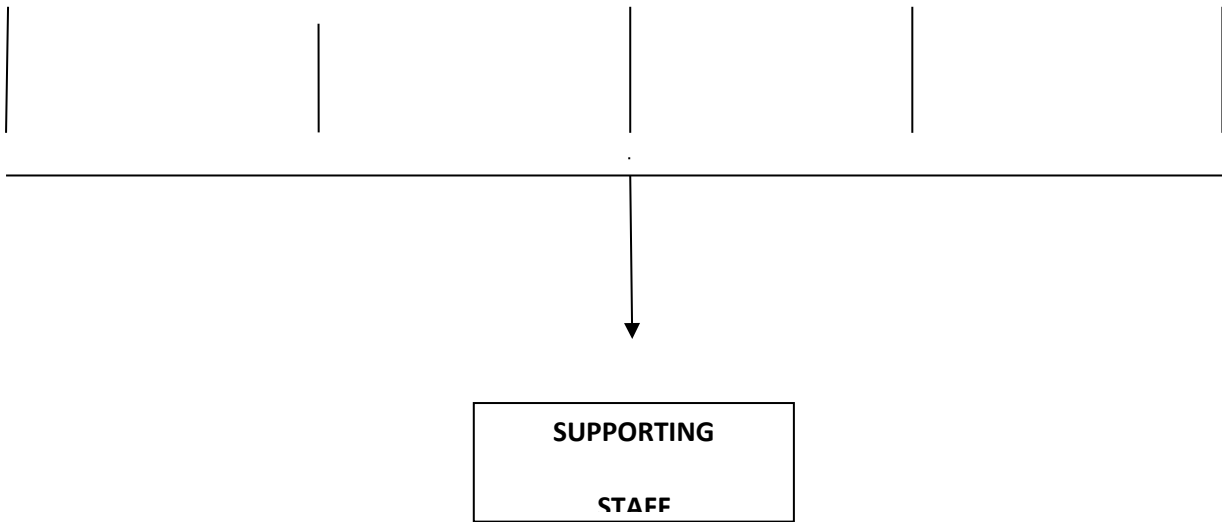
### 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter is the last one and outlined a summary of the research which is comprised of what the research set out to do, how it carried this out and the findings of the study. It also presented the conclusions, recommendations and areas of further study.

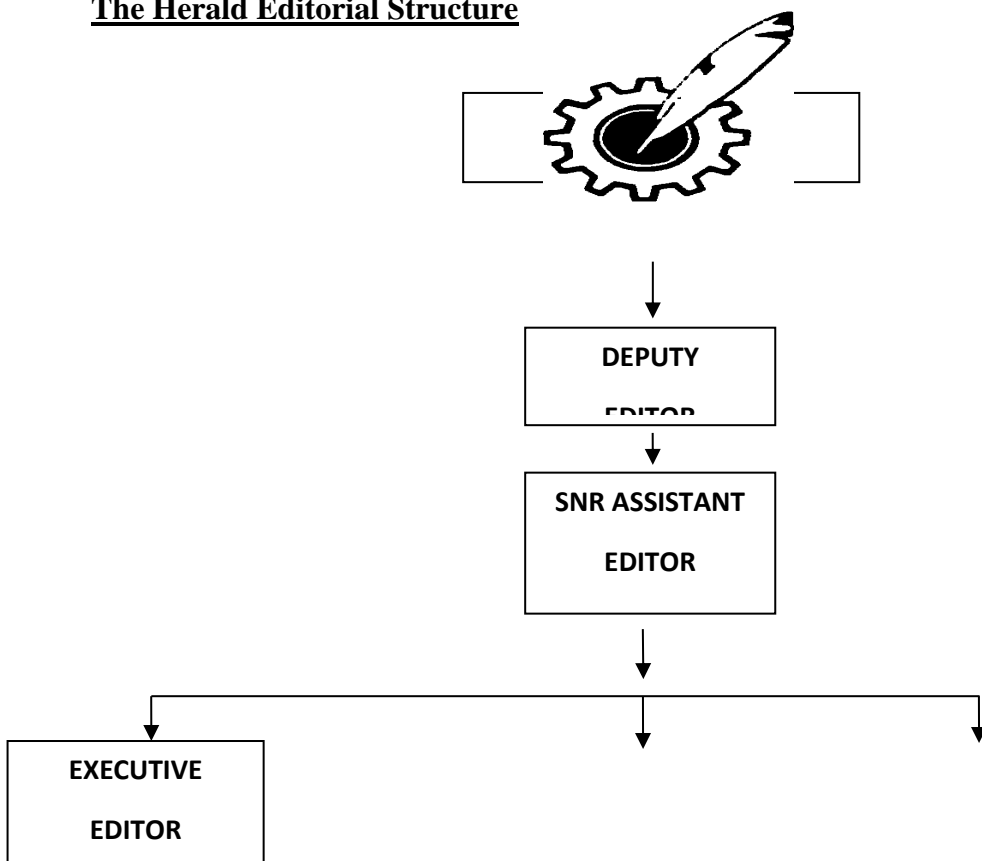
### Organogram for Zimpapers administrative structure

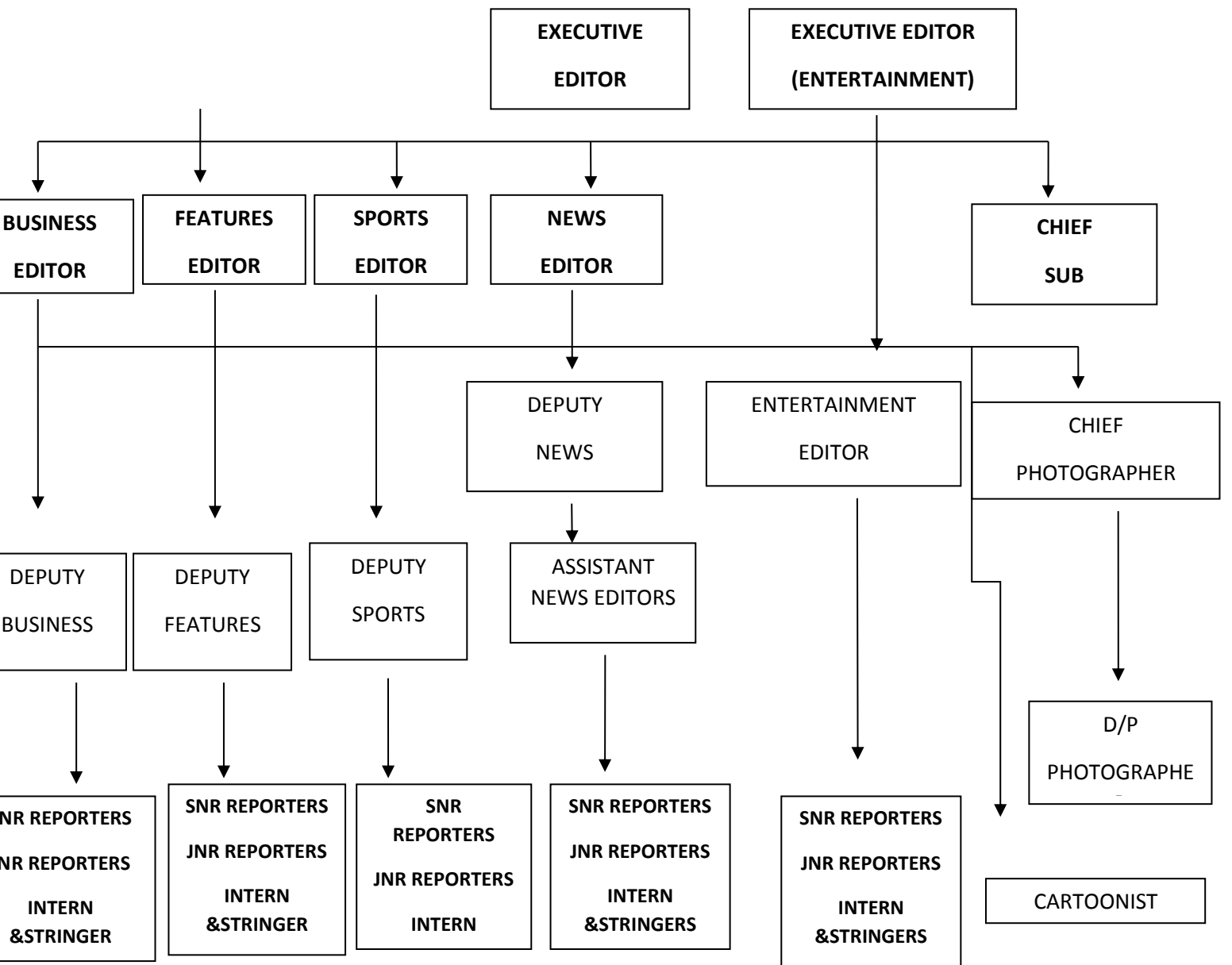






**The Herald Editorial Structure**





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