Violence Against Women in Elections in Zimbabwe: An IFES Assessment

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An IFES Assessment

Full Report

Dr. Gabrielle Bardall

with Gift Murombo, Tazreen Hussain and Otito Greg-Obi

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Market
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EV	Election Violence
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDR	Global Digital Report
GPA	Global Political Agreement
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
PDP	People's Democratic Party
SADC	South African Development Community
UN	United Nations
VAWIE	Violence Against Women in Elections
WHO	World Health Organization
ZANU-PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission

Preface

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has worked to advance good governance and support all citizens' rights to participate in free, fair and credible elections for over three decades. Violence against women in politics is a substantial threat to the integrity of the electoral process. Both the threat and the reality of violence have a powerful negative effect on women's participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders. IFES works to prevent, document and end violence against women in politics through our applied field research and our projects spanning across four continents.

The following report is part of our ongoing efforts to prevent, document and respond to violence against women in elections (VAWIE) around the globe. Through interviews and focus groups with over 100 men and women around the country, this report provides vivid evidence of the key forms of violence perpetrated against women in Zimbabwe including: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psycho-social abuse, and economic abuse. Using a state of the art online sentiment analysis tool, this report also demonstrates how social media is increasingly used to coercively deter Zimbabwean women from taking on active roles in politics and civic life. This evidence illustrates how these forms of violence contribute to the lack of representation of Zimbabwean women in politics.

Whether focusing on gender inclusiveness in Zimbabwe, or elsewhere around the world, IFES prioritizes the empowerment of women and girls as central to our mission to support transparent and resilient democracies. We invite you to join IFES in ending violence against women in politics and in all spheres of life. Thank you.

William Sweeney Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer, IFES

Executive Summary

The following report encompasses two areas of research. The first presents an assessment of violence against women in elections (VAWIE) in Zimbabwe in physical, "real world" spaces while the second explores VAWIE in the cyber-sphere, across social media and other internet platforms (referred to as VAWIE "Offline" and VAWIE "Online").

Summary of Findings – VAWIE Field Assessment

Women engaging in Zimbabwe's elections as candidates, voters and journalists experience devastating sexual extortion, physical violence, harassment and intimidation from their bosses, colleagues, religious leaders and domestic partners. This deeply impedes their free and fair participation in the process.

VAWIE FIELD ASSESSMENT FINDINGS		
Factor	**WINDOWS OF VULNERABILITY**	**WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY & RESPONSES**
Status of Women	- Women's lives are governed by starkly different expectations and norms than men, despite the evolving legal framework. - High levels of unemployment negatively impact access to resources, especially for political purposes. - Women with disabilities, and women from marginalized groups and the LGBTQI community face multiple levels of marginalization.	- Zimbabwe has a relatively substantive legal and normative framework for protecting women's rights. - Zimbabwe has made significant strides in amending and enacting legislation on gender equality and has passed seventeen pieces of legislation to advance this objective in addition to Constitutional and Gender Commission provisions. - Women's growing role in economy is closing the gap.
Women's Access to the Electoral Process	- Past limitations to women's political participation include: long queues, low civic and voter education, intimidation, unfair documentation rules around voter registration and family pressure. - Women's participation has been viewed as a token and/or a privilege granted by men. - The degrading and exclusionary treatment of women political journalists facilitates ongoing unequal and sexist media. - Women's wings of political parties tend to exclude women from key leadership. Access to political finance and vote buying by parties further preclude women from participating. - Traditional and religious leaders often contribute to enforcing gendered norms,	- Post Mugabe era signals break from the past on party control of state institutions and renewed desire by institutional leaders to demonstrate impartiality - Political party codes of conduct now exist

	including exclusion from civic and political participation	
Trends in Violence Against Women in Elections	• Impunity for VAWIE allows these acts to continue unimpeded. • The effect of "shaking the matchbox" to subtly warn voters of reprisals of the 2008 election violence is a powerful means of control and dissuasion. • Female candidates are at the forefront of VAWIE and face intense psychosocial violence, especially attacks on their moral probity, and occasional physical violence, including during door-to-door campaigning. • The fear of domestic violence in relation to civic or political participation restricts women's participation. • Intraparty abuse, sexual bribery and violence is rife, politics are viewed as zero-sum. • Generalized risk of election violence deters women from attending campaign rallies and events. • Extensive online intimidation and harassment degrades and deters political women and aspirants.	• Strong general awareness about VAWIE allows more aggressive and targeted responses. • Zimbabwean police force publicly declared a policy of zero tolerance for election-related violence, harassment, and intimidation.

Summary of Findings – VAWIE "Online"

The rising use of social media to threaten, humiliate and coercively deter Zimbabwean women from taking an active role in politics and civic life undermines electoral integrity and human security ahead of the 2018 elections. This phenomenon has been documented through a systematic, empirical analysis of online sentiment and behavior using artificial intelligence-based software refined by in-country research.

VAWIE-Online has been progressively increasing since 2013. We found that 60% of violent discourse and related content in the political space was directed at women for the period from January 2013 to April 2018.[1] The volume of VAWIE online spikes around election periods and reflects political events generally, but women also experienced consistently higher levels of VAWIE online in the inter-election period.

Proportionally, women were the object of nearly three times the amount of physical violence-related online sentiment than men, a surprising finding that breaks with accepted knowledge about VAWIE. Women received nearly double the proportional amount of psycho-social EV-violent content as men, and experience a more constant flow of this content outside electoral periods. Psycho-social online content related to women's perceived failure to fulfil social norms regarding marriage and childbearing, and for alleged sexually promiscuous behavior, provocative dress and/or salacious scandal-mongering. Proportionally, men received 14% more sexual violence-related content than women, mostly related to homophobic content and accusations of having committed rape. However, overall online traffic targeting women was more 19% more negative than men.

Individual and organizational actors engaging in EV-discourse are classified in three groups: direct perpetrators, indirect perpetrators and "treacherous sympathizers", all of which amplify the climate of intimidation. Identifying individual perpetrators for online incidents is very challenging because much web content is not linked to identifiable accounts. Of those perpetrators that could be identified, male internet users accounted for over three-quarters of EV-discourse online, against both women and other men.

The geography of VAWIE-Online includes a high concentration of content coming from Harare, reflecting greater connectivity and wealth. Many posts containing VAWIE rhetoric are linked to user accounts in the USA, South Africa and the UK, which reflects Zimbabwe's human capital migratory patterns

The data show that social media is evolving rapidly and different platforms have different degrees of impact over time. Currently, Twitter is the most dominant channel for expression. Men and women also appear to use social media differently: limited observation suggests that male targets are generally more active on social media and appear to engage with attacks, while female candidates are less active on social media and engage less with online assaults against them.

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[1] Adjusted to sample

Measures of VAWIE online are volatile and the volume of measurable VAWIE online can be dramatically affected by a single individual who "goes viral". Political women may be especially vulnerable to "viral VAWIE moments" due to sensationalism of perceived breach of social norms.

The study also makes numerous contributions to the global research on VAWIE and in politics, as well as piloting the use of advanced sentiment analysis for recording violence against women in the cyber sphere.

Introduction

IFES recognizes that violence against women in elections is a threat to the integrity of the electoral process – it can affect women's participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders, and it undermines the free, fair, and inclusive democratic process. Through increased attention to women's participation and women's voices in democracy assistance, narratives of violence against women in elections in their homes, political arenas, and public spaces have become more visible. Current typologies of electoral violence originate in definitional frameworks that tend to emphasize public acts of violence and violence between public stakeholders with distinct roles.[2] This ignores personal relationships between perpetrators and survivors, the variation in spaces where violence might occur, and nuances within types of potential violence – all of which have been highlighted by this report's findings as essential for understanding violence against women in elections. The VAWIE typology reflects the forms, actors, and spaces of violence most commonly experienced by women, and weaves them into existing and frequently used forms of categorizing electoral violence. Additionally, this typology suggests a way of identifying and categorizing barriers to women's participation that, while stemming from the same root causes as VAWIE, do not rise to the level of violence.[3] At the heart of the typology is the VAWIE definition:

> *Any harm or threat of harm committed against women with the intent and/or impact of interfering with their free and equal participation in the electoral process during the electoral period. It includes harassment, intimidation, physical harm or coercion, threats, and financial pressures, and it may be committed in the home or other private spaces, or in public spaces. These acts may be directed at women in any of their roles as electoral stakeholders (e.g., voters, media, political actors, state actors, community leaders, electoral officials).[4]*

Political Context

After Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980 during a movement that saw many women at the forefront of the revolution, Robert Mugabe, former president of the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) party, maintained power for 37 years. During Mugabe's administration,

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[2] IFES defines electoral violence as: "any harm or threat of harm to persons or property involved in the electoral process, or the process itself." This includes physical and psychological harm, as well as property damage. In 2009, the UNDP *Guide to Elections and Conflict Prevention* defined electoral violence primarily as "acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process, or that arise in the context of electoral competition…." USAID's 2010 *Electoral Security Framework* concludes that "electoral violence refers to physical violence and coercive intimidation directly tied to an impending electoral contest or to an announced electoral result." The IFES definition was developed in the field as part of IFES' Electoral Violence Education and Resolution (EVER) programs around the world. Further discussion of the evolution of the definition and the EVER methodology can be found in Lisa Kammerud, "Managing Election Violence: The IFES EVER Program" (IFES October 2009) and online at www.IFES.org.

[3] For more details on the development of the VAWIE typology, see http://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections pg. 12

[4] IFES, "Violence Against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring and Response," 2016 pg. 2. http://www.ifes.org/publications/violence-against-women-elections, pg. 2

Zimbabwe was considered an authoritarian state. The 2008 run-off between President Robert Mugabe and his opponent Morgan Tsavangirai of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) was marked by extensive violence largely against MDC members and supporters, resulting in widespread death, displacement, and gender based violence.

Ultimately, as a result of the violence, Tsvangirai withdrew from the 2008 elections. Following the run-off, Mugabe entered into a temporary power-sharing agreement under the Global Political Agreement (GPA), which was overseen by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union. The purpose of the agreement was to create a roadmap to free and fair elections through legal and electoral reforms. Robert Mugabe set elections for July 31, 2013, despite complaints from the opposition that electoral and democratic reforms mandated by the GPA had not yet been implemented.[5] Mugabe won the 2013 elections with 61% of the vote and ruled for another three years.[6]

In early November of 2018, Mugabe fired his vice-president Emmerson Mnangagwa. As a result, factional struggles within the ZANU-PF heightened due to concerns that this decision would position Grace Mugabe, Robert Mugabe's wife, to succeed him as president.[7] Eventually, ZANU-PF issued an ultimatum to Mugabe that stated he would face impeachment if he refused to step down from power, and Mugabe chose to comply. After 34 years in power, the military forced Robert Mugabe to resign on November 21, 2017.[8] After Mugabe's resignation, Emmerson Mnangagwa was sworn in as the head of the interim government. He appointed his cabinet shortly thereafter in early December. Upcoming elections are slated for July 30th, 2018.

Despite an electoral gender quota introduced in May 2013 and the political prominence of the former first lady, women have been deeply underrepresented in Zimbabwean politics for decades. Out of 420 candidates, there were only 44 women running for National Assembly seats in the 2013 elections.[9] 25 women were directly elected to the National Assembly alongside the 60 seats that are reserved for women by law. This makes for a total of 85 women (31.5% of the National Assembly).[10] In the Senate, women were elected to 39 of the 80 available seats in 2013. This was an improvement from the 20 seats secured by women in 2008.[11] Due in part to the implementation of gender quotas, there are now 124 women in the legislature out of 350, which means that women make up 35.4% of Zimbabwe's

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[5] "2008 Elections and Aftermath," *Britannica,* https://www.britannica.com/place/Zimbabwe/2008-elections-and-aftermath#ref1057117

[6] Ibid

[7]Moyo, Jeffrey, "Mugabe Fires Vice President, Clearing Path to Power for Wife," Nov 6, 2017, *New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/06/world/africa/zimbabwe-mugabe-mnangagwa.html

[8]Mackintosh, Eliza, "Zimbabwe's Military Takeover was the World's Strangest Coup," Nov 21, 2017, *CNN* https://www.cnn.com/2017/11/20/africa/zimbabwe-military-takeover-strangest-coup/index.html

[9] ZESN 2013 Harmonised Elections Report, 56.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

legislature. This is almost double the number of women elected to the legislature during the last electoral cycle.

Nonetheless, this increase in representation spurred by gender quotas is accompanied by a marked decrease in female candidates running for unreserved seats. Zimbabwe has yet to implement the constitutional requirement of gender parity in all political positions including elected and appointed offices.[12] One issue hampering women's political participation is the considerable level of internal politics and tensions that exists within women's wings, particularly with regard to the ZANU-PF party. Another issue is that women in Zimbabwe lack access to party primaries, which leads them to compete as independent candidates with little financial or institutional party support.

Representation of women is also remarkably low in the presidential cabinet. Currently, out of the 22 positions in Emmerson Mnangagwa's cabinet only 3 seats are filled by women. Sithembiso Nyoni is the Minister of Women and Youth Affairs. Oppah Muchinguri-Kashiri is the Minister of Environment, Water and Climate. Priscah Mupfumira is the Minister of Tourism and Hospitality Industry.[13] Previously, Mugabe appointed 3 women to his 26-member cabinet. Dr. Olivia Muchena was the Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education. Oppah Muchinguri was the Minister of Women Affairs, Gender, and Community development. Sithembiso Nyoni was the minister of Small and Medium Enterprises. Previously, the low level of representation of women in Mugabe's cabinet sunk from 16% in 2008 to 11.5% in 2013.[14]

Beyond the barriers to representation in office, there is a continued history of gender-based violence and political violence against women in elections. Gendered repression and electoral violence have been perpetrated against women in Zimbabwe for decades.[15] The aftermath of 2008 elections was one of the most notable upticks in political violence in the last 10 years. Women were raped and forced into concubinage as a means of punishing them or their spouses for participating in politics.[16] Testimonies of survivors revealed numerous cases of rape, gang rape, torture, intentional transmission of HIV, and sexual slavery in ZANU-PF base camps.[17] Perpetrators of these crimes were met with impunity as police refused to document these reported crimes either because they did not want "to interfere in political

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[12] NDI IRI Pre-Election Assessment Mission Statement Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonised Elections p. 6

[13] Head, Tom, "Who is in Zimbabwe's Government Cabinet under Emmerson Mnangagwa?" December 12, 2017, *The South African*, https://www.thesouthafrican.com/who-is-in-zimbabwes-government-cabinet-under-emmerson-mnangagwa/

[14] "Zimbabwe: Disappointing Number of Women in Cabinet," September 18, 2013, *Gender Links For Equality and Justice,* http://genderlinks.org.za/programme-web-menu/zimbabwe-disappointing-number-of-women-in-cabinet-2013-09-18/

[15] Kishi, Roudabeh, "Gender-Based Violence and Women's Political Participation," Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, https://www.acleddata.com/about-acled/.

[16] "Gender-based Violence in Zimbabwe," *Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum*. No. 68. 2011. Pg. 2. http://www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/Gender-based-violence-in-Zim-WT20497.pdf

[17] Ibid, 17-29

issues" or because they were afraid that members of the ZANU-PF in power would retaliate or because they themselves were members of the ZANU-PF. [18]

Despite many of these pressing challenges, women in Zimbabwe remain fiercely committed to engaging in political spheres of society. Currently, women make up 54% of the voters' roll in Zimbabwe.[19] Furthermore, Zimbabwean women have a strong sense of civic duty and often volunteer as poll-workers. In its observation of the 2013 elections the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Market (COMESA) stated, "...noteworthy was the remarkable representation of women among the polling staff in most polling stations visited." The African Union Electoral Observation Mission also noted a high level of women participating as polling staff. In addition to engaging in political participation, many women in Zimbabwe are highly active members of civil society. There are numerous women's civil society organizations dedicated to advocating for political change, fighting gender-based violence, providing women with resources, and fostering women's leadership skills.

Ahead of the 2018 elections, the overall current political climate in Zimbabwe has improved in comparison to previous elections. There has been more political space for the opposition to operate in. For example, the MDC was able to successfully hold a rally in Harare on June 5th, 2018 without any interferences from ZANU-PF, which was denied a permit to hold a counter-rally on the same day in order to prevent violence and tension. Nevertheless, many challenges remain in ensuring a credible, free, and fair process. There is widespread public concern that the secrecy of the ballot is compromised, this due largely to the fact that unauthorized officials have been asking voters to produce voter registration serial numbers as a form of voter intimidation.[20] There are also raised fears of recurrent political violence, given the June 23 bomb blast that killed two and narrowly missed the President, at a rally in Bulawayo.

It is also important to note that today's political landscape is largely shaped by information dissemination via online media. Internet penetration has evolved at a dramatic pace in the past 10 years in Zimbabwe, exploding from only 5.1% in 2009 to over 50% by 2016, [21] with 6.72 million active internet users in 2017 (40% of total population actively uses the internet) and 5.92 million active mobile internet users (35% of population actively uses mobile internet). Similarly, cellular coverage went from 6% in 2006 to 80% in 2016[22] and today most Zimbabweans access the internet via their mobile devices (67%).[23] Growth in internet penetration provides mechanism for widespread information dissemination that can bolster the use of more traditional platforms such as radio and print news. Online news outlets and social media platforms can be used to dispel misinformation about the electoral process (such as the aforementioned persistent rumor that voter registration serial numbers can be used to track how people voted). Although the increase in internet penetration provides more opportunities for the public

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[18] Ibid 26-27.

[19] NDI IRI Pre-Election Assessment Mission Statement Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonised Elections p. 6

[20] NDI IRI Pre-Election Assessment Mission Statement Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonised Elections p. 6

[21] TechZim. https://www.techzim.co.zw/2016/12/zimbabwes-internet-penetration-rate-stalls-50-1-will-government-intervene/

[22] World Bank. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2?end=2016&locations=ZW&start=2006

[23] file:///C:/Users/gbardall/Downloads/digitalin2018003regions012easternafricapart2-southv1-180129180248.pdf

to be politically active and informed, it also provides new avenues to perpetrate violence against women in elections through online spheres—a major cause for concern that is addressed in this report.

PART I –
Findings from the
VAWIE Field Assessment

Introduction

The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) conducted a violence against women in elections (VAWIE) field assessment in Zimbabwe to understand the potential challenges that create and exacerbate incidents of violence against women in advance of Zimbabwe's upcoming elections. IFES' Sr. Gender Specialist Gabrielle Bardall and Gender Program Officer Tazreen Hussain traveled to Zimbabwe from March 22 - April 6, 2018 and were joined by IFES Zimbabwe's Field Program Manager Farai Mukuta. The team convened nine focus group discussions (FGDs) and ten interviews with government officials, civil society, women leaders, journalists, religious leaders, youth groups, and elected officials from throughout the country, meeting over 111 people. The involvement of local stakeholders in conducting the assessment was key to the process and each FGD and interview consisted of an explanation of the assessment concept and methodology, and collection of critical information from each stakeholder. The outcome of the assessment is a comprehensive report on the current situation related to VAWIE in Zimbabwe, including recommendations for stakeholders moving forward.

Methodology for the Assessment

The VAWIE assessment tool encompasses questions related to gender, conflict, and elections. VAWIE acknowledges the complex mix of relationships, violence types, and spaces that set violence against women in elections apart and makes it difficult to assess and track, which in turn makes such targeted violence effective in deterring women's full political participation. This assessment uses IFES' expanded electoral violence typology that considers the unique impact of election violence on women and includes a comprehensive assessment framework to identify potential or existing trends of VAWIE.

The VAWIE assessment tool is based on the recognition that in order to effectively address violence against women in elections, practitioners must not only understand historical trends of this type of violence in a country, but also the factors which precipitate the violence. They also should develop an understanding of the cultural and socio-political norms that impact the status of women in society as well as their participation in the electoral process, and societal and institutional responses to tackle the issue. To address this need, the assessment tool is organized around the analysis of four key factors which influence the incidence and extent of VAWIE.

The assessment tool outlines key questions that should be addressed for each of these factors by the assessment team so that relevant data can be collected, an understanding of sub-components of the factor can be developed, and key challenges and opportunities that each factor presents in addressing VAWIE can be identified using standardized question sets. The assessment methodology postulates that understanding of these challenges and opportunities for each of these factors aids practitioners in gaining a nuanced understanding of the interplay between these factors that impact violence against women in elections. This approach supports understanding of the structural, cultural and institutional barriers that may create conditions for violence against women in elections in a particular country or locality. Through this approach, the assessment tool can be grounded in the specific operating environment being analyzed to ensure that the complex relationships among stakeholders and events

that may specifically impact violence against women in elections are captured, which may uncover or predict potential violence against women in elections.

Assessment Factors[24]	
Status of Women	Addresses broad concerns related to the status of women in their local and national communities, and helps identify root causes of violence against women in general and in elections.
Women's Access to Election Process	Examine gender dynamics specifically related to political and electoral processes, as well as democracy, rights, and governance issues more broadly. Categories of this analysis explore the gender dynamics related to the electoral legal framework, election administration, voter registration, women's political participation as voters, activists, and the role of political parties.
Trends in Violence Against Women in Elections	Identify incidents and trends of violence against women that occur within the context of the electoral cycle; examine triggers for gender based violence against women in elections.
Responses to VAWIE	Explore responses to VAWIE being implemented by official actors and civil society, including political parties and media. Identify strategies to reduce or prevent violence against women during the electoral cycle.

The VAWIE assessment report contains:

1. Description of methodology, including any specific customizations necessary for country context;
2. Overall assessment of key challenges and opportunities in addressing violence against women in elections;
3. Specific windows of vulnerabilities and opportunities for each factor; and,
4. Overall recommendations for strategic and programmatic responses, including prioritization of these recommendations.

In the case of this assessment in Zimbabwe, very few customizations were made to the developed methodology. IFES used the standard question set developed from original research and consultations of the Strengthening Election Administration and Civic Participation. The only deviation from the question set was to allow the flow of conversation, questions targeting the specific group with which discussions were happening, and facilitators were methodical about ensuring the content of the entire question set was covered. The pool of stakeholders remained consistent with the methodology, as did the analysis.

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[24] These assessment factors are inspired by CARE's GAF (available at http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Gender%20Areas%20of%20Inquiry.aspx), IFES' Gender and Elections Analysis tool, original VAWIE research, and USAID's ESF and Best Practices in Electoral Security.

Analysis

Factor 1: Status of Women:

"As little girls we are taught to give up our seat and sit on the floor so that little boys can sit in those seats comfortably; if we are taught this from such a young age, how do we expect to see women and men as equals in political life and in decision making roles?" -Mutare, April 2018

Zimbabwe has a relatively substantive framework for protecting women's rights. Zimbabwe is a party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Zimbabwe is also a signatory to the SADC and AU Protocols on Women. The SADC Gender Protocol calls for at least 50% representation of women in all areas of political decision by 2015.[25] It also requires party members to "ensure that perpetrators of gender based violence…are tried by a court of competent jurisdiction."[26] The Protocol to the ACHPR on the Rights of Women requires that party members, "adopt and implement appropriate measures to ensure the protection of every woman's right to respect for her dignity and protection of women from all forms of violence, particularly sexual and verbal violence."[27]

Zimbabwe's 2013 constitution was celebrated by women's rights advocates and leaders because it outlines equality and non-discrimination between men and women in society, and contains numerous provisions regarding women's legal and political rights. Zimbabwe has also has passed the following policies and legislation to protect women's rights:[28]

1. The National Gender Policy (2004), to mainstream gender in all sectors and promote equal advancement of women and men;
2. The Domestic Violence Act (2006);
3. The Gender Implementation Strategy 2007-2010;
4. The First Schedule of the Public Service Regulations (2000), prohibiting sexual harassment;
5. Amendments to the Labour Act (Act 7 in 2002 and Act 17 in 2005) prohibiting the demand of sexual favours in return for recruitment for employment, promotion or any other related activities.

One gap in the legal framework is that the electoral act does not specify a gender equality strategy. Gender is only mentioned in passing in Section 3, which is a broad provision that permits all citizens to participate in government without discrimination based on "race, ethnicity, language, gender…" etc., as

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[25] "Report on the 13 July 2013 Harmonised Elections," Zimbabwe Election Support Network, 2013, p. 55 http://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/ZESN-2013-Advance-Harmonised-Election-Report.pdf

[26] "Electing to Rape: Sexual Terror in Mugabe's Zimbabwe," Aids Free World, December 2009, p. 44 http://www.swradioafrica.com/Documents/23919945-Electing-to-Rape-Final.pdf

[27] Ibid.

[28] Concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women." February 13 – March 2, 2012, pg. 2, http://evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/-/media/files/un%20women/vaw/country%20report/africa/zimbabwe/zimbabwe%20cedaw%20co.pdf

well as section 6, another broad provision that prohibits political parties from discriminating based on "race, ethnicity, sex, gender…" etc.

In reality, focus group research described that women's lives are often governed by starkly different expectations and norms, despite the evolving legal framework. In Zimbabwean society, women are home makers and child bearers, men are decision makers of the household and protector; women are often seen as secondary citizens. Women are largely expected to be submissive to their husbands. A FGD participant explained that "even if they are more educated or are in positions of power; when women come home they must take on the submissive role in the relationship." FDG participants asserted that the practice of bride price can lead to de facto "ownership" over wife/women and which can be tied to domestic violence and politically motivated gender based violence (GBV) in society. Men are the primary perpetrators of this violence; however, women are also complicit. Several focus group members discussed abusive practices from female in-laws to uphold the patriarchal tradition. Religion plays a large role in Zimbabwean society and many focus groups brought up the example that 'Eve was created from the bone of Adam and therefore men are superior to women'.

Unemployment is currently a major problem in society. However, women are play an important role in the economy especially as market vendors in the informal sector. . FGD participants explained that even though many women sell fresh produce and are increasingly becoming the breadwinner of their families— in most cases they are still expected to give their earned wages to their husbands. Nevertheless, increased access to economic spaces has somewhat resulted in more leverage and bargaining power for women.

Many women in the elite social class, can also testify to the challenges surrounding patriarchal control of the political space coupled with generations of deep restrictions to freedom of expression in general. This is especially true for young, well-educated and affluent Zimbabwean women who

> *"We were raised for a country that never existed."*
>
> - N.M. (age 35), Harare

were raised in the hope-filled post-independence era only to see that space close. Women's opportunity to contribute to the political and intellectual leadership of their country has been confined by societally imposed views on the role of women in both political and domestic spheres both during and after Mugabe's rule. Some of these women - who might be expected to embody the rising political class of the new generation in Zimbabwe – expressed feeling caught in this limbo on the margins of political space all of their lives. Just as politics stagnated under Mugabe, so did the evolution of liberating gender norms, leaving Zimbabwe decades behind the society this generation of women was raised to believe in and lead. the post-Mugabe political landscape suggests little change or opening for women's political participation.

Women with disabilities suffer rejection from society, starting within their own families who may seek to marry them off or otherwise cast them off. Struggling to be included in their families, women with disabilities who enter politics face a rejection that starts in the home and extends to their participation in the public sphere. Women from minority groups similarly face multiple barriers and discrimination.

These barriers can create obstacles against simply persevering through life on a daily basis, let alone participating in politics and elections. The position of many women in Zimbabwe's LGBTQI community is best summarized in the following FGD comment "From the LGBTQI community we feel that politics isn't important because we are looking for survival and looking for our rights. I ask what will I get out of it."

Factor 2: Women's Access to Election Process

During the 2013 elections, CSOs were not permitted to conduct voter education. As a result, many pregnant women and new mothers stood in extremely long lines, unaware of the fact that they were qualified for preferential treatment. There were also cases in which these women were actively denied preferential treatment, resulting in disenfranchisement.[29] It has also been reported that in urban areas in particular, voting queues were between 5 and 8 hours long. Thus, many women elected to stay home and fulfil domestic duties instead of waiting in line to vote.[30] Some women interviewed confirmed that women will leave a polling station if the line is too long in fear of facing domestic abuse should they not complete their duties at home. Women in the interviews cited a global shortcoming of women failing to understand the significance of voting.

Another issue is that women were shut out of the registration process due to unfair documentation rules.[31] When providing proof of residence, house documents are often not in the woman's name. As a result, many registrar officials turned women away until the last 30 days of registration when these strict requirements were amended.[32] In addition, some married women reported that officials from the registrar rejected their registration because they could not produce marriage licenses. The time required to produce proof of marriage is lengthy and reportedly deterred women in this situation from completing the process. Women also reported that officials from the registrar changed their last names to their husbands' last name without permission.[33] This created issues during voter identification due to discrepancies between the Voters' List and their own identity documentation. Despite these barriers, more women than men are registered to vote in Zimbabwe, possibly attributed to the fact of men leaving their towns and communities to find jobs elsewhere, resulting in failure to register to vote.

> *"We gave you a chance with Grace [Mugabe] but you failed and lost your chance."*
>
> -Various male respondents generalizing about Zimbabwean women in politics

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[29] "Report of African Union Election Observation mission to the 31 July 2013 Harmonised Elections in the Republic of Zimbabwe." *Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN)*, 2013, p. 55-56, http://www.zesn.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/ZESN-2013-harmonised-election-report.pdf

[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid

[32] Ibid

[33] "Electoral Commissions Forum of SADC Countries Election Observation Mission Report Zimbabwe Harmonised Elections" , ECF- SADC, July 2013, https://erczim.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/1.-final-report-zimbabwe-elections-corr-3.pdf p.17

Women face steep barriers and exclusion in elections not only as voters, but also as candidates. There is a general lack of public acceptance of women's agency, individuality and inherent worth as political actors. Many view women's participation as a token or a privilege granted by men. This is demonstrated by numerous examples where male political gatekeepers discussed women's participation in nominal, generalized terms. We heard repeatedly that "we [male political actors] gave you [women] a chance with Grace [Mugabe] but you failed and lost your chance." Grace Mugabe was brought up frequently in FGD, where her actions were consistently viewed as a serious blow to the women's empowerment movement because she is now a point of reference for making sweeping claims about women in politics. It is common for political leaders and media commentators to use bad examples of individual women leaders to justify arguments that women are incapable/incompetent political leaders in general.

Similarly, throughout the 2013 electoral cycle, political parties continuously excluded women from the process, arguing that since a gender quota of 60 National Assembly seats was in place there was no need for further inclusion.[34] Women interviewed for this study reported that this attitude about the quota is harmful for women because it decreases their political legitimacy and makes them 'puppets'. Interviewees reported that the quota system gives men leverage to say, "you're not good enough" and that "the government had to intervene for you to get here, you're still not good enough." They report that quota women are viewed as proxies for men and don't have their own political agendas.

This experience is shared by female journalists, who report facing routine sexual harassment and discrimination, and who are viewed as incapable of reporting on political stories no matter how much they ask to write those stories. Newspaper editors are often friends with candidates and, the women journalists claim that when a candidate asks the editor not to have a woman reporter report on him, the editors comply and take the woman off the story. The women journalists we spoke to explained that their editors will not send them to report on political events because it is "too dangerous for women". In the rare cases they do get to report on such events, they are not given adequate resources to do so. They are only offered informal "help" from their agencies – which, for example, might consist of a male colleague saying "oh, we can't drive back tonight, we have to share a room." The women journalists report that opportunities to participate in workshops and other professional development opportunities are generally viewed as perks offered in exchange for sexual favors to the editors, or opportunities to take advantage of women when they are away from home. As a result, many women leave the profession altogether and go on to marketing/PR positions. This has a double negative consequence, because of its impact on both the content of reporting on women in politics and the harm to the individual journalists themselves. Media coverage of women in politics is replete with gender bias. In contrast to the more substantive coverage of male politicians, female politicians are more often discussed in terms of gossip, fashion and marital status. Media often reflects society and its values; thus, the exclusion of women from political reporting contributes to the proliferation of repressive false narratives of women, which in turn precludes access to the political domain.

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[34] Ibid.

Women are active in political parties, but they are rarely political party leaders. Parties are structured with youth wings, women's wings and the "main wings" – which are the *de facto* 'men's wings'. Political party meetings are dominated by men. When women express their interest in attending they are often told, "they aren't allowed to be here, these are political meetings", which directly implies that politics is an explicitly male space. Women also discussed how corruption adversely affects their ability to campaign. In particular, the practice of vote buying leaves women at a disadvantage because they have less access to resources. Political parties often resort to using bribes of food aid or material support, especially in rural areas, which many women do not have ability to access. In general, access to political funding was repeatedly cited as a daunting barrier to women seeking to enter office. The Gender Commission and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe is actively working to address this.

Other entrenched cultural norms and practices have the same effect. When political parties seek out traditional leaders to instruct their constituents on whom to vote for, they generally exclude female candidates. In the FGD, women explained that when they express their desire to run for office or to participate in politics within their church communities, they are typically rebuffed by pastors who claim

> *"If the husband does not want to expose his wife to such an environment he will instead run for office himself. Going against this will lead to divorce and women feel intimidated."*

that women's participation "will dent the image of the church." Furthermore, women who want to contest for office may require the permission of their husband. Interviewees explained, "if the husband does not want to expose his wife to such an environment he will instead run for office himself. Going against this will lead to divorce and women feel intimidated".

Factor 3: Trends in Violence Against Women in Elections

Zimbabwean women fear both profound physical violence in relation to their electoral participation, as well as more subtle forms of intimidation and domestic violence. Impunity for this violence and intimidation allows such acts to continue unimpeded. Re-traumatization at the hands of law enforcement and lack of trust in the legal system strongly deter women from seeking justice.

The specter of 2008 continues to cast a long, dark shadow on women's political participation in Zimbabwe. Turnout in the 2013 elections was reported to be lower due to fear of a repeat of 2008's violence, especially because the political

> *"A woman still cannot question an MP in parliament without being [told] her thighs are too big."*

dynamics remained largely unchanged under Mugabe's continued rule. Although the political opening ahead of the 2018 elections has improved the political climate to some degree, the trauma of 2008 remains. It is reported that political actors often invoke references to the violence of 2008 in order to intimidate voters into toeing the party line. The powerful memory of 2008 is sufficient to instill fear and coerce behavior, without requiring parties to revert to actual violence (i.e., it is enough to 'shake the matchbox' to remind voters of the 'fire' of 2008). [35] This practice of "shaking the matchbox" has negatively affected women's perceptions of the forthcoming elections. Despite protections and laws,

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[35] Cheeseman, Nic, and Brian Klaas. *How to Rig an Election*. Yale University Press, 2018.

women fear casting a ballot with an independent choice because they are afraid someone will see who they are voting for and they will be beaten. Women cite impunity for the crimes of 2008 as proof that the risks are still present.

Women candidates bear the brunt of political violence. These women are constantly being labeled as whores and prostitutes, and their marriages are publicly and grotesquely called into question Even once elected into office, women politicians cannot escape degrading commentary; "A woman still cannot question an MP in parliament without being [told] her thighs are too big." If a woman candidate is unmarried, she is accused of entering politics to find a husband and it is said "If she can't run a household, how can she run a constituency?" Participation in political rallies is seen as a demonstration of 'loose morals' because politics is viewed as violent, male territory. Many women reported that they face threats of physical harm from all sides including: political opponents, members of their own parties, family members, and members of their community at large. Women regularly cite the threat of divorce in retaliation for political participation. Domestic violence cases for women candidates, journalists and CSO activists were all recorded in the interviews.

> *"Few months back I was a national treasurer for [a major political party], then rumors was sent around about me being a lesbian and I felt violated and had to leave."*
>
> -Bulawayo, April 2018

Intraparty VAWIE is significant. The youth wings and women's wings are not seen as equal to the rest of the party, and these create room for abuse of women especially for those that are vying for party leadership positions. Much abuse reportedly comes from within the parties, especially if a woman goes up against a man for a party position. Rigid notions of masculinity make it difficult for men and women to work together in politics; it is not viewed as "normal" for a man to give away power to a woman, and people will say "you are selling out our identity." Women stated that "if you manage to be selected by your own party to be the candidate, you can experience violence before you go to nomination court to notify the ZEC – you can experience violence right outside the nomination court to file papers as a candidate because violence comes from your rivals in your party." Sexual bribery is a rampant issue, and many women are told outright that they must have sex with party leaders to advance or to gain a nomination for a candidate position.

Both politicians and civil society actors engaged in door-to-door campaigning are commonly subjected to catcalls, sexual harassment and assault. Civil society activists promoting voter registration faced extra pushback. Under Mugabe soldiers were deployed to register voters; as a result, many people have assumed that young CSO activists are associated with the ruling party. Consequently, these young CSO activists have faced abuse and harassment while carrying out their duties. Women engaged in door-to-door campaigning or VR efforts reported that men regularly tried to make sexual advances. Women also report that they often respond to such behavior by self-censoring their speech, their dress and their public visibility.

> *"Our freedom of expression is repressed, I fear what others will say and do to me. When campaigning you [women] can't be as blunt as a man, otherwise you will be labeled something and even physically violated… the moment you resist, you are violated somehow."*
>
> -FGD participate, Mutare

Women have also stated that they feared not only the direct act of violence but potential repercussions associated with it. For example, they are concerned that being politically active may result in getting caught in a mob or arrested and brought to jail, where they could be raped. The issue of ruling party members collecting serial numbers of voter registration slips ahead of the 2018 election also contributed to violence. Both men and women have encountered this issue and there have been incidents of young boys being beaten after refusing to give their voter slips to the police or the military.

Impunity plays a large role in allowing this climate of fear to persist. Interviewees frequently referred to the role of the police in failing to protect or even actively contributing to VAWIE during the Mugabe regime, during the years when the state and the ruling party were inseparable. In today's post-Mugabe

> *"Women are objectivized in the political space. They are told point blank that they have to sleep with the men in order to rise to power, otherwise it will never happen."*
>
> -FGD participant, Bulawayo

era, the current police leadership has made efforts to distance the body from its past in this regard, but the full impact of this remains to be seen. . Women report that their aggressors have also been met with impunity at the hands of traditional justice. For example, one VAWIE survivor was told by a local chief council that the she deserved what happened to her because she did not behave according to social norms for women. Some FGD participants suggested that it would be helpful to have a different institution or mechanism for reporting electoral violence so they do not have to take reports directly to the police. In contrast, others reported productive synergy between ZEC and police in 2018. For example, in Bulawayo it was reported that a woman complained to the ZEC about being pressured to give her serial number to a party actor. The ZEC informed the police who took immediate action. The woman interviewee felt that it was the ZEC's intervention that made the difference, because the police had not been responsive in the past. This illustration of cooperation between ZEC and security actors is encouraging.

Factor 4: Responses to VAWIE

There are several windows of opportunity, particularly with regard to ending impunity for VAWIE in the 2018 electoral process. Ahead of the 2018 elections, Zimbabwean police forces publicly declared a policy of zero tolerance for election-related violence, harassment, and intimidation. The National Prosecuting Authority has not made any similar declarations, but there is reason to believe they wish to respond to election-related violence, given the oft-professed call of the Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Priscilla Chigumba, (who previously served as a justice on the High Court) that "cases must result in convictions." It appears that political will is building amongst key actors who wish to ensure that the issue of impunity for VAWIE is addressed through the legal chain. There is an opening to strengthen the capacity to make arrests and the willingness of prosecutors to bring cases before the special courts (although this willingness remains untested).

Zimbabwe has made significant strides in amending and enacting legislation on gender equality. Zimbabwe has passed seventeen pieces of legislation to advance this objective in addition to Constitutional and Gender Commission provisions.[36] The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2008 covers many forms of VAWIE taking place in the physical world (physical violence, rape, assault, etc.). The introduction of the Cybercrime and Cybersecurity Bill last year offers a potential window to prosecute crimes of VAWIE Online, as discussed in Part II.

VAWIE largely went unreported in the 2008 elections, which is attributed to the role of the police as perpetrators at the time and as instruments of the ruling regime. At the time, women were often revictimized or victim-blamed if they tried to report to the police. Cases were not taken up or investigated, so perpetrators walked away with impunity. Addressing the role of police in protecting against VAWIE and their responsibility to provide security and access to justice for survivors is the most significant area to be addressed today. Some reports from the FGD suggest that this is beginning to change, both thanks to statements affirming confidence in the police's role by police leadership as well as cooperation between ZEC and police in addressing electoral issues. In the current electoral period, the police are vowing to say no to electoral violence. The police issued a press statement on March 20th announcing that no one has the right to demand registration slips. The announcement also asked the public to file a complaint when such a request is made. Additionally, the police are under order to arrest perpetrators of political violence. In order to further address this issue, IFES' Canadian-funded "Ending Impunity for Violence Against Women in Elections in Zimbabwe" project is working to assist police and prosecutors as they support survivors of VAWIE seeking to file their complaints and bring their grievances into the justice system. Through this program, IFES is offering rapid response assistance to foster healing and resilience in survivors. Additionally, IFES is continuously monitoring and documenting incidences of VAWIE in order to increase accountability of perpetrators and to secure justice for survivors.

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[36] International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. "Zimbabwe Country Study: Effective law and policy on gender equality and protection from sexual and gender-based violence in disasters". 2017. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Gender-SGBV-Report_-Zimbabwe.pdf

Outside of the law enforcement sector, there have also been modest developments in party politics. Political party codes of conduct now exist, but interviewees did not tend to believe they would be effective at holding parties accountable since there are few accountability mechanisms. Likewise, perception of political party accountability is as important as the actual mechanisms – there is low awareness of even the minimal codes that do exist, which leads many to believe that the parties operate with complete impunity.

The Zimbabwe Gender Commission and other section 12 commissions (such as the human rights commission, peace commission, etc.) are working closely together on GBV and election violence. There is a need for better synergy between the government commissions and some civil society actors, including in understanding mutual scopes of mandate in order to better coordinate and complement the interventions implemented by these respective parties. The Gender commission is working with UN Women ahead of 2018 elections to organize a Gender Observatory and is organizing meetings to underscore non-physical forms of violence. As a result of the political violence in 2008 violence, a GBV organization called the Musasa Project provided shelter and protection to survivors while referring them to health and legal services as needed.

PART II –

Social Media and Women's Political Empowerment: A Sentiment Analysis of Online Violence and Harassment in Zimbabwe

Introduction to the Sentiment Analysis of VAWIE-Online

This study couples nuanced cultural knowledge gained through focus group discussions and field interviews with powerful machine-learning software that use artificial intelligence to meaningfully process millions of online posts to analyze online harassment and violence as it affects politically active women and men in Zimbabwe ahead of the historic 2018 elections. We examine politically-violent online sentiment and discourse using a sample of 213 male and female members of parliament, the Senate, the Cabinet as well as a variety of political activists and figureheads.[37]

This analysis reveals that online violence against women in politics is very widespread and is alarmingly rising in Zimbabwe. Women are attacked across the cyber-sphere, and psycho-social and physical threats are the most common forms of online aggression. Among those cases with an identifiable perpetrator[38], the overwhelming majority of perpetrators are men attacking women (76%).[39] The forms of violence women experience across the cyber-sphere are varied and include direct threats of physical and sexual harm, name-calling, denigrating and demeaning comments. In many other cases, social media users discuss potential violence or threats to political women posed by third parties, amplifying the perceived threat and the climate of fear. Targeting Zimbabwean women with VAWIE-Online rhetoric is not limited to the physical borders of Zimbabwe. Internet users in other countries are also perpetrating VAWIE online in regions such as in South Africa, USA and UK.

Women with high degrees of public visibility are frequently labelled as social misfits ('*hure'* or prostitute), spinsters, unmarriageable, bitch, adulterous, corrupt and witch); labels that are associated with denigrating or deviant attributes in Zimbabwean culture. While such terms were also used against men, the interpretation of these is different given gendered meaning attached to the labels. Traditional femininity in Zimbabwe assumes obedience, chastity, monogamy, innocence, caring, trustworthiness and cultural compliance. Discourse in cyberspace raises and exaggerates antonyms of these traditional traits and identifiers by vilifying and mocking women active in the political space. This discourages women from participating in Zimbabwean politics and elections. The fact that women's voices are seldom amplified on online platforms further contributes to the overall issue of VAWIE online.

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[37] 113 MPs and Senators; 44 ministers and PSs; 29 political leaders/women wings and youth members and 6 other politically active women. Full sample described below and in annex.

[38] 29% of perpetrators of acts against women are identifiable by sex, and 30% of perpetrators against men are identifiable.

[39] Men who experience online assaults are similarly mostly attacked by other men (79%)

Scope and Focus of the Zimbabwe Sentiment Analysis

The sentiment analysis of Violence Against Women in Politics and Elections (VAWIP/E) in Zimbabwe underscores the pressures faced by women in online spaces, where the extent and intensity of abusive discourse constitutes a fierce assault on personal security and confidence of those it targets. Even from this limited pilot, the need for more effective means of combatting online violence was evident. This preliminary exploration determined immediate priorities of the violence against women online ahead of the 2018 elections. The goals of this study include the following: calibrating the analysis tool to Zimbabwe, reviewing historical violence, describing the current situation, outlining the inherent violent subtypes and identifying areas for further intervention. The findings from the Zimbabwe VAWIE/P sentiment analysis are intended to inform IFES' program priorities and engagement plans in order to thwart further violence against women in elections and politics.

The present study covered the period of January 1, 2013 – April 20, 2018, thus covering VAWIE around the 2013 elections as well as the broader scope of VAWIP following the 2013 elections through the lead-up to the 2018 general elections.
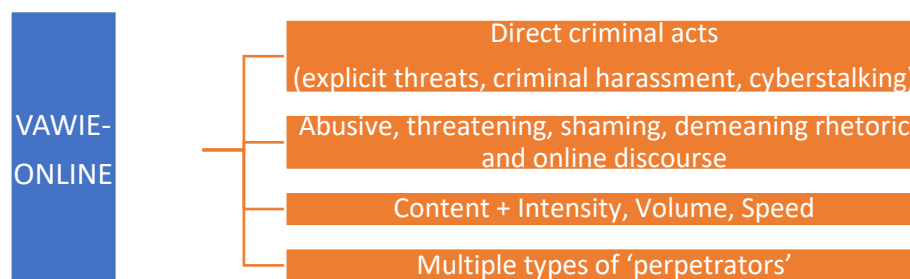

Figure 1. Unpacking "VAWIE Online"

Design of the study

The methodology for the present study is based on the principle of replicable design, using a structured model to measure the gendered aspects of online political/election violence across a vast data pool of online content. Using a methodology to carefully select a culturally-sensitive and politically-pertinent research sample based on possible targets and types of violence, we employ a sentiment analysis software to identify, extract, quantify and categorize opinions expressed across social and other online media to determine the strength of opinions, the underlying emotions and the charge (positive, negative or neutral) of the sentiments expressed. The tool has the ability to collect and analyze online content to extract evidence of aggressive, abusive and violent behavior as far back as 2008. Therefore, it serves as a very powerful tool for extracting and analyzing current and historical evidence for violent utterances against politically active women. The model is based on the premise that social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are universal public forums for self-expression, where many people

interact and share their experiences, understandings and opinions about all variety of topics. This includes the expression of a broad range of violent utterances against politically active women. Such attacks can cause damage by inflicting fear and psychological harm on their targets. By applying this model to gender in elections, the methodology provides a measurable assessment of the presence of election violence online. With this information, electoral stakeholders can firmly understand the extent of this issue and work to address it.

The findings presented here are the result of a pilot effort and draw on emerging resources being developed under IFES' leadership in "VAWIE-Online" and through coordinated access to Crimson Hexagon. The conceptual basis of the project is primarily drawn from *"Violence Against Women in Elections: A Framework for Assessment, Monitoring and Response"* (IFES, 2016) and *"Gender Specific Election Violence: The Role of Information and Com*mun*ication Technologies"* (Bardall, 2013).

An overview of the methodology is provided below. Further information is available upon request.

Selection criteria and sampling methodology

The VAWIE/P methodology employed here is founded on IFES' typology of VAWIE in general which defines the multiple forms of violence (physical, sexual, psychological and economic), the multiplicity of potential targets of violence as well as the many different potential identities of actors (including both individuals and institutional/organizational entities) that perpetrate this kind of violence.[40] The methodology monitors social media content across selected, context-relevant components of this global typology (Annex I). The method measures both men and women, in order to monitor proportional differences in the experience of online violence between the sexes.

Context-pertinent categories and subcategories of potential targets were identified from the universal typology, based on focus group discussions conducted as part of a global VAWIE assessment and on consultant with Zimbabwe political analyst experts. Given resources available for the pilot, the sample was intentionally limited in size in order to focus on calibrating the analytical tool to context.

Universal Categories –VAWIE Targets	Categories tailored for Zimbabwe 2013 – 2018 (pre-election)	
Political	Political	• Elected officials • Political Appointees • Political Parties and Subsidiaries
Institutional		
Professional non-state/non-political		
Private non-state/non-political	Private non-state/non-political	• Selected politically engaged women leaders and activists

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[40] Bardall/IFES 2011.

The current Zimbabwe pilot study primarily focused on the political category of potential targets of VAWIE/P. For the political category, the sample retained 157 elected (or appointed) officials (House of Assembly & Senate). Of these, 113 were from the House of Assembly; 29 from MDC-T Party and 52 from ZANU PF. Of the 29 MPs from MDC-T, 16 were women and of the 52 MPs from ZANU PF, 17 were women. A total of 32 Senators were monitored, 9 of whom were from MDC-T (7 women), 15 from ZANU PF (8 women) and 8 from other parties (all men). Of these 113 elected officials, 48 of them were females (42.5%).

The study also covered the Executive Cabinet, specifically Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. A total of 44 officials were monitored, 25% of women were women. 22 Ministers (three of which are females) and 20 Permanent Secretaries (seven of which are females). Six other politically active women were identified during the FGD and included in the sample. In all, the sample contained 118 men (65%) and 64 women (35%). Official Government of Zimbabwe sources were prioritized where available. Complete information on sample selection and data sources is available upon request.

Using this sample of potential targets and the four main types of VAWIE/P forms, distinct algorithms (called "monitors"[41] in the parlance of sentiment analysis) were created to search for and analyze four different types of violence-related content and discourse covering a time period from January 01, 2013 up to 20th of April 2018, which includes the last election and some preparatory activities related to the 2018 elections.

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[41] A monitor is customized building and analysis tool within Crimson Hexagon. Through the creation of a monitor, you can analyze specific conversations across various content sources. Once it has been built, you can explore the metrics that a monitor presents through a wide variety of visualizations and modules.

Summary of Sample Selection

1. Elected Officials	National Assembly	81	men	48	Zanu-PF	35
					MDC	13
			women	33	Zanu-PF	17
					MDC	16
	Senate	32	men	17	Zanu-PF	7
					MDC	2
					Other	8
			women	15	Zanu-PF	8
					MDC	7

2. Political Appointee	Executive Cabinet (Permanent Secretaries)	20	Men		13
			Women		7
	Executive Cabinet (Ministers)	22	Men		19
			Women		3

3. Political Parties and Subsidiaries	Political Parties (all)	27		
	Party Leaders	23	Men	18
			Women	5
	Women's wings (all)	7		
	Women's Wing Leaders	3	Men	0
			Women	3
	Youth's wings (all)	7		
	Youth's Wing Leaders	4	Men	2
			Women	2

There was a double count of a woman who lead a women's league at the same time being an MP.

4. Other politically active women	Women noted in FGDs/consultations	6		
	Affiliated to political parties	5	ZANU PF	1
			MDC	
			Independent	1
	Associated with political parties	1	ZANU PF	0
			MDC	1
			Other	0

Recognizing that VAWIE is culturally-specific wherever it occurs, IFES analyzed the context for VAWIE in Zimbabwe during the field assessment in March-April 2018, conducting nine focus group discussions (FGDs) and ten interviews with government officials, civil society, women leaders, journalists, religious leaders, youth groups, and elected officials from throughout the country, meeting over 111 people. The research suggested the following subtypes in the four primary categories of VAWIE.

Universal Categories – VAWIE Types (on/offline)	Tailored Categories – Online Violence in Zimbabwe 2013-2018 (pre-election)
PHYSICAL	• Direct harm to principle target • Implied harm to principle target • Direct harm to a proxy • Implied harm to a proxy
SEXUAL	• Threatened rape or other forms of *physical* sexual violence
SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL	• Marital-related (marital infidelity/respect for martial duty, motherhood, etc.) • Competence/Intelligence • Witchcraft/Sorcery • Appearance • Bestial comparisons • Sexual orientation/gender identity
ECONOMIC	• Withholding monies • DDOS • Threats to financial resources including material goods (i.e., threat and support for arson, theft, etc.)

Using these identified tailored categories, we developed a lexicon of associated words and phrases in English, Ndebele and Shona. This lexicon was used to create the algorithms, as explained below.

One of the most important research findings of the present study is a deeper understanding and specification of the typology of VAWIE/P. VAWIE in online spaces is, necessarily, a non-physical form of violence because it takes place in a virtual space. However, physical threats are very common and the intense fear and intimidation that take place in online spaces can have very tangible, material impacts including on the victim's physical and mental health and their economic resources. The content of messages transmitted in VAWIE-Online reflects all four universal forms of violence (bodily harm, sexual, socio-psychological, and economic).[42]

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[42] For example, an Instagram post threatening a candidate with rape and death would be a case of both physical and sexual intimidation. Online messages that maliciously attack a person's intelligence, morality, integrity or body image to shame, intimidate or degrade a person are psychological forms of VAWIE. Similarly, many messages threaten to rupture the social fabric of the victim's life, for example by suggesting the victim should be ostracized by their religious community, rejected by their families, divorced, or even exiled from their community (thus the term "socio-psychological"). Economic violence also abounds online. This refers to "acts of control and monitoring of the behaviour of an individual in terms of the use and distribution of money, and the constant threat of denying economic resources. The control mechanisms may also include controlling the victim's access to healthcare services, employment, etc."[42]

The identification of these subtypes is significant for both the Zimbabwean analysis, as well as for the field of research more broadly. Some components of this emerging, detailed typology are expected to be generalizable (for example, the subtypes of physical violence) while others, such as the subtypes of psychological violence, are highly context-specific. The identification of new subtypes is important because it reveals the deeper nature of the violence, including the intersection of gender norms with context-specific cultural and religious values and ethnic identities. The deeper understanding of the types of violence experienced increases the ability to define targeted responses.

Defining the Algorithms

Sentiment analysis draws on tailored algorithms or "monitors" that reflect the elements being studied (in this case, the type of potential target and the type of violent/harassing language). Before launching an analysis, each monitor is carefully constructed and tested ("trained") repeatedly to ensure that it captures the correct data and that it excludes non-pertinent information ("noise"). Given the billions of commentary data points accessible on the internet, Crimson Hexagon is an integral tool for computing data and autonomously generalizing findings and predictions based on a credible, iterative form of artificial intelligence called machine learning. Machine learning enables computers to parse put massive amounts of data, to make determinations and predictions about the issue being studied.[43] In the case of the present study, we developed algorithms to enable our computer system to identify specific, distinct expressions of violence against women in politics and elections in Zimbabwe as articulated on public internet spaces, measure and classify it and predict its future occurrence.

> *"Machine Learning is the science of getting computers to learn and act like humans do, and improve their learning over time in autonomous fashion, by feeding them data and information in the form of observations and real-world interactions."*
>
> *-Daniel Faggella, 2017*

In all, we constructed 22 Opinion monitors (detail available upon request) to reflect the types of election violence recognized (using the lexicon of physical, psycho-social, sexual and economic terms and phrases identified by the FGD) and the stratified groups of potential targets (elected officials, political appointees and parties and party subsidiaries, other politically-active women), disaggregated by sex. Two additional monitors were used to create multi-layered formulae containing all types (and their prevalent subtypes) of violence stratified by sex.

These 24 algorithms were each applied to review all publicly available web content from January 1, 2013 through April 20, 2018, including all publicly visible Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Facebook posts, as well as public content published by news media websites, blogs, etc. as described below.

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[43] Nvidia

What dimension of cyberspace?

Cyberspace is multidimensional. Individuals share content both publicly and privately, retaining different degrees of control over their content and what is said about them. Commentary and reporting on the internet appears in both more 'formal' spaces such as recognized commercial media and web-published journalism as well as weakly-regulated/unregulated public fora such as chatrooms, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, blogs and commentary spaces on media sites. Each area of cyberspace poses different risks regarding the presence of VAWIE and requires different approaches to deal with VAWIE instances. This distribution of 'cyberspaces' can be summarized as follows:

		Content Access	
		Private	**Public**
Content Management	**Private**	T1. Private conversations between individual users. Access and management limited to direct users (ex: FB PMs, WhatsApp, Skype, Telegram, etc.)	T2. Private user makes public posts on a self-managed web platform (ex: making a public wall post on FB)
	Public	T3. Formally published public media and journalism (commercial media, journalistic sites, greater degree of regulation)	T4. Weakly-regulated or unregulated public fora (Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blogs, etc, other forms of 'chatter')

Sentiment analysis software only analyses content in the public domain. Because users have greater control over content that is posted in social media spaces they manage (for example, user posts to the public Facebook page of a candidate), there is an inherent skew in the data because targets of abusive behaviour delete such posts immediately almost without exception, after which point the data cannot be retrieved. Thus, the present study captures primarily T3 and T4 and some residual T2 cases that are not self-censured. It does not capture any data from T1.

Findings

Global Trends

- 60% of violent discourse and content in the political space was directed at women for the period from January 2013 to April 2018.
- VAWIE online appears to be progressively increasing since 2013
- The volume of VAWIE online spikes around election periods and reflects political events generally.
- Women experienced higher consistent levels of violence-related online expression in the inter-election period.
- Comparatively, women experienced nearly three times the amount of physical-violence discourse than men and 24% more psycho-social violence.
- Men received 14 more sexual violence-related discourse than women, mostly related to homophobic content and accusations of having committed rape.
- Male internet users accounted for 78% of posts against elected women and 75% of posts against female cabinet members. Men also posted against other men at equivalent levels.

Zimbabwean cyberspace is rife with expressions of violent, hateful and otherwise harmful sentiment, both in the form of damaging communication such as calling names, making denigrating remarks, and making direct threats. Meanwhile, others seemingly innocuously amplify this violence through neutral discussion, sharing or other related chatter. FGD identified the existence of destructive use of Twitter in Zimbabwe, where character assassination is rife, advanced by trolls (some paid) who doctor and leak damaging videos (including the use of "deep faking" artificial intelligence), body shame and demoralize women in the public online space.

Between January 1, 2013 and April 19, 2018, the study identified 332,272 online posts reflecting the four categories of electoral violence directed at the men and women sampled by the study, and their affiliated political parties, out of millions of posts. Nearly three-quarters of these were in connection with the political parties.

> 60% of election violence-related web posts were directed at women in politics.

After adjustments,[44] 40.8% of the overall discourse is qualified as engaging with electoral violence (including VAWIE): i.e., direct threats of harm, abusive attacks, sexually or morally degrading content,

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[44] Men represented 61.4% of the overall sample studied and women represented 38.6%. Comparative percentages presented here have been adjusted by a proportional multiplier accordingly. Within-sex category data and real numbers reported do not reflect the adjustment.

Additionally, Crimson Hexagon produces both sentiment analysis and a more fine-tuned "opinion analysis" of sentiment. Total sentiment analysis identified 90,473 individual posts relating to VAWIE against individuals. Opinion analysis of the same data narrowed the total to 68,623. This report reflects opinion analysis outcomes unless otherwise stated.

harassment, etc. Only 6.9% of this was positive engagement *against* violence (expressions of support, pushback against violent content, etc.). 52% was qualified as neutral engagement (discussion around issues of electoral violence), which amplified the impacts.

Online abuse against women was mostly related to physical forms of violence (72%), followed by psycho-social violence (62%), and greatly exceeded men's experience of these forms of violence. Men and women experienced economic and sexual forms of election violence sentiment at similar levels (Figure 1). Male internet users accounted for 78 % of these posts against elected women and 75% of posts against female cabinet members. Men also posted against other men at equivalent levels.
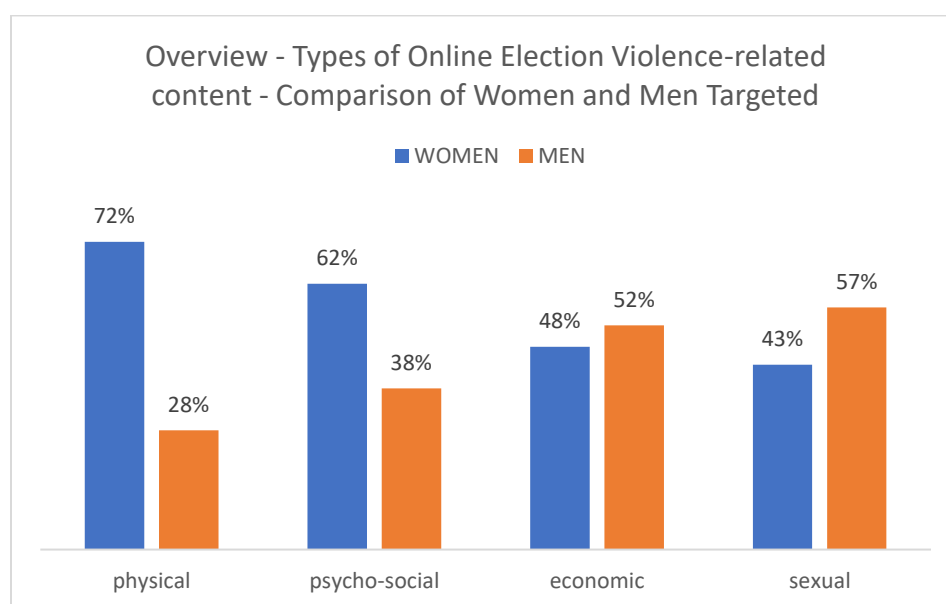

Figure 2. Overview Types of Online EV Discourse

Over the full period from 2013-2018, women were targeted by a comparably high amount of violence when compared with men. As shown in Figure 2, the amount of basic negative sentiments is increasing with time since 2013.

Abusive online discourse targeting men appeared to be closely linked to the electoral cycle, with the bulk of activity taking place directly around the electoral event. In contrast, abusive discourse targeting women appeared to take place in a much more consistent manner across time, although it also spiked during electoral periods. Specifically, although online violence for both men and women spiked around the 2013 elections, VAWIE also spiked in late 2014 when Joyce Mujuru was fired as Vice President. The trend of clustered online violence around elections appears to be holding true during the present electoral cycle, as there has been an observable increase in VAWIE starting from late 2017.
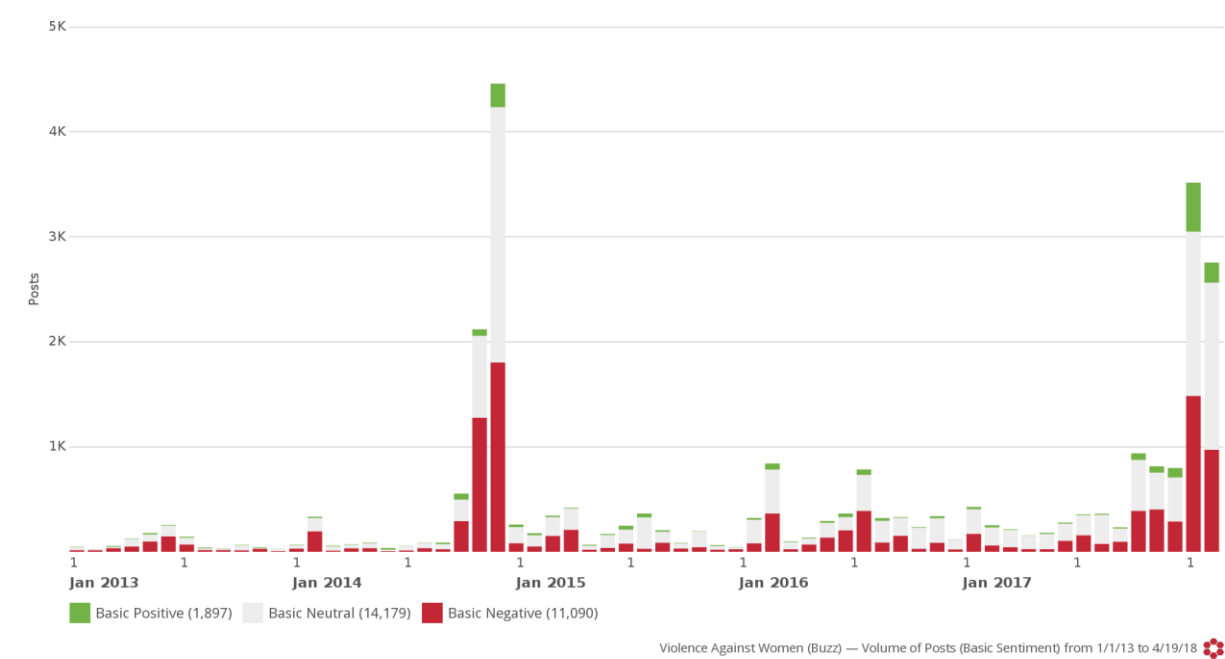
The chart shows:
- Y-axis label: Posts, with gridlines at 1K, 2K, 3K, 4K, 5K
- X-axis labels: Jan 2013, Jan 2014, Jan 2015, Jan 2016, Jan 2017
- Legend: Basic Positive (1,897), Basic Neutral (14,179), Basic Negative (11,090)
- Violence Against Women (Buzz) — Volume of Posts (Basic Sentiment) from 1/1/13 to 4/19/18

Figure 3. Volume of VAWIE-Related Posts for Women in Politics in Zimbabwe

Physical Violence

- Women were the object of proportionally nearly three times the amount of physical violence-related online sentiment than men.
- A number of direct death threats against women cabinet members Oppah Muchinguri and Sthembiso Nyoni were recorded.
- Physical EV-discourse focused mostly on individual political women directly, physical EV-discourse relating to men related both to individual political men as well as their families and supporters.
- Content relating to physical violence tended to be around real or threatens acts in the real world, rather than direct threats made on social media. Posts relating to direct attacks on principle were raised for women like Khupe in relation to the attacks during Morgan Tsvangirai's funeral; Linda Masarira in relation to her arrest and police brutality; Jestina Mukoko in relation to police brutality and also physical attacks in relation to the death of Joyce Mujuru's husband.
- Physical-violence content also included accusations of women committing or plotting murder.

Physical violence online includes explicit threats to cause direct bodily harm to a person in relation to a targeted user's involvement in an electoral process, and/or bodily harm to a proxy (child, family member, etc). In online contexts, written physical violence threats sometimes translate into real-world violence.

Women were the object of proportionally nearly three times the amount of physical violence-related online sentiment than men. This is startling: the consensus of research on VAWIE "offline" (in real-world physical spaces) is that men are overwhelmingly the targets of physical violence, not women. Yet the data in this study suggest that political women face a dramatically more hostile and dangerous environment than men do in online spaces. In general, the threat of physical harm rarely spills over into actual physical harm – by definition, threats are precursors to material harm and are designed to coerce behavior without requiring recourse to actual physical engagement (i.e., the purpose of a threat is to achieve one's demands/objectives by evoking imminent action). Research about physical-world VAWIE explains the high proportion of psycho-social violence among women by emphasizing the special vulnerabilities of women to various forms of intimidation. This research on VAWIE-Online demonstrates a much graver situation: Zimbabwean political women are being discussed in relation to death, mutilation, killing and blood-

> **Examples of physical-violence content March 2018**
>
> *"Ex-Zanu-PF party women's boss Oppah Muchinguri has spilt the beans, saying she feared being killed after she was pressured by a lot of people to give up…"*
>
> *"… have to face Ngozi or live with sad memories of recalling the day you murdered someone. Ask the extremely gorgeous Oppah Muchinguri, she assassinated Tongogara but now she goes …"*

letting at nearly triple the rate as men. In other words, there is no gendered-difference in the content of the violence; women are simply receiving much greater volumes of it on the whole.

Figure 3 illustrates physical forms of online violence against elected men and women across the full period. For elected women, this was especially related to the allusions to physical attacks committed against Thokozani Khupe, Linda Masarira, Jestina Mukoko. This was also in relation to the death of Joice Mujuru's husband. For cabinet women, physical forms of violence were mostly related to contentions regarding threats to Oppah Muchinguri from the former First Lady Grace Mugabe.
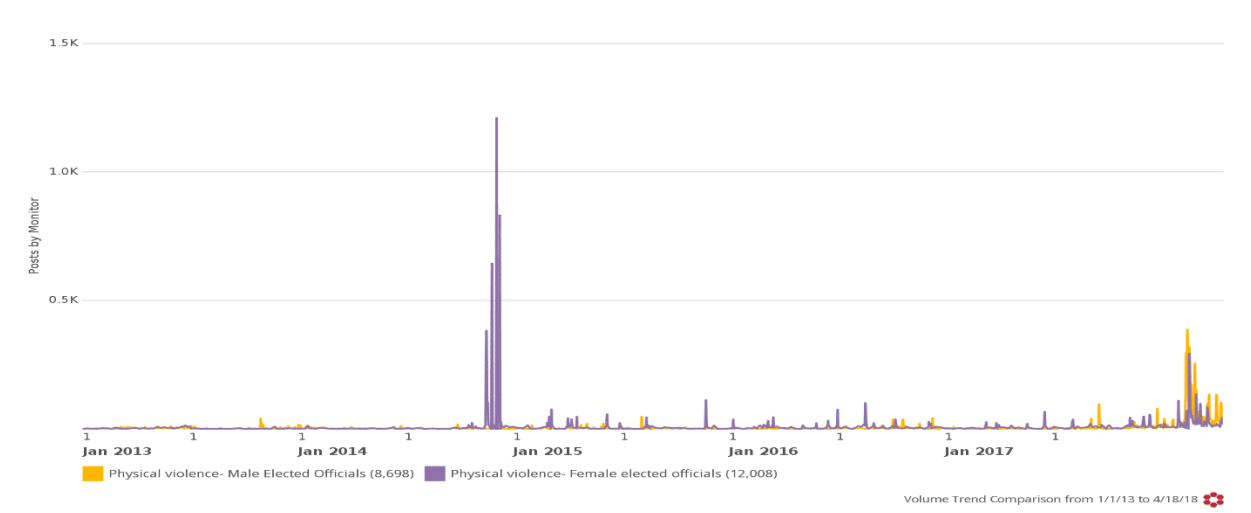

Figure 4. Volume Trend for Physical Violence - Elected Officials

Physical violence was disaggregated according to four strands: direct threats of harm to the principle target (i.e., the woman MP or cabinet member) and direct threats of harm to a proxy of the principle target (i.e., the MP's children, family, friends), and implied/indirect threats to the principle and proxy. For elected women, content focused mostly on the individual women themselves rather than on people surrounding them (Figure 4).

Figure 5. Opinion Analysis for Physical Violence - Elected Officials

Psycho-social violence

- Women received nearly double the proportional amount of psycho-social violent content as men.
- Elected women also experienced a more constant flow of violent psychosocial content than did men outside of election periods
- Elected women generally attracted more polarizing online commentary, with both relatively higher amounts of psychosocial negative sentiments and also relatively higher positive sentiments.
- Psycho-social online content related to women's perceived failure to fulfil social norms relating to marriage and childbearing, and for alleged sexually promiscuous behaviour, provocative dress and/or salacious scandal-mongering.
- Although men also experienced aggressive and threatening behaviour on social media, it did not reflect the scale of that directed towards women and did not contain any of the gender-specific denigrating and shaming content as the discourse aimed at the women.

Psycho-social violence causes harm by inflicting fear on its subject as punishment for their behavior or to coerce their behavior. It can include psychological intimidation, social sanctions and punishment, family pressure and character assassination. It may be sexual in nature, including harassment (unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal harassment of a sexual nature).[45] We used sentiment analysis to classify strands of psycho-social violence according to five categories that appeared most pertinent in the Zimbabwe context: critique marital roles/duties, attacks on competency, accusation of inappropriate personal behavior, ethnic accusations and witchcraft.

Of the individuals studied, women received nearly double the proportional amount of psycho-social violent content as men. Indeed, although women only constituted 35% of the sample, psycho-social violence against them outpaced men in real numbers as well as proportional violence, with 12,443 individual posts identified involving political women (Figure 5).[46]

> Psycho-social online violence emphasized women's perceived failure to fulfil social norms relating to marriage and childbearing, and for alleged sexually promiscuous behaviour, provocative dress and/or salacious scandal-mongering.

[45] Bardall, G. 2015. Towards a More Complete Understanding of Election Violence: Introducing a Gender Lens to Electoral Conflict Research ECPR. https://ecpr.eu/Filestore/PaperProposal/ce51102c-24cb-4161-a3d8-ac125011be4a.pdf

[46] Chi square tests indicate a statistically significant higher share of voice targeted at women (χobt(1)= 4.967, p=0.026).

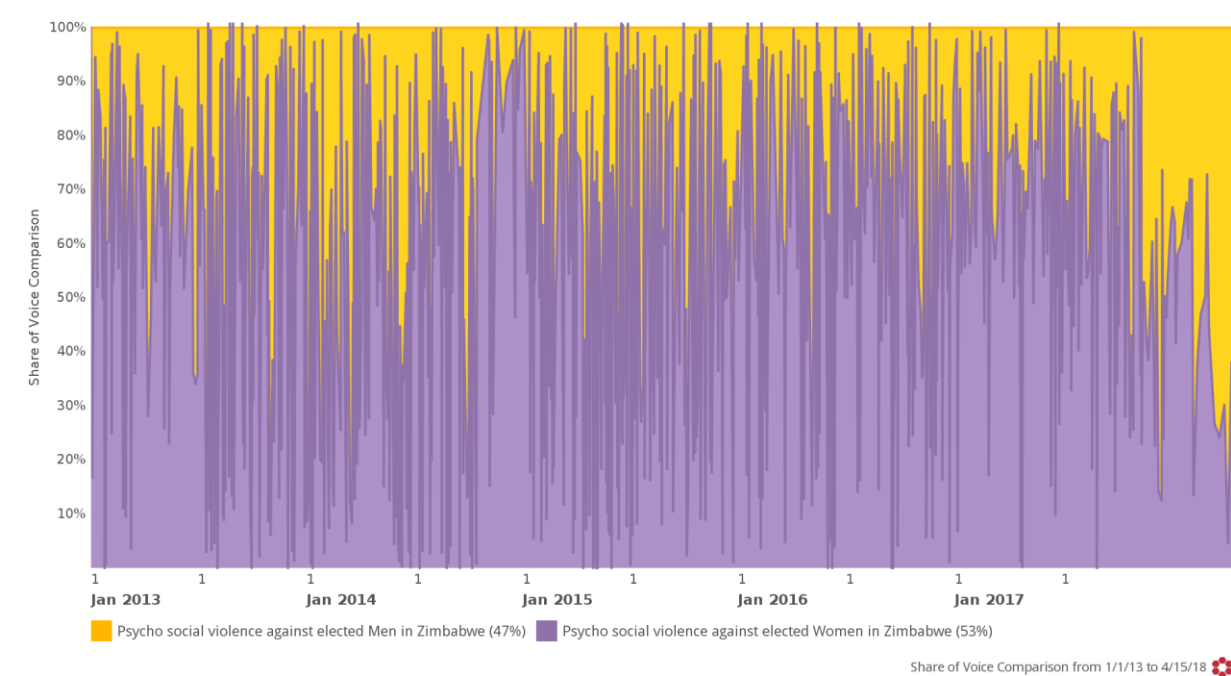| Period	Sex	Observed Voice	Expected Voice	Residual	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
2013-2018	Male	47	58.0	-11.0	4.967[a]	1	.026
	Female	53	42.0	11.0			
	Total	100					

Figure 6. Share of Voice Comparison on Psychosocial Violence - Elected Officials (2013-2018)

Broadly speaking, these findings show that elected women generally attract more polarizing online commentary Women face both relatively higher amounts of psychosocial negative sentiments and relatively higher positive sentiments (Figure 6 and 7). Although they receive more consistent amounts of violent content outside the election periods, basic negative sentiments were found to be especially high during the election periods and other major political changes.
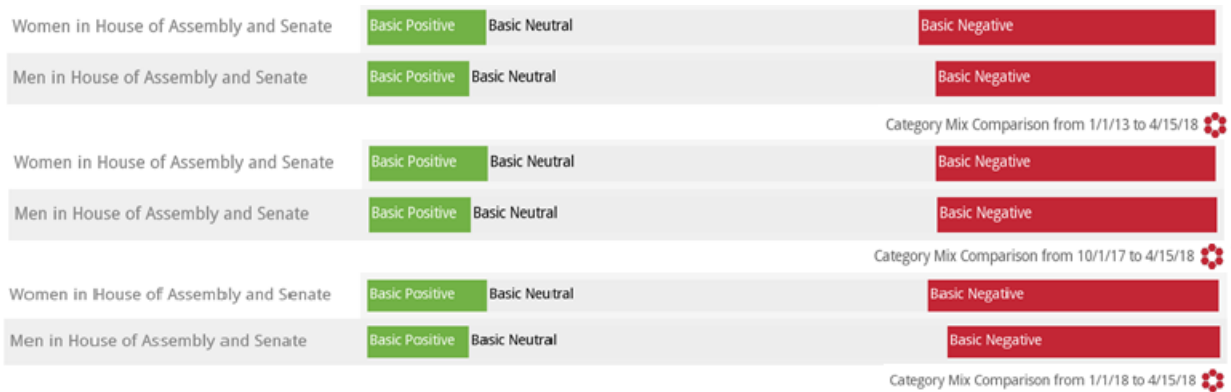

Figure 7. Sentiment Analysis for Psychosocial Violence - Elected Officials

Figure 8. Net Sentiment Comparison for Psychosocial Violence - Elected Officials

Examples of Tweets expressing psycho-social forms of VAWIE March 2018

"I can't believe former VP Joice Mujuru would seek the help from Nigerian witch doctors to kill me. #immature #dontbelieveinsuperstitions"

"That's what marriages do as well mama Khupe, you might be married for 3 decades but if you act in a way which undermines your marriage we don't care how long you were married, you're just divorced. Your working relationship with MT in this past year was appalling for a VP."

"I have increased security here in Harare today after former VP Joyce Mujuru enlisted two witch doctors to remove me from power!"

In Zimbabwe, various forms of psychosocial violence characterized women's experiences online during the period studied. The nature of the violence varied according to distinct subtypes of psychosocial violence, specifically relating to women's perceived failure to fulfil social norms relating to marriage and childbearing, and for alleged sexually promiscuous behaviour, provocative dress and/or salacious scandal-mongering. This violence also varied according to the targets, reflecting different trends for women from different groups such as women cabinet ministers and women elected MPs. Although men also experienced aggressive and threatening behaviour on social media, it did not reflect the scale of that directed towards women and did not contain any of the gender-specific denigrating and shaming content as the discourse aimed at the women.

For example, in Zimbabwe, Oppah Muchinguri, the current minister of Environment, Water and Climate was intensely attacked for remarrying and for her reputed sexual misbehavior. She was deemed a husband snatcher and adulteress in dozens of posts. These attacks spilled over into different areas and often interwove between political accusations and shaming her personal behavior. For example, she was also accused of playing a role in the death of General Josiah Magama Tongogara (whose death occurred at the end of Second Chimurenga but recently resurfaced). In addition, she was accused of allegedly participating in the "*Gukurahundists'* who planned and executed the recent military coup. She was also accused of smuggling related to the killing of

elephants. The intermingling of personal and professional discourse is characteristic of VAWIE-online experienced by Zimbabwean political women (Figure 8).
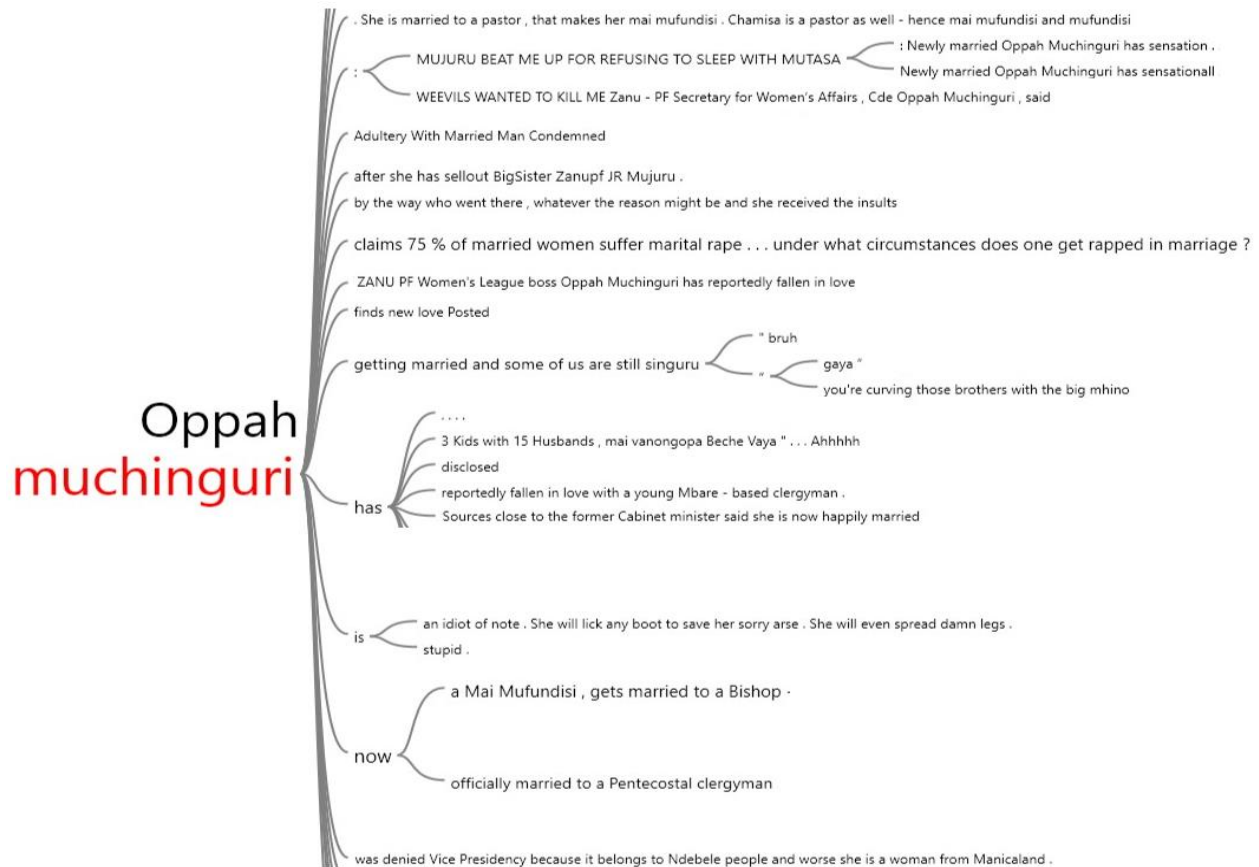

Figure 9. Excerpts for Oppah Muchinguri

In addition to being targeted by a greater relative volume of psychosocial violent content, elected women also experienced a more constant flow of violent psychosocial content than men experienced outside of election periods (Figure 9). Apart from sentiment deemed 'neutral', for elected women, a significant number (3593) of people demonstrated negative and more violent emotions across these posts, such as expressions reflecting unhappiness (2009 posts), disgust (696 posts), anger (582 posts) and fear (273 posts) (Figure 10). This is similar to emotion expressed about cabinet women. (Figure 11).
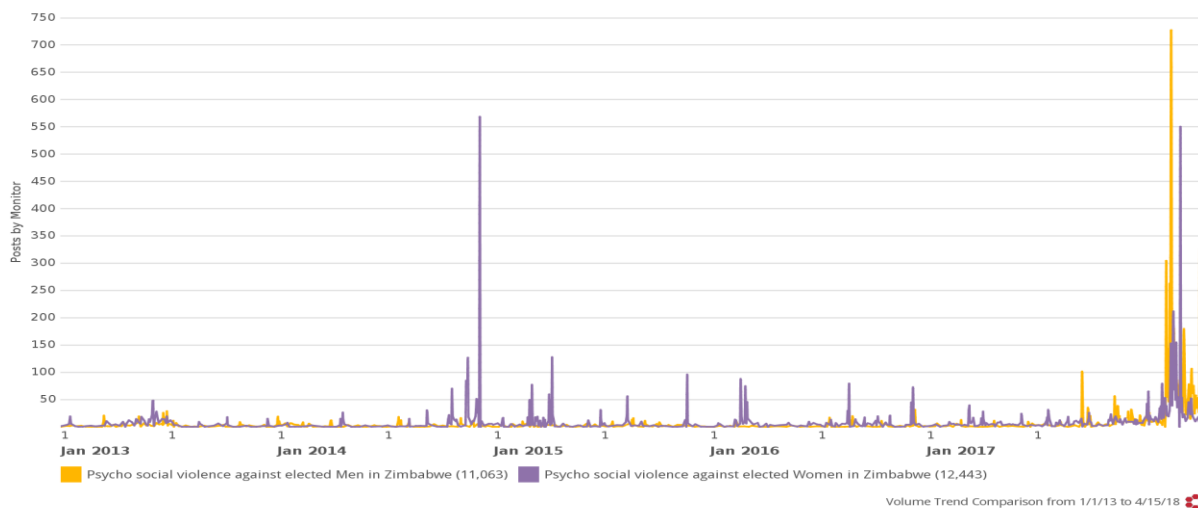
Figure 10. Psychosocial Volume Trend Comparison for Elected Officials (2013-2018)
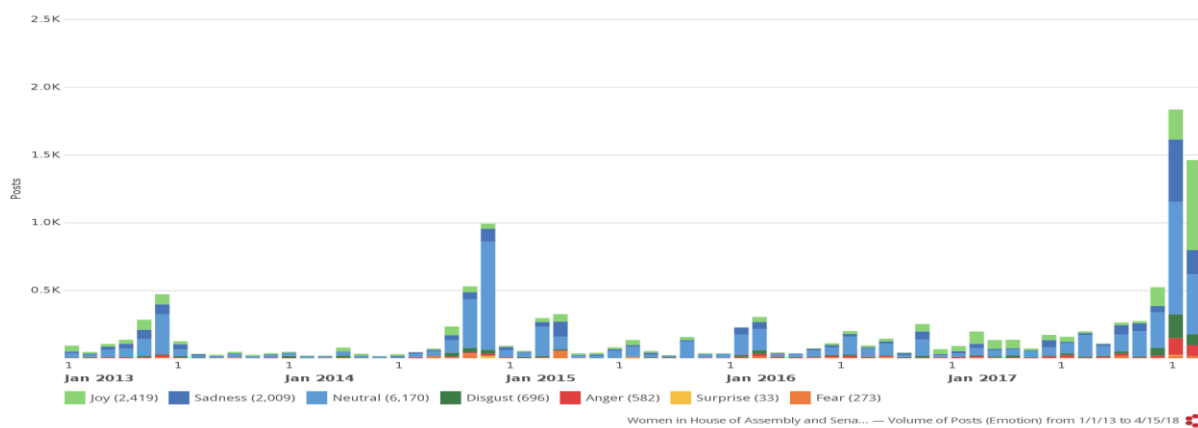

Figure 11. Emotion Analysis for Psychosocial Violence - Elected Female Officials
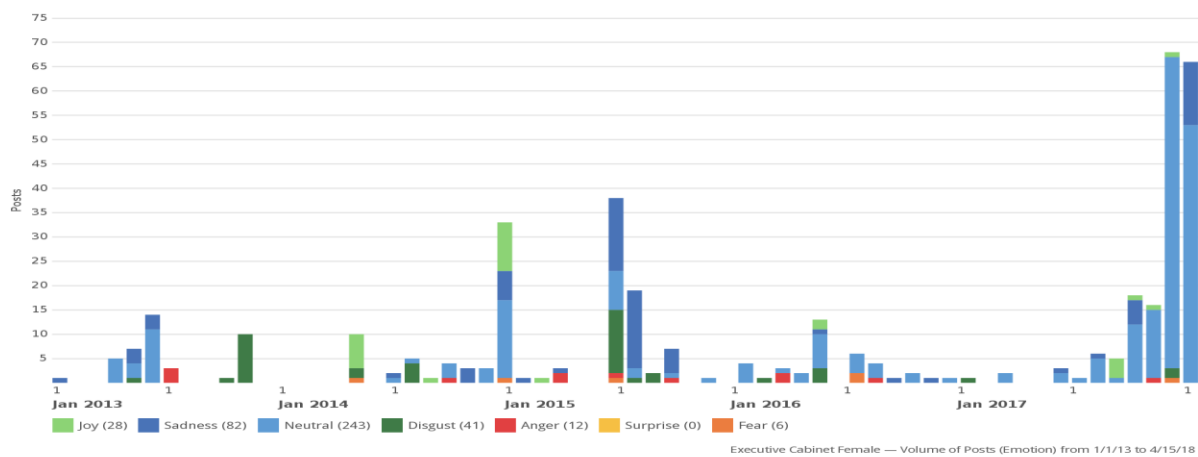

Figure 12. Emotion Analysis for Psychosocial Violence - Cabinet

What were these users posting about, specifically? It was observed that elected women were mostly attacked based on their marital/family status, competency, accusations and engaging in ethnic politics. Attacks on elected women are distributed throughout various categories whilst attacks on men were highly concentrated in competency (46%) and to a lesser extent in accusations and tribal/ethnic contentions. For elected females, there were mostly marital and competency psychosocial issues around 2013 elections, witchcraft and accusations (of plotting to kill the then president Mugabe) around late 2014 as well as a recent rise in ethnic and competency issues moving towards the 2018 elections (Figure 12). Joice Mujuru and Thokozani Khupe faced the lion's share of these psychosocial attacks. Aggression toward Joice spanned the full time-range while Khupe was comparatively a more recent and growing target.
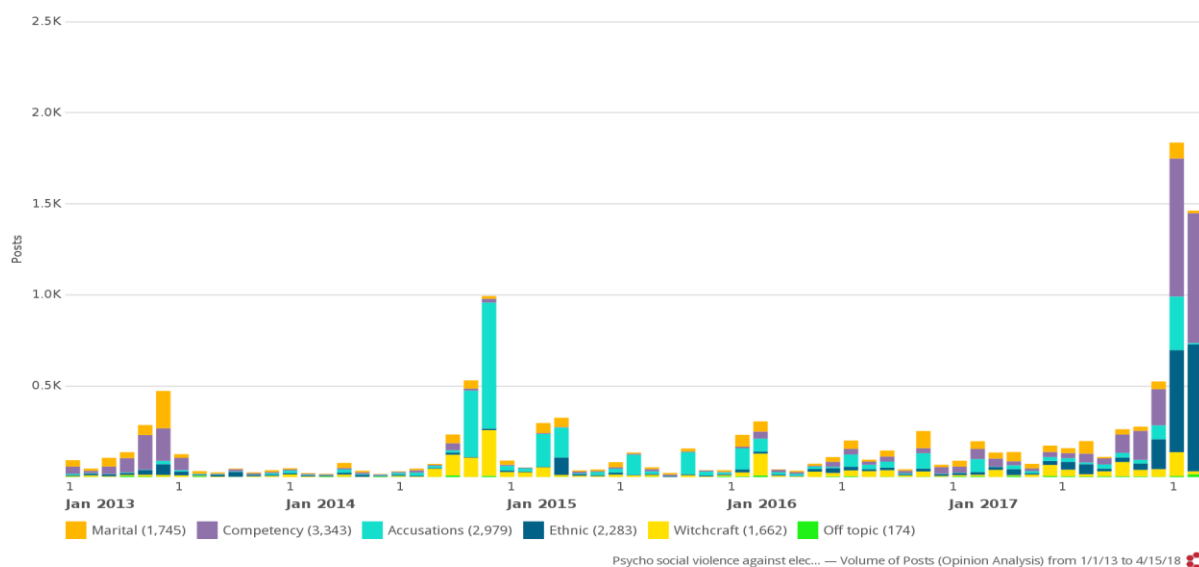

Figure 13. Volume of Posts for Psychosocial Violence - Elected Women

Sexual Violence

- Most women who were targeted by sexual attacks (especially Khupe, Mujuru and Oppah Muchinguri) were attacked with accusations of promiscuous behavior.
- Zimbabwean political men receive significant amounts of sexual-related violent discourse online, mostly related to homosexuality or accusations of committing rape.
- Proportionally, men received overall 9% more sexual violence-related content than women, however traffic around women was more intensely negative (19% higher negative values for content directed at women).

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines sexual violence as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work." Sexual abuse for electoral motives includes politically-motivated rape as a tool of terror and intimidation, marital rape as a tool of repression, sexual harassment, assault and abuse with the objective of controlling, intimidating, humiliating and disenfranchising the victim (including poll workers sexually assaulting voters, male MPs sexually assaulting women MPs, etc), virginity tests and sexual exploitation of female political prisoners and detainees.[47]
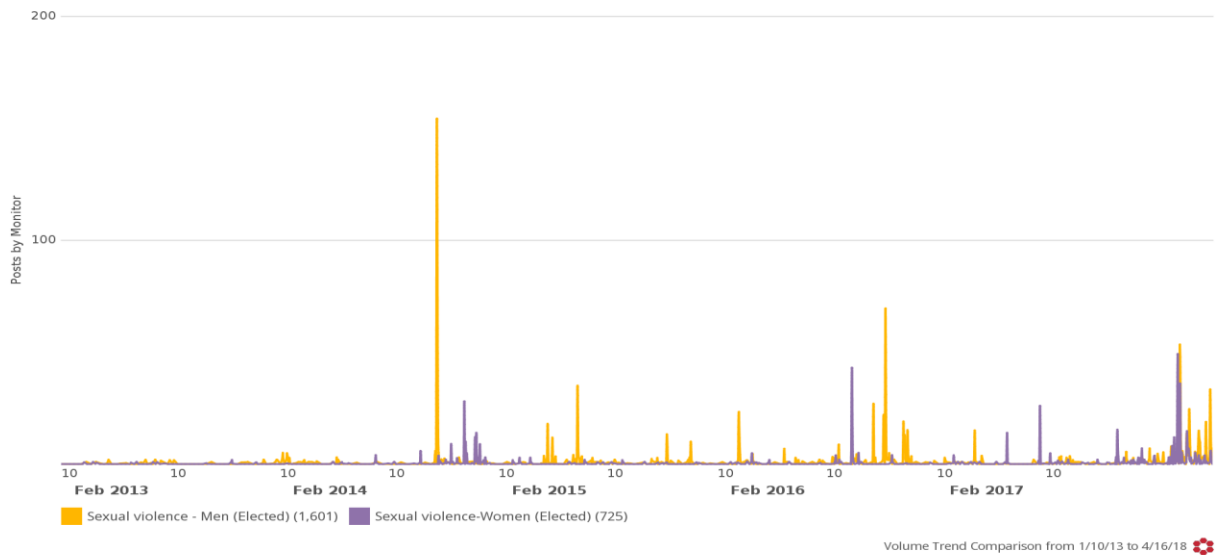

Figure 14. Volume Trend for Sexual Violence - Elected Officials

In this study we sought to make a distinction between threats of committing sexual violence upon a person and accusations of sexual misconduct or sexualized slurs. We categorized sexual threats as posing a risk to the target's physical integrity while slurs and accusations were categorized as attacks on

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[47] Bardall 2015.

the target's moral/emotional integrity. We endeavored to include only direct threats of sexual assault in this section and to only include sexualized insults, accusations, etc as forms of psycho-social violence in the previous section. However, in practice we found that these categories overlapped significantly, thus the data presented here reflected both physical threats of sexual violence and sexualized accusations and attacks on character.
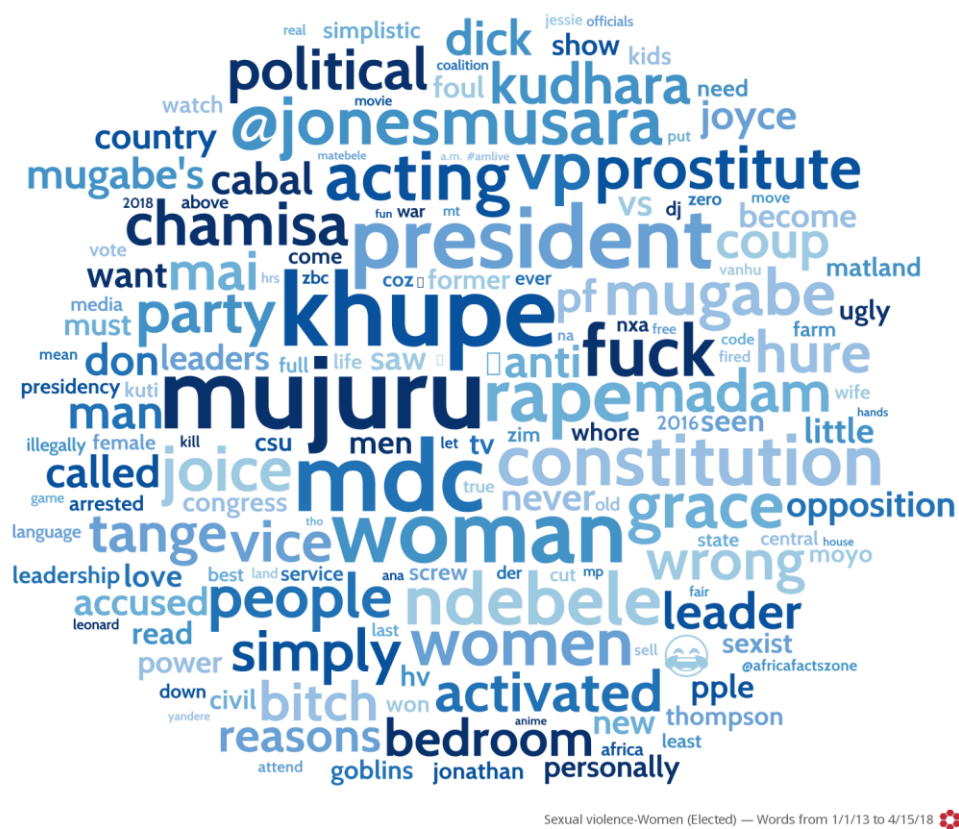

Figure 15. Cloud for Sexual Violence Against Elected Officials

It was observed that elected men received relatively more sexually violent material than elected women and all material was not necessarily tied to election periods (Figure 14). Although men seemed to receive a lot of interaction much of it was primarily related to neutral sentiments. In contrast, women received proportionally more negative sentiments related to sexual violence (Figure 15) and much more diverse forms of attack (Figure 16). Sexual comments targeting men often accused them of homosexuality or of committing rape. Meanwhile, women experienced a much broader range of sexualized attacks, including much higher rates of accusation of prostitution, harassment, sexual blackmail. Nearly half of comments against women reflected attacks based on gender identity and sexism. Furthermore, comments relating to women seem to be significantly increasing during the current election period.
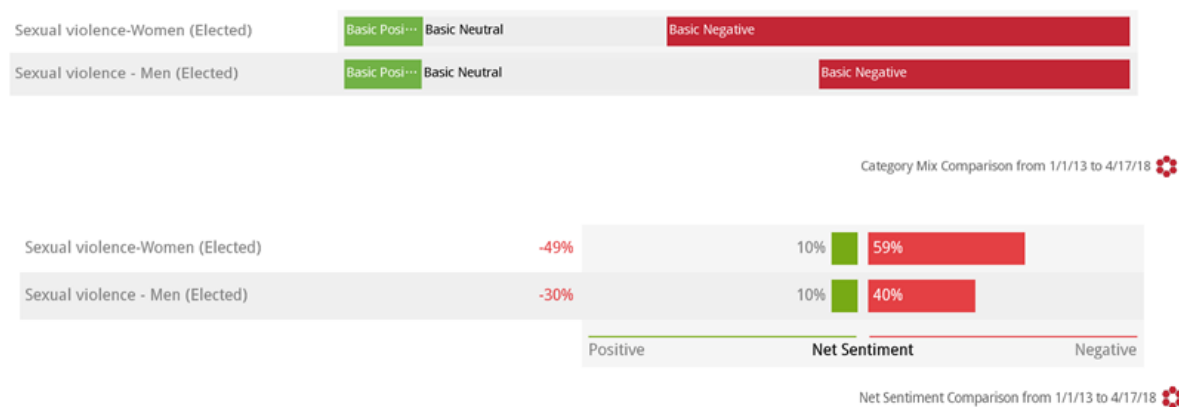
Figure 16. Sentiment Analysis for Sexual Violence - Elected Officials

Figure 17. Opinion Analysis for Sexual Violence - Elected Officials

Perpetrators

- Three types of perpetrators of VAWIE-Online are identified: direct & indirect perpetrators and treacherous sympathizers.
- Identifying perpetrators for online incidents is very challenging because most web content is not linked to identifiable accounts.
- Of those perpetrators that could be identified, men were the most common violent posters, both towards women and men, by a ratio of 3:1.
- Women are much less likely to engage online on political topics relating to contentious or violent issues or sentiment.

Through the Facebook and YouTube self-reported statistics as well as inference from Twitter and Instagram data, 7982 posts (29%) of the posts on women have identifiable sex. Of these posts, 76% came from males. For posts on men in all categories and for all forms of violence, about 11000 posts (30%) had identifiable sex, 79% of which also came from male posters.

The platform has other tools that can be marshalled towards perpetrator profiling. Time and funding constraints imposed limitations of the pilot study on further statistical analysis in this area, however qualitative analysis of the data reveals **three degrees of perpetrator engagement significant to understanding the nature of VAWIE online in Zimbabwe and beyond:**

Direct perpetrator: Instigates the harmful action by authoring threatening or abusive posts. Direct perpetrators can be difficult to identify for a number of reasons including the difficulty of identifying the origin of harmful rumors and the ability of instigators to cover their tracks by deleting harmful posts once a rumor has started spreading in its own right.

Indirect perpetrator: These individuals or organizations contribute to perpetrating online VAWIE by amplifying, magnifying, exaggerating and distorting vicious commentary expressed by direct perpetrators. This happens through re-sharing or re-tweeting violent comments, "liking" violent comments, etc. In some cases, it is challenging to distinguish between direct and indirect perpetrators. Our qualitative review of the content suggests that the vast majority of VAWIE online is generated by users in this group.

Treacherous sympathizer: Sentiment expressed by this category of social media user includes neutral and positive commentary discussing the actively violent content expressed by direct and indirect perpetrators. Although the commentary is not actively violent, neither is it constructive or empowering because it reflects gossip-mongering, salacious rumor spreading and titillation. This form of sentiment expression is considered to contribute to the problem of VAWIE because it deepens the cultural stereotypes that constrict women's empowerment and diverts attention away from substantive conversation. It also contributes to adding to the hype and sensationalism that the subjects of this violence deal with, which intensifies the sense of fear and intimidation they experience, which can re-traumatize victims or have the secondary effect of deterring other women from entering the political space for fear of similar reprisal.

Demographics and Domestic and Global Geography of VAWIE Online

- Domestic content is predominantly traced to Harare, reflecting the greater levels of connectivity and relative wealth.
- Instances of online VAWIE against Zimbabwean women are not limited to the geographic boundaries of Zimbabwe. Many VAWIE posts are linked to user accounts in the USA, South Africa and the UK, reflecting Zimbabwe's human capital migratory patterns.
- International media sources and virulent individual members of the diaspora account for a disproportionate amount of international VAWIE-related content.
- Limited data suggest that internet users discussing VAWIE content are mostly over the age of 35.

An exploration of geographical distribution of a conversation by city and region was performed for content from Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.[48] Based on this, 16,232 posts on violence against women had identifiable locations. Although this sample is too small to make statistical conclusions, it suggests an interesting picture of the geographic distribution of online commentary

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[48] Location data availability begins on September 22, 2009, Facebook location data begins on May 1, 2009 and Instagram location data on September 6, 2014

about Zimbabwean politics, including Zimbabwean political women. Of the identifiable content, the plurality was based out of Zimbabwe (41.4%), however other countries also figured prominently including South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the USA. The trends seem to be following some migratory patterns, South Africa, United States of America and United Kingdom are some of the major common destinations of Zimbabwean migrant workers.
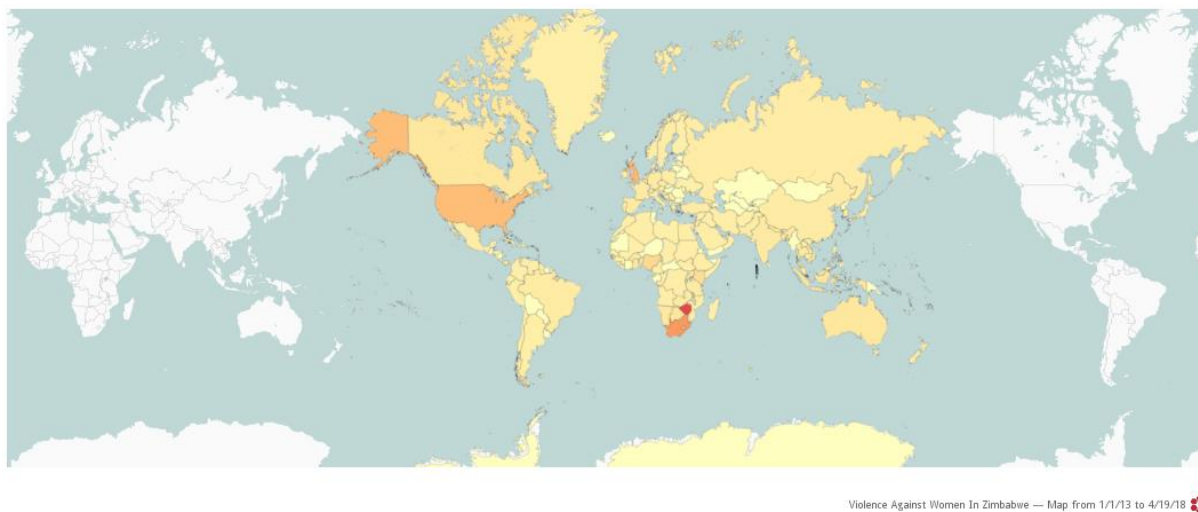

Figure 18. Global Distribution of Origins of EV-Discourse

Figure 19. Distribution of EV Content Source within Zimbabwe

The global dimension of VAWIE is driven by concentrated diaspora communities (and in some cases, individual foreign internet users). In some regions, much of the international content can be traced to a handful of individual users. It also reflects posts by global media that repeat and amplify "viral" stories, many of which are related to salacious claims of women breaking social norms as well as stories that may appear as "human interest" for foreign media consumers but are harmful to the women within the

Zimbabwean context, specifically accusations of political women engaging in witchcraft. Taking the example of posts from the US, the three top geographic zones generating VAWIE-related posts (California, New York and Washington DC) reflected a fairly broad diversity of users commenting on different aspects of the issue (types and targets), whereas VAWIE-related posts from other parts of the country (such as Illinois and Oklahoma) were more often from concentrated groups of individual users.
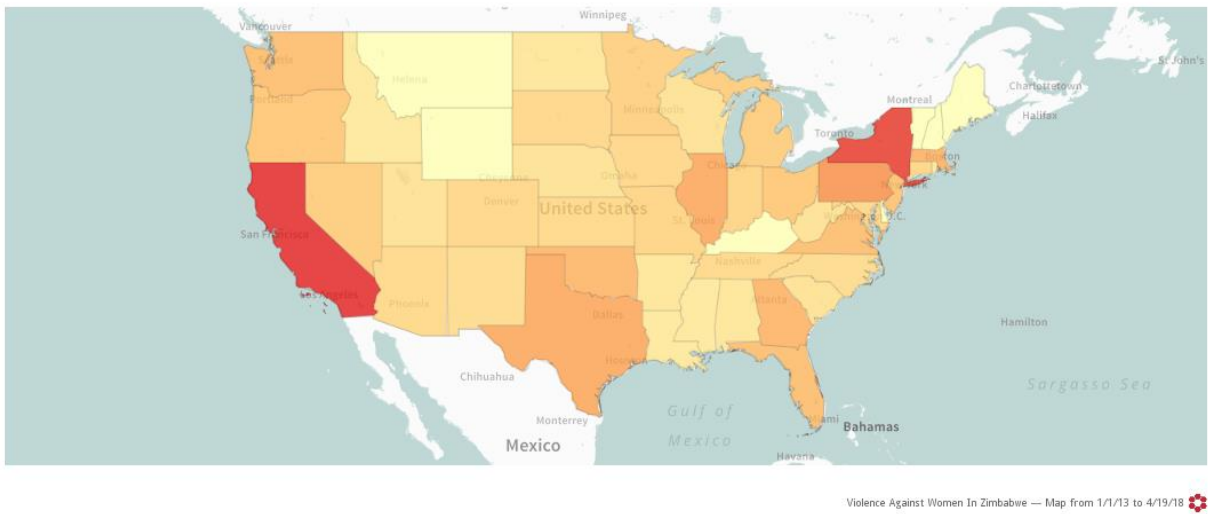

Violence Against Women In Zimbabwe — Map from 1/1/13 to 4/19/18

Figure 20. Distribution of EV Content Source in USA

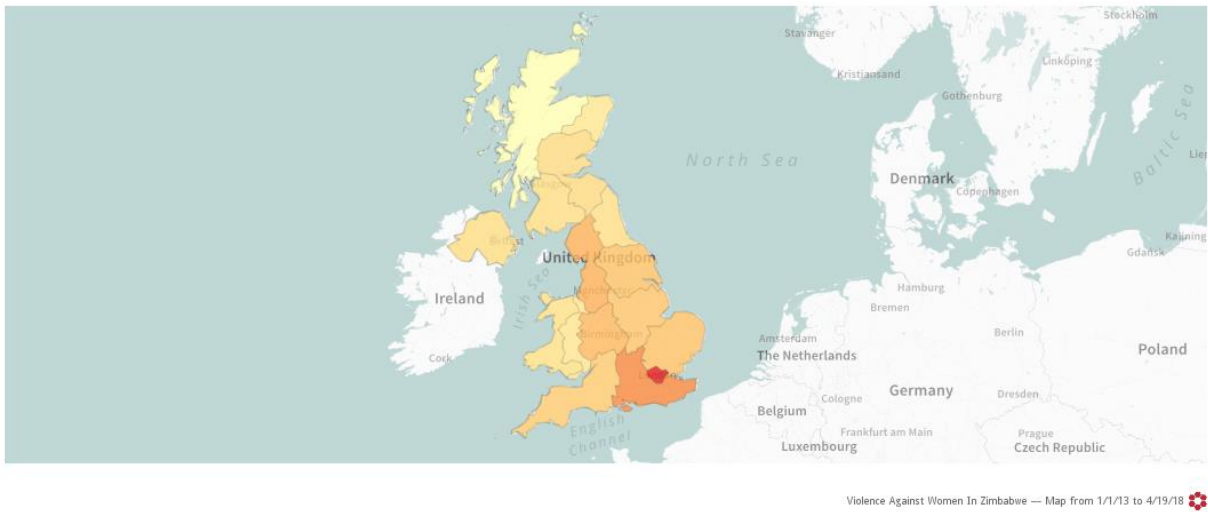Violence Against Women In Zimbabwe — Map from 1/1/13 to 4/19/18

Figure 21. Distribution of EV Content Sources in the UK

Which social media?

- Social media is evolving rapidly and different platforms have different degrees of impact over time.
- Twitter is the most dominant channel used to utter violent sentiments against both sexes in Zimbabwe today.
- Men and women also appear to use social media differently: limited observation suggests that male targets are generally more active on social media and appear to engage with attacks, while female candidates are less active in general and engage less with online assaults against them.

The GDR estimates there are 1 million active social media users in Zimbabwe (6% penetration) and 88 million (5% penetration) active social users on mobile devices. Both groups are growing swiftly (9% and 14% growth respectively in the past year). Facebook is the most popular social media website in Zimbabwe (1 million monthly active users), however only 39% of Facebook profiles in Zimbabwe are declared to be female profiles, compared to 61% declared as male profiles. Instagram is popular as well, with 260,000 monthly users and a similar gender skew (38% declared female users and 62% declared male users).

The gendered manifestations of online violence reflect these trends. For one, the use of online spaces to express violent and abusive sentiment has evolved rapidly in Zimbabwe. Over time, different social media platforms have ebbed and waned in importance as vectors for online violence. For example, for violence against women, we see that Facebook was most used (60%) around the 2013 elections, while Twitter (85%) more dominant towards the forthcoming 2018 elections.
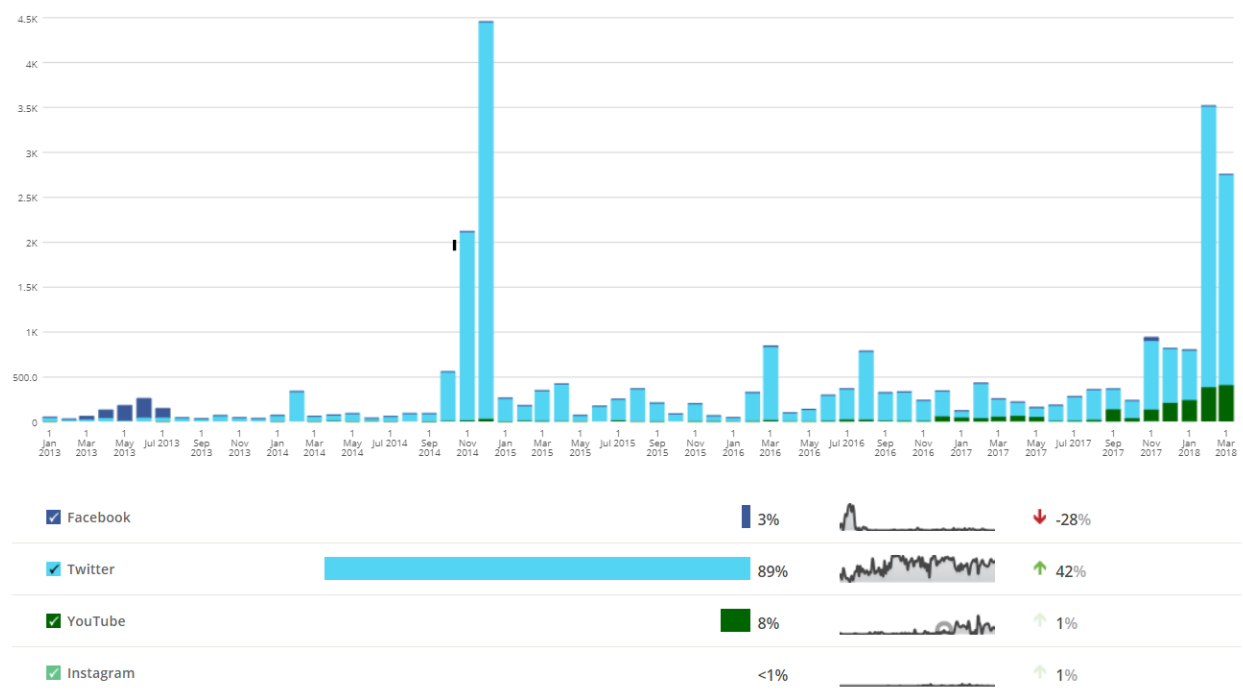
Figure 22. Evolution of Social Media Sources for EV-Content Over Time, 2013-2018

Of the public platforms that are able to be monitored by sentiment analysis software, Twitter is the most dominant channel for the expression of violent sentiment for both men and women. However, women experience online violence more evenly across a broader array of social media than men. In particular, women Cabinet members were targeted by 2.5 times more psychosocial forms of violence on Facebook than were men (19% for women v 7% for men). Women also experienced slightly higher amounts of psychosocial attacks on YouTube (15% for women v 12% for men).

Men and women also appear to use social media differently. It has already been noted that men far outpace women in engaging in election violence discourse online given that men account for over three-quarters of posts. We also found a difference in how the potential targets of violence engage in social media.

Using social account monitors, the project monitored four individuals' twitter accounts, two men (Chamisa and Mnangagwa) and two women (Khupe and Mujuru). The difference in the ways these individuals used Twitter was striking: Chamisa alone comprised 91 % of voice share, while Khupe and Mujuru scarcely used their accounts. Traffic on these women's accounts was overwhelmingly generated by mentions of them by others (mostly men), instead of the women posting directly. It was also observed that Khupe seemed to stop responding from her account when she recently started to receive attacks following the death of Tsvangirai. Mujuru was also observed to

Figure 23. Auto Sentiment for the 'Giants'

hardly engage in posting or replying to posts and she is mostly mentioned on posts by others. Regardless of the user's activities (including Chamisa's vast voice share), Khupe was found to be receiving more negative sentiments than all the other users (proportional to content relating to the social account holder for the current year).
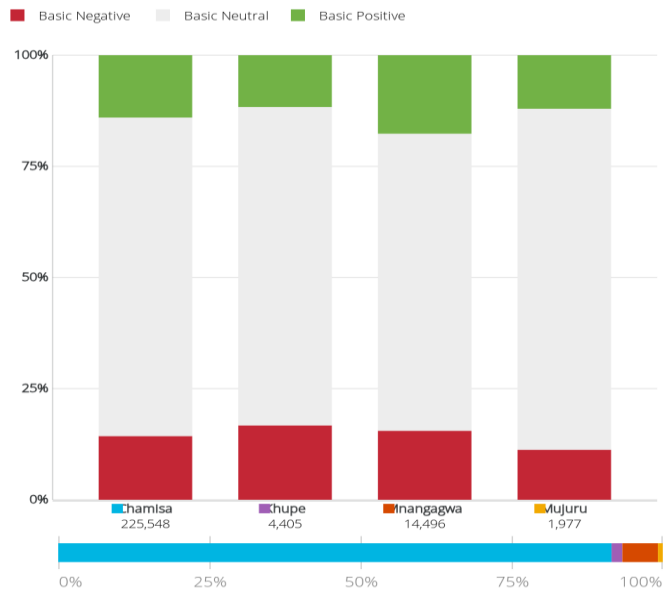
Viral VAWIE Moments and the "Giants"

- Measures of VAWIE online are volatile and the volume of measurable VAWIE online can be dramatically affected by a single individual who "goes viral."
- Joice Mujuru and Thokozani Khupe were particular "lightning rods" for viral moments (Mujuru in late 2014, for psychosocial violence and sexual blackmail and again ahead of 2018 elections, and Khupe more recently following dispute with her party). Many other women were targeted in viral moments as well.
- Political women may be especially vulnerable to "viral VAWIE moments" due to sensationalism of perceived breach of social norms.
- Measurement of VAWIE-Online should take the "viral factor" into account and be measured by multiple metrics including the volume of content, the intensity, the speed and which it spreads and the online impact factor.

The general aggregate findings about VAWIE-Online in Zimbabwe reveal startling and disturbing trends. Among these, we have noted the volatility of online violence in respect to individual targets. Specifically, when an individual topic or person "goes viral" the statistical presence of violent discourse expands exponentially in the space of a few hours or days. For example, 16 November – 9 December 2014 was a period of intense pressure for Joyce Mujuru. On the 16th of November 2014 she suddenly faced about 280 attacks largely on accusations of witchcraft. This topic went viral (about 416 posts) on the 17th and

declined only to sharply rise (636 posts) on the 26th but the attacks were now more diverse; witchcraft, loss of job, sexual blackmail and corruption allegations. On the 4th of December she got about 1386 posts by the 9th of December 2014, a day after her dismissal as Vice President of Zimbabwe, that figure rose to 1927 posts. The rapid nature of viral harassment has great potential to result in intense pressure, intimidation or harm for the target of the discourse. To understand VAWIE-Online in Zimbabwe, we therefore need to take a closer look at the individual cases where violence was most present.

Are women more likely to "go viral" over VAWIE topics than men? There is no definitive answer to this, however we noted women that had several more "viral moments" compared to men. The intensity of the "viral moments" directly reflected the salacious nature of the issue, and women seemed to be especially vulnerable to this because the suggestion of women breaking social norms carried much more weight than men committing the same acts. There are more deeply rooted social conventions, norms, restrictions and expectations on women's moral behavior than on men. This means there is a wider scope for accusations of breaking these conventions. Consequently, such accusations tend to be more dramatic carry and greater shock-value in the form of gossip mongering and sensationalism. Thus, there is reason to believe that women may be more vulnerable to "viral VAWIE moments" given that there is such a high level of attention focused on purported breach of gender norms.

The spike in documented VAWIE online in late 2014 corresponds with the dismissal of Joyce Mujuru from her position of Vice-President on December 8th. One of the first women commanders in Mugabe's ZANLA forces during the war and a former cabinet minister under Mugabe from the time of independence, Mujuru was sworn in as vice-president in 2004. Widely viewed a strong potential successor to Mugabe, in late 2014 the president sacked Mujuru after accusing her of corruption and plotting to kill him. Almost immediately from the time the first official allegations were made, online discourse sprung up around Mujuru, distorting, amplifying and aggravating the claims and inventing new and false rumours, often with explicit sexualized content. Collectively, these threats and denigrations amount to varieties of what is classified as psycho-social VAWIE. At this time, online discussions focused on two thematic threads sexualizing Mujuru's political involvement. On one hand, her ousting from the party was connected to her performance of (or failure to perform) sexual acts to secure her position. On the other, a rumour that Grace Mugabe was threatening to release a sex tape of Mujuru. Both of these threads reduced Mujuru's participation to sexual terms. Furthermore, the second rumour, suggested a threat (blackmail) against her continued political participation.

A major area of online allegations against Mujuru from this time forward was the accusation of witchcraft. In his original allegation of plotting to assassinate him, former president Mugabe suggested Mujuru was acting through witchcraft. Online social media users seized this rumour, distorted it and blew it out of proportion. Interestingly, the gender-specific dimension of the witchcraft allegation may have been diluted in this particular instance. whereas in many cultures witchcraft is often a misogynistic slur, in Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe has accused both men and women in his entourage of threatening him with witchcraft, most notably accusing Mujuru's successor, Emmerson Mnangagwa, of plotting witchcraft against him as well (Mnangagwa was accused of "consulting witchdoctors and prophets as part of a campaign to secure the presidency" in late 2017).

In addition to these threads, at the time of the spike in online activity many posts carried undertones of economic harm towards Mujuru, discussing her loss of employment and alleged corruption, shaming and ridiculing her for her dismissal as VP. For example, violent and abusive online discourse targeted at Joyce Mujuru continued at low but fluctuating rate from 2015 up to late 2017, a point at which the violent utterances started again and are increasing in the lead up to the 2018 elections.

Linda Masarira, current spokesperson of the MDC-T faction led by Thokozani Khupe and well-known opposition activist, is another frequent object of online abuse and violence. Masarira was arrested in May 2015 for insulting the authority of the president, in June 2016 for her leadership of the 'Occupy

Figure 24. Topic Wheel for Women in Politics in Zimbabwe (2013-2018)

Africa Unity Square' campaign. She was also arrested in July of the same year after being accused of throwing stones and burning market vendor stalls. Her December 2016 comments regarding the Ndebele were viewed as incendiary and tribal The comments quickly went viral on the internet where many users responded to her with insults, threats and degrading attacks. Her arrests were also the focus of much online discussion because of reports that her children were beaten and harmed during her time in prison.

Similar to Masarira, Thokozani Khupe, President of the MCD-T party, has come under intense attack in the online space. During this current pre-electoral period, there was a significantly observable increase

in the negative sentiments, especially psychosocial and sexual violence against Thokozani Khupe following some disputes in the MDC-T party. Thokozani Khupe was targeted by ethnic attacks and negative sexual labels (prostitute, bitch and '*hure'*). Thokozani Khupe was mostly attacked in relation to her conflicts with Nelson Chaminsa over the leadership and succession in MDC-T Party.

Mable Chinomona, ZANU-PF politician and deputy speaker of the National Assembly, was insulted and shamed online after losing her position in the Women' League in 2017. Subsequently, Ms. Chinomona was reinstated as a member of the League and promoted to its Secretary after the previous secretary, Mrs. Grace Mugabe, was expelled from the ZANU-PF in December 2017.

Sarah Mahoka, outspoken former member of the ruling party, was also attacked in relation to allegations of incompetency following comments regarding women's dress choices that were interpreted as rape victim blaming. She also attracted a lot of discussions around plots and threats to kill her.

Lucia Matibenga, former member of the MDC-Renewal Team and current leader of the PDP party, was attacked as being incompetent following her assumption of party leadership and 'firing' of Tendai Biti, the founding leader.

In response to death threats, MP Jessie Majome published the following response in the press:

Dear Harare Westerners and friends

THE RETURN OF THE DEATH THREATS!

I got these 4 death threat sms messages last night from 'Hitman' for my family (including my…..wife!) and myself for involvement in, and if I participated in today's epic misrule protest march. I wonder how many others got such threats. The messages are in the pictures below.

But, from the pictures I'm seeing from Victoria Falls (I am conducting Parliamentary Public Hearings on the NPRC Bill) the threats have been a utter waste of time. God is in control! We are not a nation of sheep.
…
Your MP

Jessie Fungayi Majome

These women from the topic wheel (Figure 23) are those with major topics and major voice shares in the cyberspace for the period 2013-2018. However, there were others who also attracted significant attention such as Oppah Muchinguri, cabinet minister, who was mostly attacked for allegations of promiscuous sexual behaviour; Sithembiso Nyoni, also a cabinet minister, who was mostly attacked on corruption and theft allegations (Figure 18).

Youth opposition activist Fadzai Mahere was attacked for her gender activisim, squandering of donor funds as well as her marital status and relationship.

Journalist, opposition figure and human rights activist Jestina Mukoko was attacked for her gender activism and discussed her experience as a victim of real-world physical violence. Mukoko was abducted and tortured in 2008 and has spoken about the incident increasingly in recent years.

Jessie Majome, Harare West, MDC-T MP, received death threats on Twitter. Death threat posts targeting Majome went viral in 2016, starting around April. She personally reported having received these threats from someone she said was named 'hitman.' Several online users retweeted this and it was mentioned in the press as well. Majome also reported having received death threats ordering her not to participate in the Harare protest march. Around September 2016, she started to receive other death threats, many people retweeted the post "*'CIOs' Threaten Majome With Death*". In October she was trending due to the post, "*Zanu thugs attack drag Jessie Majome by the collar in Mutare*" as well as the post, "*Majome Receives Death Threats from 'Hitman' Again*".

Sekai Holland, former cabinet minister under the ruling party, identified and discussed as a victim of real physical violence[49]. As a political activist Sekai Holland was elected to the Zimbabwean parliament in March but had to run to Australia for her life after being brutally beaten up by police. Together with her husband, Jim Holland, they were had to run away.

Tracy Mutinhiri, a ZANU-PF deputy minister, was sexually blackmailed through the viral of allegations of snatching someone's husband. Monica Mutsvangwa, ZANU-PF politician and former minister, was attacked regarding her family and her expulsion from ZANU PF.

Nyasha Chikwinya, MP from ZANU-PF who spoke out against sexual harassment, violence, and discrimination against women during the primaries in 2013, was ridiculed and shamed for her association with a church whose leader has been accused of raping women. In August 2016, she was forced into the limelight with the posts like, "*Women Affairs Minister Nyasha Chikwinya seen at rape accused Magaya's church*" and *"How does Women's Affairs Minister Nyasha Chikwinya attend PHD service 24 hrs after its leader Walter Magaya was arrested on rape allegations."* Such posters sought to associate her with the alleged rape cases and began to question her competence. One comment said, "she probably doesn't even realize how it relates to her job, in other words she is the wrong person for the job."

Using Sentiment Analysis for Real-Time Action & Research Contributions

Most of the study focused on using the sentiment analysis tool to understand the broad nature of VAWIE-Online in Zimbabwe, based on historical data, and also on calibrating the tool for use during the elections. However, we also explored the potential of the tool to conduct targeted and real-time analysis, including understanding the dynamics in the immediate lead-up to the 2018 elections.

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[49] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rb0yuk9Yi3g

In general, we found that the tool offers promising potential to monitor violence in real time. Once the algorithms are created and trained, they are able to run can run continually, auto-enhance and adapt to the changing nature of violence (thanks to the machine learning capacity of Crimson Hexagon) and provide nearly real-time analysis for rapid response needs. For example, from the main dashboard of the software, users are alerted to changes in trends and in specific sub-areas of interest, as with this example illustrated below. The software allows deep detail, such as the identification of the most common times of day for posts.

EXAMPLE: Limited period analysis, pre-2018 elections:

READ OUT ON FIRST 3.5 MONTH OF 2018: *In this period psycho-social (45%) and sexual (32%) forms dominated online EV-discourse, especially regarding ethnic threats (40%) and slut allegations (30%) levelled against Thokozani Khupe. These violent utterances started to rise after the 8th of February with topic waves discussing the conflict between Khupe and Nelson Chamisa over the leadership of the MDC-T following the death of the party's founding leader Morgan Tsvangirai. These discussions continued to rise and split into different topic headings, especially "Chamisa vs Khupe", culminating around March 14th. After mid-March Thokozani Khupe seemed to have stopped using her Twitter account; a possible symptomatic withdrawal effect as a result of incessant bombardment on her account. Joyce Mujuru also featured in the current year attacks mostly around the 18th of March. (Figure 28)*
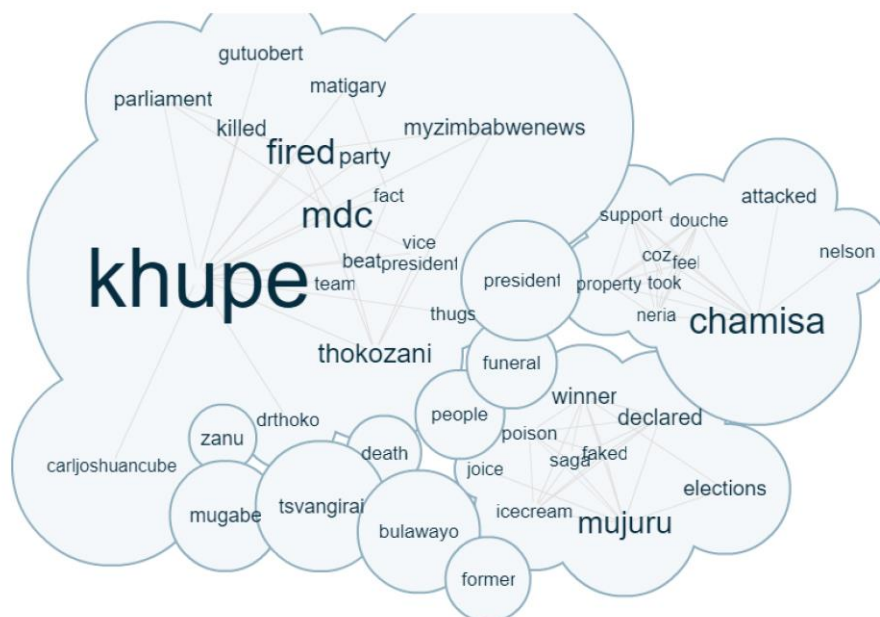

Figure 25. Clusters for Women in Politics in Zimbabwe (1-20 April 2018)

Although this sentiment analysis is based largely on the data from past online expressions, we found that the tool has great capacity to work in real-time to analyze new posts relating to contemporary and current political discourse. In practice, the analysis can be done for any posts from the previous day. Therefore, the data can be used to generate daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly or any other specified time range reports (Figure 28). Once trained, the monitor continues to work autonomously and give alerts to major changes in each of the monitors without requiring further manual input.
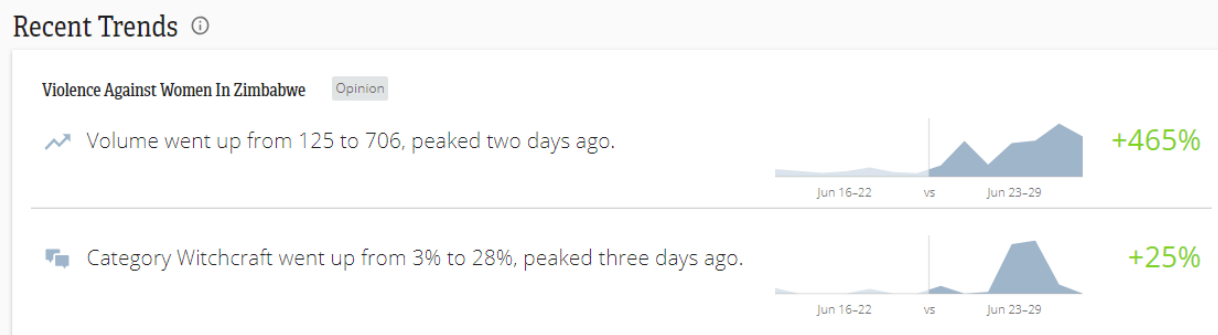

Figure 26. Extract: Example Screenshot from Crimson Hexagon Dashboard, Real-Time Monitoring

The model was adaptable and pertinent in Zimbabwe's context given the exponential increase in the number of people interacting across the social media platforms. Online users are increasingly engaged with Twitter, Facebook, blogs, YouTube and Instagram as well as the comment sections of online news sites and blogs thereby increasing our access to a wider range of platforms. It was also observed that the majority of the posts were in English, which further generalized the accessibility of the platform as well as the impacts of the online discourse, which extended well beyond Zimbabwe's borders.

In addition to the findings about the dynamics of violence against women in Zimbabwe, the research here makes a number of contributions to the global research agenda on VAWIE, specifically the study:
- Produced a first, limited pilot of sentiment analysis for studying VAWIE
- Identifies subtypes of universal types of VAWIE
- Introduces a new typology of dimensions of cyberspace
- Introduces a new typology of perpetrators in cyberspace
- Defines metrics for measuring VAWIE-Online (type/target, volume, speed, impact)

The research also identified a number of areas where more work needs to be done to enhance the use of sentiment analysis to record VAWIE and challenges with the approach. These include:

- Distinguishing types of perpetrators
- Distinguishing sexual threats of a physical nature from those of a moral nature
- Characterizing economic forms of violence
- Connecting incidents into interpretable behavioral patterns (cyber-stalking, etc)
- Due to volatility of social media, we should study the "giants" separately from others, if possible.

Conclusions from the VAWIE Field and Online Assessments

Violence against women in elections (VAWIE) is an urgent concern in Zimbabwe's upcoming elections given the gender dimensions of general election violence, the impact of new technologies and the horrific rapes and sexual violence perpetrated against women in past electoral cycles.[50]

Zimbabwe has taken important steps to promote gender equity, however women continue to face hostile attitudes and violent barriers to their participation in many critical roles in Zimbabwean democracy. As the 2018 electoral cycle ushers in a new era in the country's political history, presents a key moment for equality to surge forward and to turn the page on all forms of political violence, for once and for all.

Online violence against women is a serious problem that has continued to rise at alarming rates. Social media platforms in Zimbabwe heighten insecurity for women's political participation by facilitating the spread of violent, abusive and denigrating messaging. A broad range of violent utterances against women were observed through the pilot analysis, especially physical threats and psycho-social harm. The cyberspace aggressions largely exaggerated and distorted perceptions of political women as social and sexual misfits, to dissuade them from participating and/or undermine their base of support.

To address the issues reported above, the following actions are recommended to pertinent stakeholders:

- Police and prosecutors should build confidence with local populations in their willingness to seriously address VAWIE issues, to provide secure and effective services to women that submit violations, to assist in the proper documentation and processing of said cases, and to ensure they are prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Police and prosecutors may benefit from training on how to handle GBV cases to avoid re-traumatization.
- The ZEC's leadership on the issue and ongoing coordination with police is a positive force in ensuring the priority of addressing the issue, in demonstrating solidarity in ending impunity and in making the connection between VAWIE and electoral integrity. All measures to promote and enhance this coordination and leadership position will positively contribute to addressing impunity for VAWIE.
- Online violence can most effectively be addressed through bystander intervention initiatives to mobilize grassroots communities of support, elevate the issues and provide solidarity and coping tools to overcome this legal, but toxic form of violence.

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[50] Analysis presented here draws on preliminary results of a VAWIE-assessment conducted in country from March 22 – April 6, 2018. The assessment team spoke with 111 individuals, including 9 focus group discussions with pertinent stakeholders (2 in Mutare, 2 in Masvingo, 4 in Bulawayo, and 1 in Harare) and key informant interviews with 10 organizations/government agencies. The assessment also drew on an in-depth desk study. The preliminary findings of the assessment inform the content of this proposal. Other, direct references are cited accordingly. The public version of the assessment is due out in May 2018.

- Civic and voter awareness campaigns on the following topics will further protect women's participation: zero tolerance for election violence and VAWIE; importance of the secret vote and the value of their vote.
- The creation of inter-party women's coalitions, such as those that have begun to emerge in Mutare and Bulawayo, are helpful in promoting solidarity and generating solutions to cross-cutting issues affecting women's participation within party structures.
- Engaging men's groups for gender equality, like Padare, on VAWIE will help address the issue of toxic masculinities and develop allies within the community of male political leaders

In addition, online forms of violence require unique and innovative responses. We found that most social media users attacking women in cyberspace were men. We observed that men who received attacks often directly respond and showed some level of resilience rather than resorting to withdrawal or avoidance techniques, as was observed with some of the women affected. Despite the gravity of the issue, it was found that there is low participation of women in cyberspace; their low voice and limited participation in the political cyberspace is an additional vulnerability and potential sign of disempowerment and inequality. Strategies to raise the voice of women, empower them and build resilience for women in the cyberspace are important.

Our observations suggest that cyber-attacks to an individual could have a potential to deter not only the targeted woman but also other women who would have been emulating or desiring to follow the same person. The nature of the attacks to women are highly associated with devious and deviant attributes in Zimbabwean cultural expectations for women, leading to potential inhibition of most women who might be considering joining and participating in Zimbabwean politics and elections. To this, there is need to raise awareness on how the cultural attributes are being used to disadvantage women.

Generally, it seemed that cyberspace/online behavior frequently violated acceptable social norms of behavior. Cyberspace behavior seem to have some negative sub-cultural components that go uncensored. Given the number of indirect perpetrators, it appears that many people exhibit online violence because others are doing it (social empirical expectations). Therefore, we recommend raising awareness about online violence, which will help create a regulatory social norm for online interaction and a behavioral rule that is known to exist. Insights from Crimson Hexagon can be used to inform awareness-raising strategies. The awareness programs should aim to foster the belief that many other users are non-violent (empirical expectations) and that the non-violent rule should be followed. These social norms will lead to willingness to sanction deviations from non-violence (normative expectations). This can be done both in real life as well as through social media platforms such as TextIT, LINE Bots, Telegram Bots, Twitter and Facebook.

Negative and violent online messages were found to sprawl beyond a country's borders. It was observed that Zimbabwe had significant posts from the USA, UK and South Africa. Therefore, there is need for a strategy that can be used to engage the diaspora and international community on the damage of online violence.

Attitude changes and behavioral changes also need to occur within the context of policy changes

towards criminalizing violent utterances. It can be inferred that people rely on cyberspace to utter their negative motives because of the fact that these utterances are more convictable and punishable when perpetrated in the real world. Thus, there is need to advocate for policy reforms that explicitly provide for cybercrimes related to online interactions. The lack of clear legislation on interpersonal attacks in the cyberspace makes it difficult to synthesize and convict perpetrators of violence.

The awareness endeavors and policy changes should also be accompanied by capacity building on monitoring and policing online violence. The ability to take control and track when, where and who is involved in online violence would enable both governmental and non-governmental organizations to constructively implement effective interventions.

In conclusion, VAWIE is a complex problem, occurring on many levels and requiring a synergy of collective responses to address it when and where it occurs. This pivotal moment in Zimbabwe's history can offer an equally historic turning point for building a more inclusive and peaceful society.

Annex I. Global Framework for VAWIE

Types of Harm			
Categories	*Physical*		*Non-Physical*	
	Bodily Harm	**Sexual**	**Socio-Psychological**	**Economic**
Subtypes *Include but are not limited to:*	Murder/attempted murder, physical assault and injury, battery, maiming, wounding, etc.	Rape/attempted rape, sexual assault, intimate partner sexual assault, forcibly compelling a person to perform sexual acts	Intimidation, threats to victim or victim's family, verbal harassment, shaming, defamation	Denial/constant threat of denial of resources/services, unlawful control and monitoring of the use and distribution of monies and access to services (healthcare, employment.)

Victims/Survivors			
Categories	**Political**	**Institutional**	**Professional (non-state/non-political)**	**Private (non-state/non-political)**
Subtypes *Include but are not limited to:*	Candidates, elected officials, political aspirants (i.e. seeking nomination), staffers, party members and supporters.	Electoral management body (EMB) permanent staff and poll workers, police and security forces, state administrators and civil servants.	Journalists, civic educators, civil activists, community leaders	Voters, various private citizens (bloggers, university professors, politically vocal celebrities and pop culture figures, retired state people, etc.)

Perpetrators		
Categories	**Institutional**	**Non-state political actors**	**Societal**
Subtypes *Include but are not limited to:*	State security, police, armed forces), government institutions (executive, judicial and legislative actors), electoral agents (poll workers, EMB staff, electoral security agents), and state proxies (militia, gangs, insurgents, mercenaries, private security	Candidates, party leaders, inter-party and intra-party members, paramilitary, party militia, non-state armed actors	Journalists/media, voters, community members or groups, religious leaders, traditional leaders, employers, criminal actors, intimate partners/spouses, family members, electoral observers, youth groups

Locations			
Categories	**Public**	**Private**	**Domestic**	**Virtual**
Subtypes *Include but are not limited to:*	Streets, political party headquarters, churches	Private homes, offices	The space between intimate partners, wherever they may be physically located	Public online spaces such as television, blogs, internet media, chatrooms, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram Private virtual spaces, such as personal email, Short Message Service (SMS) texting, cellular and landline telephone connections

Adapted from IFES 2017, Bardall 2011, 2016.

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