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PERCEPTIONS OF THE ELECTORATE ON ELECTORAL
INTEGRITY IN THE ZIMBABWE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS: A
CASE STUDY OF ZVISHAVANE DISTRICT

BY

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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Abstract

Electoral integrity is key to the achievement of democracy the world over and gives opportunities for citizens to participate in their daily livelihoods and hold their leaders accountable. Elections seem to have varying perceptions on their achievement of these objectives, hence, it was the purpose of this research to investigate the perceptions of the electorate in Zimbabwe on the 2018 Harmonized Elections using the case study of the electorate in Wards 8 and 15 (representing the Ngezi urban and Runde rural) constituencies) of the Zvishavane District, respectively. The conceptual framework was constructed from the two variables namely; elections and electoral integrity. Methodologically, the research design was qualitative in nature with reliance on the use of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions as well as secondary data. Data was analyzed through coding, content analysis and thematic analysis. The key findings indicated that despite improvements in some of the electoral processes and systems, the 2018 harmonized elections in the selected wards in the Zvishavane District did not pass the benchmark of electoral integrity. The level of electoral integrity achieved varied in the different phases of the elections, specifically that it was high in the post-electoral period, moderate during the electoral period and very low in the pre-electoral period and lastly that contested electoral legitimacy has a negative impact on the well-being of citizens. The major recommendations of the study include that; there is need for all stakeholders in the holding and management of elections such as the media, civil society, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, traditional leaders and political parties to fully implement electoral reforms. In addition, the study recommended that there should be checks and balances on the influence of the Executive over the appointments of commissioners of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Judiciary by giving more power to the Legislature which comprises of representatives of the people. Lastly the study recommended that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should review the 2018 general elections and implement reforms suggested by all stakeholders to avoid recurrence of the same issues being raised in the forthcoming 2023 elections.

Key Words: Elections, Electoral Integrity, Legitimacy, Harmonized Elections of 2018, Electoral Democracy

Declaration Page

I declare that this dissertation is my original work except where sources have been cited and acknowledged. The work has never been submitted, nor will it ever be submitted to another university for the award of a degree.

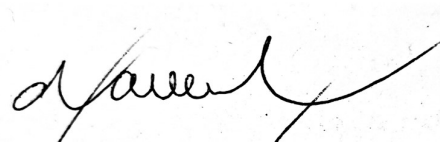
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Dedication Page

I dedicate this work as my contribution to the academic pool of knowledge in Zimbabwe and across the borders. This work is also dedicated to the government of Zimbabwe, political parties, electoral management institutions, civil society organizations, universities, general public who are the voters, public policy formulators and analysts.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AU	African Union
AUEOM	African Union Electoral Observation Mission
BAZ	Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe
BVR	Biometric Voter Registration
EDR	Electoral Dispute Resolution
EJD	Electoral Justice Database
EMBs	Electoral Management Bodies
ERC	Electoral Resource Centre
EUEOM	European Union Electoral Observation Mission
GNU	Government of National Unity
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
KI	Key Informant
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDC A	Movement for Democratic Change Alliance
MP	Member of Parliament
MPLCs	Multiparty Liaison Committees
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
PEI	Perception of Electoral Integrity
PR	System Proportional Representation System
SADC	Southern African development Community
SEOM	SADC Electoral Observation Mission
UANC	United National African Council

UN	United Nations
ZANU PF	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZEC	Zimbabwe Electoral Commission
ZESN	Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is going to be looking at the introductory elements of the study. These include; the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the statement of objectives, the research objectives, research questions, limitations of the study and the delimitations of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Democracy is an ideology that was coined to enable the citizens to have a say over how they would want to be governed. This would give them the power to influence decision making and public policy making. Democracy would empower the citizens to choose their leaders through contestable elections. An election is the formal process of selecting a person for public office or of accepting or rejecting a political proposition by voting (Eulau, Webb, and Gibbins 2005). In a well-functioning democracy, the elections would be free, fair and credible in order for the leadership chosen to be legitimate. Electoral integrity refers to the international norms and global standards governing the conduct of elections (Norris, 2012) . Legitimacy would in turn attract international recognition, support from the citizens in public policy making as well as good governance in terms of constitutionalism, transparency and accountability. In addition, legitimacy would also enable peace, stability, unity, harmony and development.

However, over the years, elections in Zimbabwe have been characterized by contestations where the losers do not accept defeat and the winners' victory is questionable amidst allegations of electoral fraud. In addition, the continuous contestation of elections has resulted in the citizens who are the voters (electorate),

having mixed perceptions on the effectiveness of the elections. Therefore this study was necessitated by the need to assess the extent to which the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe achieved electoral integrity which would in turn ensure legitimacy of the leadership. The study particularly focused on the perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane Runde and Zvishavane Ngezi Constituencies, which make up Zvishavane District.

Zimbabwe has consistently and ‘regularly’ held periodic elections since the first one in 1979 with the latest ones having been held in 2018. However, the outcomes of the elections have historically been met with condemnation. Coltart (2016) has found that “the 1979 election was deemed illegal by the United Nations. In the 1980 elections, PF ZAPU and UANC condemned the ZANU PF Victory”, (p.101). The 1985 election was not legitimate, (The Times London, 1985). The 1990 election was mired by violence and serious illegalities, (Moyo, 1992). In addition, Stiff (2002) has also found that “The European Union election monitoring team expressed that the 2000 and 2002 elections were neither ‘Free’ nor ‘Fair’ ”, (p.458.). Coltart (2016) has also argued that;

In 2008, SADC, AU and the Pan African Parliamentary Mission condemned the election results saying they; did not represent the will of the people, fell short of accepted AU standards and were not free, fair and credible. The 2013 elections were also condemned on the basis of manipulation of the Electoral Act and uneven playing field for political parties , (pp.472-474.).

It can therefore be concluded that the condemnation and contestation of election results and elections in Zimbabwe is a historical pattern.

In November 2017, Zimbabwe had a change of leadership for the first time in 37 years after the intervention by the Zimbabwe Defense Forces. The intervention was called ‘Operation Restore Legacy’. Operation Restore Legacy was a military operation which

triggered the demise of Robert Mugabe who had been the sole leader of Zimbabwe for thirty-seven years since the country attained independence in 1980, (Mangwana, 2017). Elections were held in 8 months after the operation on the 31st of July 2018, (VeritasZim, 2018). However, contrary to the hopes of the citizens and the international community, the outcome of the elections was contested through violent protests on the 1st of August , (VeritasZim, 2018) and a Constitutional Court application to challenge the Presidential results by the Movement for Democratic Change Alliance, herein after (MDC A), Presidential candidate, Nelson Chamisa, (Staff Reporter, 2018). The constitutional court which was held on the 22nd of August 2018, (Zimbabwe Independent, 2018) ruled that Emmerson Dambudzo Munangagwa had won the election. Upon entry into office, Emmerson Munangagwa, set up a Commission of Enquiry to investigate the August, 1 post-election violence which was led by Kgalimo Motlante, former Vice President of South Africa, (Ndlovu, 2018). The Commission produced the Motlante Report, whose accuracy has also been questioned by many. Moreover, despite the Con Court ruling, the MDC A has continuously refused to recognize Munangagwa as the legitimate President of Zimbabwe.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Elections should be the democratic way through which citizens participate in politics by choosing their leaders and holding to them to account. This research seeks to address the problem of the continuous contestation of elections in Zimbabwe, with a particular focus on the harmonized elections held in 2018. Thus, the need to analyze the extent to which the 2018 harmonized elections achieved electoral integrity.

Objective 3 of the African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of 2007 provides for the promotion of holding of regular free and fair elections to institutionalize legitimate authority of a representative government as well as the

democratic change of governments. The Zimbabwean government has domesticated these norms and values through Chapter 7 of the 2013 Constitution and the Electoral Act Chapter 2:13. Section 155 (1) of the Constitution provides that elections which must be held regularly and referendums- must be (a) peaceful, free and fair (b) conducted by secret ballot, (c) based on universal suffrage and equality of votes and (d) free from violence and other electoral malpractices, (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013). The Zimbabwe Electoral Act Chapter 2:13 provides for the periodic delimitation of constituencies and wards, the registration of voters and requirements for registration on particular voters' rolls, a code of conduct for political parties, candidates and other persons participating in elections or referendums, challenges to election results, nomination of candidates and the mandate of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, (Zimbabwe Electoral Act, 2004).

It is therefore the purpose of this study to investigate how the electorate perceives the effectiveness of elections, which is achieved through holding elections which score high on electoral integrity. Negative perceptions will mean mistrust in the electoral process and vice versa. The consequences of this phenomenon include, failure of the efforts of re-engagement in the international community being made by the government, repulsion of investor confidence which contrasts with the government's mantra of 'Zimbabwe is Open for Business', lack of citizen support, participation and engagement in public policy processes, polarization which will lead to lack of social cohesion and unity of purpose, lack of accountability and transparency of the leadership to the public, mistrust between the leadership and the citizens leading to recurrent protests and use of force in response by the state, frosty state-civil society relations. All these consequences, if not addressed will impede peace, security and development in Zimbabwe.

1.4 Statement of Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

1.4.1 Assess perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District on the electoral processes and systems implemented in the Zimbabwe 2018 harmonized elections.

1.4.2 Analyze the perceptions of the electorate on the achievement of electoral integrity during the 2018 harmonized elections in Zvishavane District.

1.4.3. Evaluate the perceptions of the electorate on the impact of contested electoral legitimacy on the welfare of the citizens in Zvishavane District.

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 What are the perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District on the electoral processes and systems that were implemented in the Zimbabwe 2018 harmonized elections?

1.5.2 How did the electorate perceive the achievement of electoral integrity on the 2018 harmonized elections in Zvishavane District?

1.5.3 What are the perceptions of the electorate on the impact of contested electoral legitimacy on the welfare of citizens in Zvishavane District?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will redound to the benefit of society considering that elections are an important element of a well-functioning democracy and it is the electorate that votes for candidates in an election, hence the research will give them a platform to express their thoughts and feelings on the issue of how elections are held in Zimbabwe. In addition, the findings of the perceptions of the electorate from both the rural and urban constituencies on electoral integrity in Zimbabwe will give a balanced understanding of the similarities and disparities that exist amongst the

electorate and the reasons for such. The findings will also be used to draw conclusions and their implications, from which recommendations will be suggested on how the conduct of elections can be done according to international standards and norms in preparation for the 2023 elections. The recommendations will be of benefit to the citizens on their role as the voters and potential candidates; political parties who provide candidates, mobilize support during elections and are potential governing parties; the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission as the only body with the constitutional mandate of managing elections in Zimbabwe; the Judiciary, the Executive and the Legislature as the branches of government, subsidiary agencies of line ministries and other various institutions in their role of ensuring electoral integrity in Zimbabwe through oversight, funding, monitoring and electoral laws and policies; civil society as the watchdog of government and their critical role of educating, advocating, lobbying and mobilizing before, during and after elections. The study will also contribute to the academic research that is ongoing worldwide on the subject of electoral integrity.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019) define delimitation as the marking or describing of the limits of something. The study employed a Conceptual Framework which was built on the two variables of 'Electoral Cycle' and 'Electoral Integrity'. Geographically, the study focused on two wards in the two constituencies of Zvishavane District. These being Zvishavane Ngezi (urban) and Zvishavane Runde (rural) in Zimbabwe. These wards are Ward 8 (Maglass Township) for urban and Ward 15 (Vhugwi) for rural. The researcher got interested in Zvishavane because of the district's history. Zvishavane is a mining town in the Midlands Province of Zimbabwe. Zvishavane District has both rural and urban populations which are in close proximity to another. The town is popular for being home to Shabani Mine, commissioned in 1979 and at one time, the

tallest building in the country. In addition, together with Gath's Mine in Mashava, the two were at one time the world's sixth largest producers of Asbestos with annual output exceeding 140 000 tons, (The Sunday Mail, 2015). Unfortunately the mine ceased operations in 2004 following problems between the government and, Mutumwa Mawere who then owned the mine, after which it was put under government administration till date. This left 3000 out of 5000 employees of Shabani Mine unemployed, (Newsday, 2017). However, the opening of other businesses in different sectors of the economy in Zvishavane such as Midlands State University, banks, retail supermarkets, furniture stores, fashion stores, manufacturing and small to medium enterprises has provided relief as they have absorbed the unemployed lot over the years. To date, the some of the former employees remain unemployed and still struggling to get compensation of their outstanding salaries from the Shabani Mine, (Midlands Correspondent, 2013). This makes them take interest in political issues. In addition to asbestos, the town is also rich in other minerals such as platinum, gold, beryl, chromite, iron ore and diamonds, hence the district houses mines such as Mimosa, Murowa and Sabi Gold, (Mindat. org, 2020). The mineral richness therefore explains the heavy presence of the small scale miners which is key for the livelihoods of the surrounding communities in both the rural and urban constituencies. The town was also the first town to house the Midlands State University satellite campus in 2015 which is where the researcher is currently employed, (Midlands State University, 2020). Hence the researcher felt the research would be a service to the community and contribute to the university's efforts of community engagement. In addition, being a social scientist specializing in Political Science and growing academic, the researcher felt that the research would also add an understanding to the political and social dynamics of Zvishavane community through getting their perceptions on the

effectiveness of elections, particularly the 2018 Harmonized Elections. Additionally, Zvishavane is the rural home of the incumbent President of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Munangagwa who was the Presidential candidate for ZANU PF during the elections under study, the 2018 Harmonized Elections, (Masvingo Mirror, 2019). Lastly, Zimbabwe held its first multiracial election in 1980 and has done the same ever since, (South African History Online, 2019). However, of interest to this research is the 2018 harmonized elections because these were the first elections held after the exit of Robert Mugabe who had ruled Zimbabwe since independence in 1980, (Mangwana, 2017).

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The researcher faced difficulties in securing appointments with key informants from organizations such as Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The researcher was however referred to the access the ZEC report which was available online.

The researcher also found it difficult to physically access key informants who were located outside Zvishavane. In such cases of geographical inaccessibility of key informants the researcher used other online mechanisms such as emails, WhatsApp video and voice calls, telephone and Skype for interviews.

Due to the political nature of the research and the people's past experiences of political torture, there was a significant number of potential respondents who refused to take part in the research out of fear and suspicion that their information would be used to target them. In such cases the researcher moved to the next household. However some refused to participate in the research out of frustration with the political system in Zimbabwe. The researcher respected their decision. This was only experienced in Ward 8 (Maglass Township).

1.9 Summary

The chapter contained the introductory elements of the research. These included the background of the study which explained the build-up of the reasons which led to the need for the research. These included the historic pattern of electoral contestation in Zimbabwe since 1980 and the contestation of the 2018 general election within a promised 'New Dispensation'. The statement of the problem elaborated the problem that the research seeks to address which is the perceptions of the electorate on the continuous contestation of elections in Zimbabwe, particularly the 2018 general elections. The African Union Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance of 2007, the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Electoral Act Chapter 2:13 were quoted as the governing guidelines for the conduct of elections. The statement of objectives explained the aim of the research which is to understand the perceptions of the electorate on the extent to which the 2018 General elections achieved electoral integrity. The objectives of the research were clearly explained as well as the questions that the research seeks to answer. The chapter also explained why the research will be so important by elaborating how the findings would be used and who would benefit from the suggested recommendations. The delimitations of the study were also stated, which included; the conceptual framework, the geographical and the time delimitations. The limitations of the study were also explained which included; accessibility of the respondents, difficulties in securing appointment with the key informants. The researcher also explained how she overcame these challenges.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

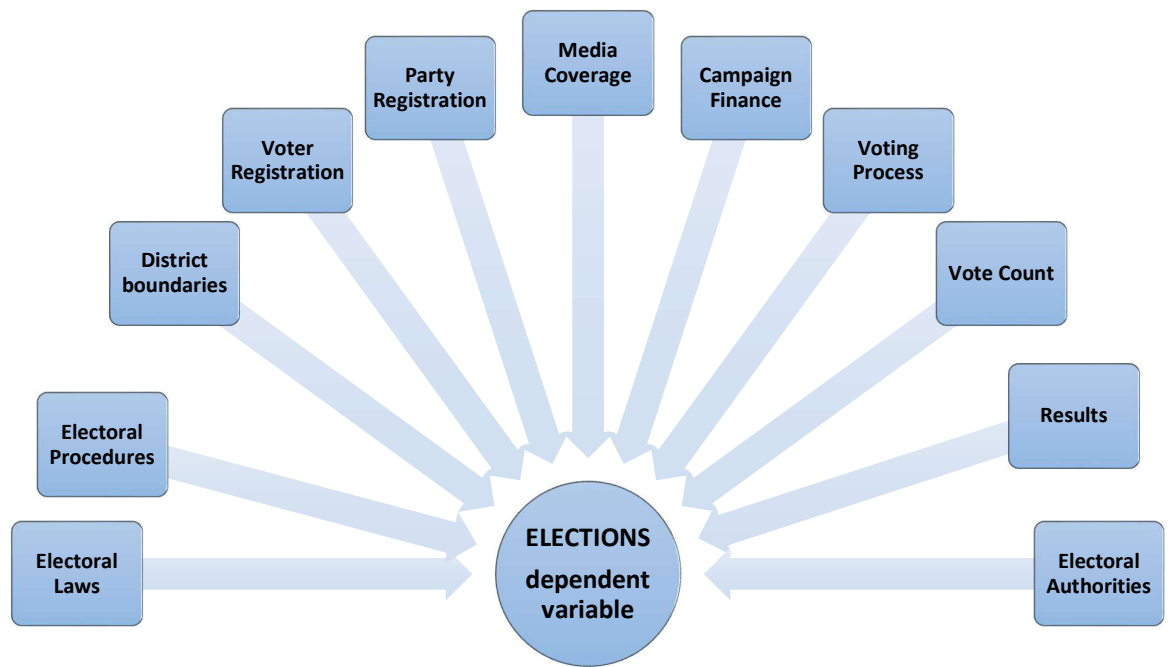
This chapter explains what the academic pool of information and research holds on the applicability of electoral integrity in Zimbabwe, particularly looking at the 2018 harmonized elections. The review of literature is based on the following themes; global state of democracy, democracy in Africa, an overview of electoral integrity around the world, the relationship between electoral integrity, democracy and development, independence of electoral management institutions, electoral dispute resolution, the state of politics in Zimbabwe, civil society in Zimbabwe, the electoral process in Zimbabwe and media coverage of the 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe. Additionally, the Chapter also looks at the Conceptual Framework of the study. The conceptual framework is constructed from the two variables namely; elections and electoral integrity.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework is “when the researcher specifies the meaning of the concepts and variables to be studied”, (Babbie, 2011 p. 89). Mulder (2017) notes that the conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between the causal and the effects of the variables. The conceptual framework was constructed from the two variables of the study namely; ‘elections’ being the dependent variable and electoral integrity’ as the independent variable. The hypothesis of the study was that the quality of elections (being free, fair and credible) depends on their ability to achieve electoral integrity. This causal-effect relationship is based on the study of the Electoral Integrity project of 2014 which used the electoral cycle to come up with the 49 points of an index of measuring electoral integrity, (Norris, Frank and Comma, 2015). These elements of

the cycle include the following, in their chronological order; electoral laws, electoral procedures, boundaries, voter registration, party and candidate registration, campaign media, campaign finance, voting process, vote count, results and EMBs, (Electoral integrity project, 2014).

FIGURE 1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FLOW CHART



Source: Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) expert assessment in Norris and Gromping (2019)

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework in the form of a flow chart. The diagram also illustrates the hypothesis of the study mentioned above. The variable of electoral integrity was measured using the 11 sub-dimensions of electoral integrity formulated by Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) expert assessment in the Electoral Integrity project as indicated by the arrows converging to the central point of the dependent variable, which is 'elections'. The 11 sub-dimensions include; electoral laws, electoral

procedures, district boundaries, voter registration, party registration, media coverage, campaign finance, voting process, vote count, results and electoral authorities, (Norris and Gromping, 2019). On the other hand the variable of elections was measured using the electoral cycle as guided by the Electoral Integrity Project of 2014.

2.2.1 The Electoral Cycle

The cycle has three stages that are inclusive of the electoral processes. These will determine that an election has been free, fair and credible, thereby achieving electoral integrity, (Ace Project, n.d.). The first stage is the pre-electoral period. This includes processes such as the legal framework, planning and implementation training and education and voter registration. The Legal framework includes the constitution, legislation, revision of electoral system and electoral boundaries, electoral bodies and the code of conduct. Planning and implementation includes; budgeting and financing, election calendar, recruitment and procurement and also logistics and security. Lastly there is civic education and voter information. The second stage is the electoral period. This includes voting operations on the actual Election Day and the verification of results. The third and last stage is post-election period. This looks at the various activities and processes that happen after the elections.

2.2.2. Electoral Integrity

The Koffi Annan Foundation (2012) defines electoral integrity as any election that is based on the democratic principles of Universal Suffrage and political equality as reflected in International Standards and Agreements and is professional, impartial and transparent in its preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle. The factors responsible for electoral integrity include the upholding of international norms, independence of the Judiciary and the Electoral Commission, the Rule of Law,

impartial media, and a vibrant civil society, effective electoral systems and processes that promote participation, among others

Ace project (2012) argues that, without electoral integrity leaders and officials lack accountability to the public and the loss of confidence in the election results means that the government lacks the necessary legitimacy. International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), (2018) argues that, “the legitimacy of an election depends in large on the actual and perceived integrity of the electoral process. If voters and candidates believe that an election is fraudulent or has been poorly administered, they may not accept the outcome. At best, this can breed public dissatisfaction or disinterest; at worst, violence, ineffective governance and long-term instability”, (IFES, 2018, para. 1). A study conducted by Norris in May 2019 states that Zimbabwe is ranked number 144 out of 165 countries and categorized as an Electoral Autocracy on the scale of electoral integrity and types of regimes. According to the Perception of Electoral Integrity (PEI) 100 point index of 2014 from a survey done by Electoral Integrity Project, Zimbabwe is ranked number 48 in the category of low integrity, (Norris and Gromping, 2019).

2.3 Review of Related Literature

2.3.1 Global State of Democracy

International IDEA (2017) defines democracy as a political system that is based on popular control and political equality. There is an international occurrence of Democratic backsliding in many states that is caused by the continuous manipulation of democratic processes and institutions. As a result, there is a growing disconnection between the electorate and the politicians. In agreement, evidence produced by the newly developed Global State of Democracy (GSoD) Indices presenting global and regional assessments of the state of democracy from 1975-2015 supports this view.

The global level assessments show that show that, while there is much room for improvement in democracy around the world, many countries having experienced democratic decline, democracy on the overall has made considerable progress over the last 40 years, especially regarding free elections, respect for fundamental rights and control of government, (International IDEA, 2017). Bekaj (2017) also argues that democratic resilience is being threatened from within by those in power through manipulating electoral reforms, restricting dissent and freedom of speech and reforming the constitution to extend their terms in office. These actions have a ripple effect on the functioning of institutions beyond those directly targeted and affect the people's well-being, livelihoods and safety. Bekaj, (2017) gives four features of democratic backsliding which are; Coups D'état, Election Day voter-fraud, strategic manipulation of elections and executive aggrandizement. However, on the other hand the classical philosopher Plato denounces Democracy as a process for deciding what to do in a political system. He argues that even voting in a leader would be risky because voters are easily swayed by irrelevant features such as; he has a good voice, he is educated, he is from my area, my partner likes him/her, (BBC Radio, 2015). This study will therefore investigate the state of democracy in Zimbabwe and the implications of such in its ability to hold elections with electoral integrity.

2.3.2 Democracy in Africa

Cheeseman (2015) notes that Africa is not homogenous, hence democratic practices in Africa take different directions. As a result, he divides Africa into subparts, leaving out states without effective governments. This is in line with the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States of 1934 which gives conditions for a state to be recognized in international law. In explanation, Article 1 provides that; "the state as a person of the international system should possess the following

qualifications; a permanent population, a defined territory, an effective government and capacity to enter into relations with the other states”, (Klabers, 2016).

Subsequently, in understanding the state of democracy in Africa, Cheeseman (2015) found that;

States that have established open and competitive democracies such as Botswana, Ghana, Benin, South Africa, Senegal and Mauritius will continue to make democratic gains and consolidate over time. The second group of countries in which leaders with authoritarian inclinations are still attempting to hold out against increasingly confident and popular opposition parties: Burundi, the DRC, Kenya, Uganda, Zimbabwe, among others, will continue to move back and forth between opposition gains and authoritarian repression until the government of the day is willing to accept defeat. Finally, there are the states in which authoritarian governments have established strong control over their political systems and so have had little to fear from holding elections: Cameroon, Chad, Rwanda, and so on. The great authority wielded by presidents in these countries makes it tempting to think of this group as a stable authoritarian category. However, as with the first group of states it is important not to interpret the surface appearance of stability as implying that a political system has deep roots. However after noting all these observations, the overall conclusion is that it is too soon to give up on African Democracy, (para. 2)

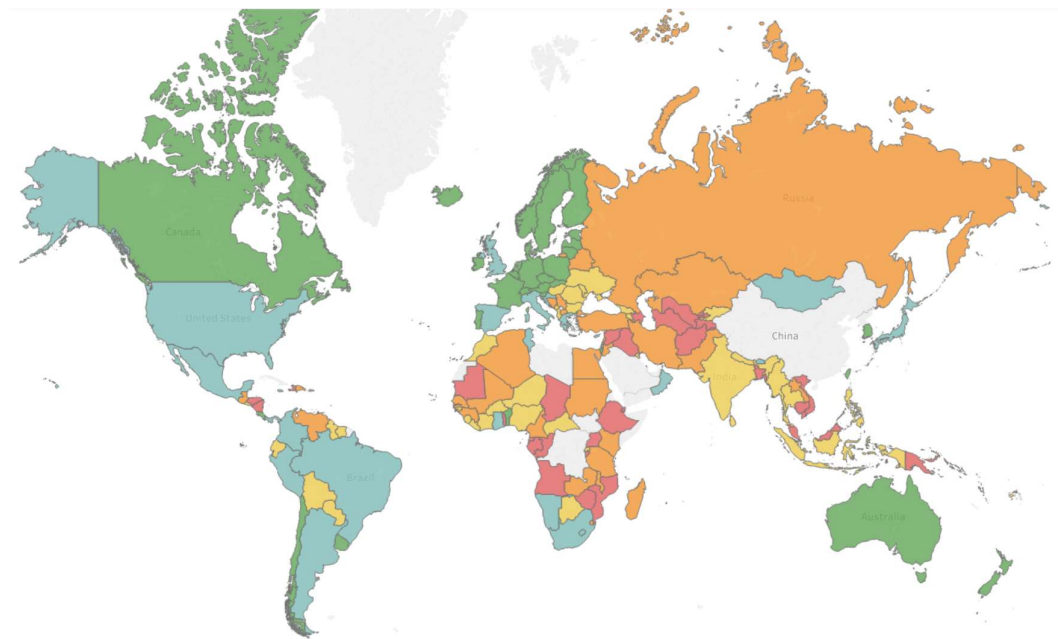
On the other hand, Lewis (2019) argues that the ousting of incumbents in Senegal and Nigeria over the years through the ballot are encouraging signs for competitive politics. Senegal has been seen as one of Africa’s liberal democracies whilst Nigeria has struggled to legitimate competitive electoral governance. Thereby showing that Africa is still on the road towards achieving democratization, though the direction may vary from one country to another. This study will therefore assess the direction which Zimbabwe is following in terms of democratization.

2.3.3 Overview of Electoral Integrity around the world

The demand for accountability and democracy across the globe is increasing and Norris (2019) notes that there is a widespread concern in many countries about it being

low or falling turnout, public disaffection, party polarization and the failure of elections to ensure legitimate outcomes. A report was formulated by the Electoral Integrity Project on the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) data set in 2019. The data was drawn from a rolling survey of 3, 861 expert assessments of electoral integrity across 337 elections in 166 countries in the world, (Norris and Gromping p.5). The assessment was done by observing eleven sub-dimensions which include; electoral laws, electoral procedures, district boundaries, voter registration, party registration, media coverage, campaign finance, voting process, vote count, results and electoral authorities. The research will therefore use these eleven sub dimensions of measuring electoral integrity to examine the perceptions of the electorate on the extent to which the 2018 harmonized elections achieved electoral integrity.

FIGURE 2: ELECTORAL INTEGRITY WORLDWIDE FROM 2012-2018



PEI Index 2012-2018

	Very High (70+)
	High (60-69)
	Moderate (50-59)
	Low (40-49)
	Very Low (less than 40)
	Not included

Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey (Norris, 2019, p. 11.)

The above image shows that electoral integrity is very high in European Nordic countries such as Canada, Australia and most of Central Europe, just to mention a few. Norris (2019) observes that; these are all affluent post-industrial societies, consensus democracies and egalitarian welfare states. Countries such as United States of America, Brazil, South Africa and Botswana have been placed in the category of High Integrity scoring a percentage of between 60-69% over 100. Further analysis reveals that the average expert ratings of American elections are significantly pulled down by electoral laws, voter registration, and district boundaries issues. The region also contains the highly problematic cases of Venezuela, Honduras and Haiti, India and most parts of West Africa have been placed in the category of moderate with a score of 50-50%. Russia and most parts of North and East Africa are categorized as low integrity with a score of 40-49%. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Algeria, Mali, Sudan and Egypt scored very low on integrity with a percentage of less than 40 over a hundred.

Moreover, a study of the Electoral Integrity Project conducted by Norris, Comma and Frank (2014) on worldwide elections held in 2013 concluded that;

Worldwide, electoral integrity is at risk in South East Asia. Hence, Malaysia ranked 66th out of 73 elections, due to problems with its district boundaries and electoral laws. Cambodia ranked 69th due to concern about voter registration, the compilation of results and the independence of electoral authorities. Recent electoral protests and

instability in Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia vividly illustrate these challenges. Eurasian elections also raise serious concern, such as those in Belarus, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan. Finally, several African states also risk failed elections, including Equatorial Guinea, Togo, Djibouti, the Republic of Congo, Angola, and Zimbabwe, (Norris, Comma and Frank, 2014, pg. 6)

This shows that, electoral integrity is not a new concept in the study of elections. Another observation is that Zimbabwe was also highlighted as one of the countries that are at high risk in 2014, just as in 2019 as mentioned above.

In addition, Norris (2019) also notes that the reasons why electoral contests fail vary from one country to another range from; corruption in kleptocratic regimes ruled by clientelism, contests disrupted by violence and civil conflict, state repression of opposition forces and fundamental human rights as well as lack of state capacity in poorer developing countries. The other problem has been that of the quality of campaign media as it affects the flow of information during campaigns as well as cybersecurity attacks on official party records and email servers. Recent attention has been catalyzed by intelligence reports of Russian meddling in the 2016 US election. However, the problem is not confined to America, as foreign interference has been reported in the Brexit referenda campaign and in Europe.

The report further analyses three case studies of elections held in 2018 in Italy, Venezuela and Russia. The observations are as following;

CASE BOX 1: Observations of Case Studies of Russia, Italy and Venezuela

Italy

Italy held general elections on the 4th of March 2018, after a period of political turbulence following the resignation of Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, leader of the center-left Party Democratic (PD). The campaign saw sporadic outbreaks of xenophobia and violence, including a far right activist shooting at and injuring African migrants. Despite high quality elections overall, politicization of media regulation, lack of media diversity, and harsh libel laws may undermine the ability of Italian citizens' to make informed political choices, particularly as the problems associated with fake news and misinformation grow more severe.

Russia

The reelection of President Putin in the Russian election on the 18th of March 2018 was in no doubt flawed, the vote was seen by some analysts as “a sort of celebration of the post-Crimea majority’s identity”. OSCE observers characterized the election as having been conducted in “an overly controlled legal and political environment”, in which restrictions on fundamental freedoms of expression and candidate registration and “extensive and uncritical coverage of the incumbent” skewed the playing field.

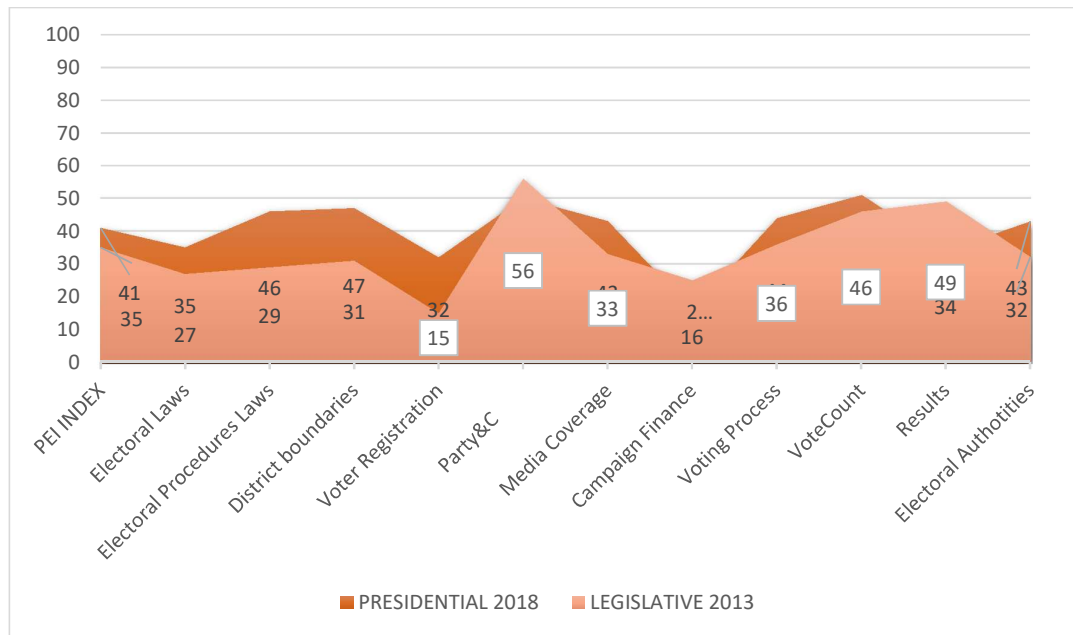
Venezuela

The Venezuelan Presidential election held on the 20th May 2018 was widely denounced as a “farce” and a “show election”, with the Organization of American States stating that in the electoral process “the dictator Maduro tried – without success – to give a democratic veneer to his totalitarian regime”. The legitimacy of the contest, which Maduro won easily with more than two-thirds of the valid vote total, was further undermined by an opposition boycott and record low turnout. The elections were widely condemned, with G7 leaders making a joint statement, “united in rejecting the electoral process leading to the May 20, 2018, Presidential election in Venezuela” for “failing to meet accepted international standards”. The High Representative of the EU similarly released a statement condemning the elections for failing to comply with minimum international standards of political pluralism, transparency, and the upholding of the rule of law, while Members of the European Parliament called for “fresh presidential elections in accordance with internationally recognized democratic standards.

Source: Norris and Gromping (2019).

The above case box shows that the contestation and condemnation of elections is not only peculiar to Zimbabwe, but it is an international phenomenon as has been observed in Russia (Eastern Europe), Venezuela (Latin America) and Italy (Europe), countries that also held elections in 2018, the year under study.

TABLE 1: ZIMBABWE'S PERFORMANCE SCORES DIMENSIONS OF MEASURING ELECTORAL INTEGRITY



Source: Data obtained from Norris and Gromping (2019)

Fig 2 shows the eleven dimensions of measuring electoral integrity and compares how Zimbabwe scored on each of them in the 2013 and 2018 elections. Fig 2 shows that the 2018 Presidential Elections had improvements in a number of aspects compared to the 2013 legislative elections that were held in Zimbabwe. This also includes on the overall PEI Index where Zimbabwe scored 41%/100 compared to 35% in 2013. The Data also concludes that in 2013 Zimbabwe ranked number 302/337 elections as compared to a rise to position 274 in 2018. However, though there was an improvement, on the overall, Zimbabwe is still in the category of very low integrity. This becomes the academic gap that this study seeks to fill through an in depth investigation of the 2018 General Elections through the perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District.

2.3.4 Electoral Integrity, Democracy and Development

Norris, Comma and Frank (2014) argue that electoral integrity is strengthened by democracy and development. This explains why most established democracies such as Norway, Netherlands and Germany are doing well in the ranking of electoral integrity. Moreover, Norris et. al (2014) note that economic development consolidates democratic practices, reinforces civic cultures and builds the capacity of electoral management bodies. However, in a study conducted in 2014, titled ‘The Electoral Integrity Project’. Norris et. al concluded the following; that;

Several third wave democracies and emerging economies performed well in electoral integrity, despite having less experience of competitive elections, including countries such as the Republic of Korea, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania, Rwanda, Chile, Argentina, and Mongolia. The report also noted the electoral flaws in long established democracies such as Italy, Japan and the United States. In the case of America, experts highlighted concern over processes of redistricting, voter registration, and campaign finance, (p.6).

Therefore this shows that there is no correlation between electoral integrity, democracy and development. This means that there are other factors that determine electoral integrity other than democracy and the level of development of a country.

In agreement, Lewis (2019) argues that the question of whether democracy can be sustained or consolidated in low-income countries has been settled as seen by the move by most countries towards democratization. She notes that this has been seen in most countries having held at least six elections since their transition polls, with most yielding credible results.

2.3.5 Independence of Electoral Management Institutions

Kerr and Luhrmann (2017) note that Citizens are more likely to express confidence in elections when Electoral Management Bodies, herein after (EMBs), display de facto

autonomy and less likely to do so when mass media disseminate information independent of government control. Additionally, they suggest that EMB autonomy may not have a positive effect on public trust in elections if media freedom is low. Moreover, in a meeting held on the 13th of September 2015 in Baghdad, Iraq, with the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) Commissioners, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Iraq (SRSG), Ján Kubiš expressed the United Nations' continuing commitment and support in promoting the professionalism, independence and impartiality of Iraq's electoral institutions. In his words he stated that, "Strong electoral institutions free of political interferences are crucial for sustaining Iraq's democratic processes and the protection and wellbeing of electoral staff are of paramount importance", (United Nations Iraq, 2015, para.4.).

In Zimbabwe, elections are managed by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. The commission was established according to Section 238 of Chapter 12 of the Constitution which provides for independent commissions supporting democracy. Section 232 lists the commissions as follows; the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission, the Zimbabwe Media Commission and the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission. In addition, Section 238 provides that there shall be a Chairperson of the Commission who is appointed by the President after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission and the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders and eight other members appointed by the President from a list of not fewer than 12 nominees submitted by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. Section 234 also provides for the Independence of the Commissions. Some of the conditions are that; the commissions are independent and not subject to the direction or control of anyone, must act in accordance with the constitution and must exercise their functions without

fear, favor or prejudice. In addition, Section 236 requires members of the independent commissions to be non-political which means that ; they must not further the interests of any political party or cause, they have to relinquish their membership to political parties within thirty days of their appointment, otherwise they cease to be a member of the commission concerned, (Constitution of Zimbabwe, 2013).

Section 239 provides for the Functions of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). These include: to prepare for, conduct and supervise elections (Presidential, Parliamentary, Local and Provincial Council, National Council of Chiefs and Referendums), ensure that the elections and referendums are conducted efficiently, freely, fairly, transparently and in accordance with the law, to register voters, compile voter's roll and registers, ensure proper custody and maintenance of voter's rolls, delimit constituencies, wards and other electoral boundaries, to design, print and distribute ballot papers, establish and operate polling centers, to conduct and supervise voter education, to accredit observers, to receive and consider complaints from the public and to take such action in regard to the complaints as it considers appropriate. In addition, section 241 requires the ZEC to submit a report to parliament through the appropriate Minister on the conduct of every election and referendum.

2.3.6 Electoral Dispute Resolution

When elections are held it is necessary to promulgate laws to enable free and fair elections. However, the mere existence of laws does not guarantee the holding of free and free elections, therefore it is necessary to guarantee access to justice and to have an electoral dispute-resolution system to ensure that the law is applied in practice and elections are held on a level playing field. It is also important that the legal and institutional frameworks enable the implementation of sanctions to punish and discourage infractions (Oropeza, 2017).

In addition, Solijonov 2016 notes that:

The way in which complaints and disputes are handled is one of the important indicators of the credibility of elections. Therefore, free and fair elections necessitate the adoption of efficient and transparent electoral dispute-resolution (EDR) mechanisms that are explicitly defined in legislation, (p. 9.).

The legal frameworks focus for example on the dispute resolution procedures applicable to certain stages of the electoral processes including the nomination of candidates, the conduct of campaigns or the certification of results. This is called Electoral Justice, (Solijonov, 2016). A global expert survey on Perceptions of Electoral Integrity (PEI) carried out by Norris et al. (2015) shows that ‘democratic’ or ‘free’ countries generally experience fewer challenges to elections results than ‘partly free’ or ‘not free’ countries. Moreover, International IDEA developed a handbook on the Electoral Justice Database (EJD) in 2010 which is divided into 4 parts. These include the following; Challenges relating to election results, challenges related to political party/ candidate registration or nomination, challenges related to campaign financing and challenges related to election –related criminal offences, (International IDEA, Electoral Justice Database, 2010) . It should however be noted that “there are some types of disputes that are not currently covered in the EJD such as complaints related to voter registration and disputes related to general election campaigns”, (Solijonov, 2016, p. 12.)

Furthermore, the EJD also talks of the ‘First Instance’ and ‘Last Instance’ bodies that adjudicate over electoral disputes. Data collected shows that the most frequently observed first-instance bodies are courts of general jurisdiction and EMBs, followed by constitutional courts or councils. When it comes to the last-instance bodies it is notable that, in the vast majority of countries, the highest level of court of general

jurisdiction performs this function (High Court, Supreme Court or Court of Appeals). The existing legislation in a country should include; the dispute resolution bodies available, number of levels of adjudication, that is, whether decisions can be appealed or not, who can challenge results with the first instance body, the timing of challenges to election results, whether or not there is a requirement to pay a fee or deposit to submit a complaint to the first instance Electoral Dispute Resolution (EDR) body, the EDR system should also guarantee the right to a defense or to a hearing to challenge both to the complainant and to the person or body complained against, requirement for the first instance EDR body to issue a reasoned decision (one based on the principles of congruence and exhaustiveness), (Solijonov,2016).

In Zimbabwe, the Electoral Act Chapter 2:13, Amendment 6 of 2018, Part XX1A provides for Conflict Management. Section 160B provides for the constitution of Multiparty Liaison Committees at National, Constituency and Local Authority levels. Subsection 2 provides for the composition of the committees which include a Commissioner at the national level, political party representatives and representatives of independent candidates, (Zimbabwe Electoral Act Chapter 2:13). The Multiparty Liaison Committees (MPLCs) can be the First Instance Bodies in the case of an electoral dispute based on the violation of the electoral Code of Conduct. In addition, section 160C provides for the functions of the MPLCs and these include the following; to resolve disputes, concerns matters or grievances relating to the electoral process or non-compliance with the code of conduct and they report to the Electoral Commission, (Zimbabwe Electoral Act Chapter 2:13). Moreover, the section also provides that the decisions of the multiparty liaison committee shall be made by consensus.

Part XX11 provides for the establishment of the Electoral Court which is a division of the High Court. It is provided that the court shall have exclusive jurisdiction to hear

appeals, applications and petitions. Collins Dictionary (2019) defines Exclusive as something that is limited to people who are privileged and is therefore not available to everyone, (Zimbabwe Electoral Act Chapter 2:13). Furthermore, Section 162 provides that the electoral Court shall be composed of at least two high court judges who may work with one or more assessors, (Zimbabwe Electoral Act Chapter 2:13). The Electoral Court has the powers of the High Court. Section 170 of the Constitution provides that, “the High Court is a superior Court of Record and consists of the Chief Justice, the Deputy Chief Justice and the Judge President of the High Court and such other judges who may be appointed from time to time”, (p.73.). Amongst the parameters of the High Court provided for in Section 171, of interest to the study is subsection 1(c) which states that the High Court may decide constitutional matters except those that only the Constitutional Court may decide.

Moreover, at this point it is paramount to give an account of the Constitutional Court. Section 166 of the Constitution provides that the Constitutional Court is a superior court of record that consists of the Chief Justice and the Deputy Chief Justice and five other judges of the Constitutional Court. Subsection 3 provides for the cases to be brought before the court and these are; cases concerning alleged infringements of a fundamental human right or freedom enshrined in Chapter 4, or concerning the election of a President or Vice President must be heard by all judges of the court. Section 167 provides for the jurisdiction of the constitutional court and among other things, states that; it is the highest court in all constitutional matters and its decisions bind all other courts. Moreover, subsection 2(b) states that *only* the Constitutional Court may hear and determine disputes relating to the election of the office of the President, among other provisions. Subsequently, it is also important to note that the constitution provides for the independence of the judiciary in Section 164. Subsection

1 provides that the courts are independent and are subject only to the constitution and the law, which they must apply impartially, expeditiously and without fear, favor or prejudice.

The Electoral Act also provides for Electoral Petitions in Part XXIII. Section 167 provides that a petition may be submitted to the Electoral Court by a candidate who seeks to challenge the undue election of a Member of Parliament. In addition, part XXIII also provides for the following provisions; governing the petitions such as who is a respondent, the duration of time that the respondent has to be given a notice, the procedure of the trial of the petition, who pays the costs of the petition as well as the procedure of appeals, just to mention a few. Therefore, this brief narration of the Zimbabwe Court and Legal System shows that the country has electoral dispute resolution mechanisms. However, in spite of their existence the study will investigate the extent to which they are effective and just.

2.3.7 State of Politics in Zimbabwe

It is of importance to examine the character of politics in Zimbabwe. This helps to ascertain if there is fertile ground for electoral integrity. According to Morgenthau (1948) politics is the struggle for power. The role of power is to influence decision making and have authority. Elections are one way through which people get into power and ultimately politics. Chigora (2012) notes that Zimbabwean politics have been characterized by divisions which have manifested in the form of human rights abuses, loss of livelihoods, de-humanizing acts, corruption, political violence and overall mistrust between different groups in the Zimbabwe society. However, the formation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2009 at the backdrop of September 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) marked a new era in Zimbabwean politics. Given such an environment the GNU saw it robust to tackle these issues as a way of building

a better and united society. This was done through the establishment of an institution to deal with issues of national healing, reconciliation and integration, (Chigora, 2012 p. 8.). In addition, Chigora also notes the existence of the politics of domination by ZANU PF and the politics of opposition by the Movement for Democratic Change, electoral violence and electoral fraud.

As noted earlier, the 2018 general elections were meant to be different, with a new President, under the new dispensation. However, Cheeseman (2018) also notes that during the campaigns, the politics of fear continued to characterize Zimbabwean politics, undermining the prospects of a free and fair election. In addition, Cheeseman (2018) notes the negative effect of the nickname given to the incumbent President Munangagwa who was the ZANU PF Party Presidential Candidate, 'Crocodile'. He notes that, "the mention of a "crocodile" is a reference both to Mnangagwa's nickname and to the concern of many Zimbabweans that someone who was previously one of the most brutal members of the Mugabe government cannot be trusted to respect human rights". However, despite acknowledging a few positive signs such as the accreditation of international monitors from the European Union and the United States, the High Court ordering the traditional leaders to stop campaigning for ZANU PF thereby opening campaigning space for the opposition parties to campaign in the rural areas, there are negative signs characterizing the politics of Zimbabwe. Cheeseman, (2018) makes reference to a survey conducted by the Afro barometer in May 2018 which revealed that; 31 % of the voters were worried that the secrecy of their ballot was compromised, 41% believed that the Security Forces would not be willing to accept the results and 40% feared the possibility of violence after the elections. This study will then investigate the trends of continuity and change in Zimbabwean politics and the effect on the promotion of electoral integrity.

2.3.8 Civil Society in Zimbabwe

Yishai (2002) states that a vibrant and active civil society is pivotal to democracy as it contributes to a government's legitimacy and efficiency. Zaidise (2004) notes that civil society has also played a crucial role in overthrowing authoritarian regimes in Eastern Europe, China, Middle East, South Africa and South America as well as introducing democratic government and practices in developing countries. Makumbe (1998) notes that for most of Africa, civil society would include trade unions, professional associations, church and Para-church organizations, resident, student, business and other special interest associations, the media and various types of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Makumbe (1998) also argues that even though civil society seemed to pursue an anti-state agenda, the truth is between the late 1980s and early 1990s, its major preoccupation was the fight of the masses against unjust rule by governments.

Civil society in Zimbabwe emerged in the mid-nineties. As such, Gumbo (2002) notes the challenges being faced by the civic movement in Zimbabwe. These include; that the government will by all means do everything to maintain political power and to contain the civic movement for example by arresting and imprisoning activists who take part in the civic activities, reliance of the mass support base of the MDC, and donor funding that comes attached to conditions suitable to the donors not the grassroots. Being a feature of democracy, Civil Society plays a major role during elections. These range from conducting voter education, civic education and awareness campaigns on elections. Questions have risen as to whether there is a civil society in Zimbabwe, given the frosty relations it has with the state? The study will also investigate how this affects the promotion of electoral integrity in Zimbabwe.

2.3.9 The Electoral Process in Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission is charged with the duty to conduct the electoral processes efficiently and fairly. The electoral process in Zimbabwe includes; delimitation of boundaries, voter registration, nomination of candidates, voter education, accreditation of observers, voting and counting of votes, (Human Rights Bulletin, 2011). Gromping and Comma (2015) note that the quality of a country's elections has become increasingly important for government legitimacy and domestic support. The research will examine if the various stages of the electoral process in Zimbabwe were executed in a way that promotes electoral integrity or not.

2.3.10 Media Coverage of the 2018 Harmonized Elections in Zimbabwe

One of the factors of electoral integrity is even coverage of all parties on the media. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission Regulations Statutory Instrument 33 of 2008 is the primary instrument that is used in regulating and monitoring the conduct of the media in covering elections, (Zimfact 2018). Some of the provisions of the statutory instrument include that public broadcasters shall; ensure the equitable allocation of airtime to political parties and candidates, advertising airtime on television and radio shall be allocated only after the payment of the charges has been made by the candidate or a third party to the broadcaster. While private and commercial channels have a prerogative to cover parties as they wish, the public broadcasting media belongs and must be accessible to all. Though social media gives alternative ways for campaigners to reach their audience, it is affected by disadvantages such as low internet penetration and connectivity outside cities means that public broadcasts remain the most accessible sources of information in rural areas where most voters reside. Audience research shows that the majority of Zimbabweans rely on radio, especially the state run outlets, (Malunga, 2018). Therefore the research

will investigate if these issues to do with media coverage were addressed during the 2018 harmonized elections.

2.4 Summary

The chapter explored the various literature available on the issue of elections and electoral integrity. The chapter took a funnel approach in the discussion, that is, from the international, regional and national perspective. The themes discussed in the chapter include the following, an overview of electoral integrity worldwide, the global state of democracy, democracy in Africa, media coverage of elections in Zimbabwe, civil society in Zimbabwe, electoral management bodies, electoral dispute resolution, the electoral process of Zimbabwe and general politics in Zimbabwe. The chapter also identified academic gaps which the research sought to fill through field work data collection

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology for this study, the research being a case study of the Zimbabwe 2018 Harmonized Elections, paying attention to the perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District. The chapter states the research design used in the research. In addition, the chapter also outlines and justifies the different methods, techniques and instruments the researcher used to collect information about the subject matter as well as the data collection procedure that was followed. Data collection methods which were used include primary and secondary sources. Primary Sources that were used include; in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher had the help of two research assistants who volunteered to assist. The research assistants were 4th year students in the department of Politics and Public Management at Midlands State University during the interviews of the voters and focus group discussions in Wards 8 and 15. The major role of the assistants was to help coordinate focus group discussions, taking notes during the interviews, thereby ensuring that as many voters as possible were reached in the few trips that were managed by the researcher. Secondary sources that were used include; e-books, e-journals, e-articles, e-newspapers and various social media platforms.

3.2 The Research Design

The research design was qualitative, in the form of a case study. Qualitative research involves looking in depth at non- numerical data, (Boyd, 2020). Gaille (2020) notes that the benefits of a qualitative research are that; it helps understand attitudes, it allows for genuine ideas to be collected from specific socioeconomic demographics, the qualitative research process uses a smaller sample size than other research methods thereby reducing research costs. In the context of this research, the qualitative research

design gave a human experience to the research which was very important in understanding the voters' experiences of the 2018 harmonized elections. There were issues of political culture, as well as the knowledge and understanding of the electoral processes and systems which could be best understood by listening to people's experiences. Moreover, the qualitative research also offered the researcher flexibility to follow up on any thoughts or answers that were provided by the respondents in both the interviews and the focus group discussions.

Furthermore, the research was in the form of a case study. Boyd (2020) defines a case study as a detailed analysis of a single person or a group. In this case the research focused on the analysis of the perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District on electoral integrity in the Zimbabwe 2018 harmonized elections. A case study is an approach that aids in-depth exploration and insight into the research phenomenon more generally, (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls and Ormston, 2014). A case study is helpful in developing a new theory based on the findings of the research, (Boyd, 2020). In addition, case studies offer verifiable data from direct observations of the individual entity involved. Those observations make it possible for others, in similar circumstances, to potentially replicate the results discovered by the case study method, (Gaille, 2020).

3.3 Population and Sampling

Sampling is defined as a statistical procedure for finding cases to study, (Silverman, 2013). A sample is a set of objects, occurrences or individuals selected from a parent population for a research study, (Gray, 2014) A research population can be explained as a comprehensive group of individuals, institutions, objects and so forth which have common characteristics that are of interest to the researcher, (Rafeedalie, n.d.). The research drew the population from one urban constituency and one rural constituency

Zvishavane Ngezi and Zvishavane Runde, respectively for the voter interviews as well as focus group discussions. In addition the key informants were drawn from various organizations that were of interest to the study. In total, the sample size for the research was 143 respondents. Purposive sampling, which is a form of non-probability sampling techniques was employed in the study. Non-probability sampling is a sampling method in which, not all members of the population have an equal chance of participating in the study, (Fleetwood, 2020).

3.3.1 Sampling Techniques

3.3.1.1 Purposive Sampling

According to Babbie (2011), purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative. Purposive sampling ensures that the sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and questions which the researcher wishes to study, (Bryman, 2012). The research employed purposive sampling techniques in choosing the specific key informants with in-depth knowledge about elections and only those citizens who voted or participated in the electoral process for the interviews and focus group discussions. The method was time efficient as it only focused on people who had useful information to address specific areas of the research.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

3.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data is defined as data which is collected by the researcher from sources such as observations, surveys, questionnaires, case studies and interviews according to his requirements, (Ajayi, 2017). Primary data was obtained through conducting in-depth

interviews and focus group discussions. Primary data generation methods allowed interaction between the one obtaining information and the one giving; thereby creating a rapport which could not be achieved in secondary methods. The information obtained was first hand there by reducing the occurrence of bias. Primary methods enabled the researcher to explain to the respondents in areas that required clarity. The obtaining of the same responses led to a build-up of information thereby making it easier for the researcher to make out concrete data from them hence discovering patterns. However, some of the sources were not readily available hence the researcher had to travel to get to them thus being costly. Some of the methods such as interviews required a lot of preparation and skill in order for them to give out accurate results. Also, some of the methods such as Key Informant Interviews were time consuming as the respondents made appointments a time that was most convenient for them.

3.4.1.1 In-depth Interviews

According to Rubin and Rubin (2012), when using in-depth interviews, researchers talk to those who knowledge or experience with the problem of interest. In-depth interviews are a qualitative data collection method that involves direct, one-on-one engagement with individual participants, (Steber, 2017). Interviews enabled the researcher to establish rapport with participants to make them feel more comfortable, which could generate more insightful responses, especially regarding the sensitivity of the topic under study. The Interviews also gave the researcher the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, probe for additional information to generate a rich understanding of attitudes, perceptions, motivations regarding the issue of elections and electoral integrity. Moreover, during the interviews, the researcher could monitor changes in tone and word choice to gain a deeper understanding of the responses. The interviews

also had the absence of potential distractions or peer-pressure dynamics that could sometimes emerge in focus groups.

3.4.1.2 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group discussion involves gathering similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest, (HERD Team, 2016). Focus group discussion is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than from a statistically representative sample of a broader population, (Nyumba, T.O, Wilson, K, Derrick, C.J and Murkhejee, N, 2018). The discussion enabled a free flow of information and ideas. In addition, the focus group promoted discussion, idea sharing and debate which was important for making conclusions in the research. Moreover, the discussions provided a breadth of shared experiences from the participants who had been voters in 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe. The researcher could also interact with the participants, pose follow-up questions or ask questions that probed more deeply into the subject under study. Furthermore, the researcher could get information from non-verbal responses, such as facial expressions or body language. Lastly, in the focus group discussions, information was provided more quickly than if people were interviewed separately.

3.4.2 Secondary Data

According to Heaton (1998), secondary data involves the use of existing data, collected for the purpose of a prior study, in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from the original work. The use of secondary sources helped the researcher improve the understanding of the problem under study. The process of collecting the data saved the researcher a lot of time as it was already sorted and well organized. In addition, the collection of the data was very economical as compared to primary data. In addition,

Secondary data was valid and reliable as it had already been used and evaluated by other researchers. Furthermore, secondary data ensured the correctness of data collected from primary research and helped in adding new values and attributes in the understanding of the subject under study.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were in the form of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews on key informants and those citizens who voted in the 2018 harmonized elections in Maglass Township and Vhugwi District. Ward 8 known as Maglass Township was used for Zvishavane Ngezi constituency, whilst Ward 15 known as Vhugwi was used for Zvishavane Runde constituency. 45 voters were interviewed in Vhugwi whilst 58 voters were interviewed in Maglass Township. A total of 111 in-depth interviews were held; 103 with the voters and 8 with the key informants. In selecting the respondents, the researcher visited the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission in Zvishavane to access the voter's roll for voters' information in wards 8 and 15 to help her select the participants. The research assistants also helped with recording notes and coordinating focus group discussions.

In addition, 8 Key informants were drawn from the various stakeholders involved in the management of elections. These included the following; Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, Political Parties, Academia, Media (state and private), Civil Society Organizations such as Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN), Electoral Resource Centre (ERC), Councilors, Members of Parliament and Local Observers. 2 Key informant interviews were physically done, whilst 6 were done through use of WhatsApp voice calling, video calling and telephone. The researcher was guided by the interview guide to ask questions whilst she took notes of the responses.

Subsequently, two focus group discussions were held, one from each ward. Ward 15 Focus Group Discussion was held at Vhugwi Business Centre community hall with 18 participants whilst in Ward 8 it was held at Machipisa Shopping Centre at a venue provided by the Councilor with 14 participants. These were people who voted or participated in any other way in the 2018 general elections. The researcher was guided by the focus group discussion guide of questions whilst the participants took turns to respond. The researcher was pre-occupied with facilitating and moderating the discussion, hence the assistants were either helping with coordinating or recording the discussion with a cellphone.

Furthermore, secondary data was accessed in the form of; e-journals, e-books, e-articles, e-newspapers, book reviews, dissertations. Secondary sources were used for literature review, conceptual and theoretical framework. These were also used for collecting various statistics so as to observe patterns. The sources included text books, journals, and online sources such as, e-books, e-journals newspapers, and reports from Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, ZESN, ERC, SADC, African Union and European Union.

3.6 Analysis and Organization of Data

3.6.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis entails the synthesis of crude data that would have been obtained from the research findings, (Gary, 1998). The data analyzed was obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary sources included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions whilst secondary sources included; document analysis of text books, electronic books, electronic journals, articles and newspapers as well as the 2018 harmonized election reports from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, European Union, African Union and the Southern African Development Community. The

researcher processed the information into meaningful data through coding. Content and thematic analysis were employed by the researcher. The themes developed were also used to organize the data through subheadings.

3.6.1.1 Content Analysis

The purpose of content analysis is to describe the characteristics of the documents contents by examining who says what, to who whom and to what effect, (Bloor and Wood, 2006). The researcher made use of raw data and categorized it under important themes informed by the research objectives.

3.6.1.2 Thematic Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006) define thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns within data. Analysis is done through the process of coding in six phases to create established meaningful patterns. These phases are; familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming theories and producing the final report, (Braun, Virginia and Clarke, 2006). The data obtained from various sources was organized into themes. This approach emphasized the participants' perceptions, feelings and experience as the paramount object of the study. Thematic analysis allowed the respondents to discuss the topic in their own words, free of constraints from fixed response questions found in quantitative studies.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Silverman (2013) defines ethics as the guidelines or principles relating to good professional practice. The researcher first applied to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee (AUREC) for Initial Review of the research proposal and got approval to conduct the research. During the data collection, the researcher would ask the respondents if they wanted to be anonymous or not. In cases when they wanted

anonymity and confidentiality, the researcher respected that. The researcher disclosed all there was to know about the research, including assuring the respondents that despite being political, the research was purely for academic purposes. Moreover, the researcher had to observe protocol in the communities by first talking to the Councilors of the wards before talking to the voters. The researcher also acknowledged and cited the various authorities whose work was used in the data collection of the research. Lastly, Objectivity was applied at all the stages of the research such that the results were not biased or distorted.

3.8 Summary

This chapter presented the processes that the researcher undertook to collect, analyze and organize the data as well the ethical considerations that had to be taken into account. These include the following; The Research Design which is a case study design with a qualitative approach. The research was a case study of the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe. The Research Population included the various stakeholders who were involved in the management of the elections (qualitative population) and the voters who were drawn from two wards in Zvishavane Runde and Ngezi constituencies. The research used a non-probability method of Purposive sampling. The research employed both primary and secondary methods. The research tools included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for primary sources. Secondary sources included text books, e-books, e-journals, e-articles, e-newspapers and reports from local and international electoral management bodies as well as international electoral research institutions on electoral integrity. The chapter also discussed the analysis of data which was content analysis, thematic analysis and analysis of data from the qualitative interviews for qualitative data. Ethical considerations that were taken into account include observing the confidentiality of

the respondents, participation by informed consent, avoiding harm to the participants, respect for the human rights and culture of the participants, acknowledging and citing authorities of the secondary data gathered as well as maintaining objectivity at all stages of the data collection.

CHAPTER 4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a report of the findings and results following the study that was done at Zvishavane Wards 8 and 15 of the Ngezi and Runde Constituencies, respectively. Here, the researcher focused on presenting the data collected and also highlighting the interpretation and analysis of the data thereof. Attention was given to the responses obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data from electoral reports of ZEC and observer missions were also presented. The data was presented and analyzed using coding, which helped in developing the themes. The findings were linked to the main objectives of this study.

4.2 Data Presentation and Analysis

4.2.1 Perceptions of the electorate on electoral processes and systems

In this section, the researcher was looking for how the electorate felt about the various electoral processes and the electoral systems that were implemented in the 2018 General Elections. The first question asked here was whether the respondents were aware of the electoral systems and processes that were implemented in the 2018 general elections. The second question was to ask if the respondents felt that the electoral processes and systems implemented in the 2018 general elections promoted free, fair and credible elections.

4.2.1.1 The Electoral System

In terms of the electoral system, KI 4 appreciated Zimbabwe's hybrid system that involves 4 different systems. These are First-Past-the-Post in the National Assembly, Proportional Representation in Senate, Majoritarian in the Presidential and Quota system for women, chiefs and those with disabilities to cater for the different needs of society. She however noted that, "*effectiveness is about implementation in line with*

the constitution because the system itself does not have credibility” (Key Informant 4, Programs Coordinator, Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network, personal communication, October 2, 2019). In agreement, KI 8 also noted the need for laws to be aligned to the constitution and added a dimension of the disempowerment of the Members of Parliament who are appointed through the Proportional Representation System and the ineffectiveness of the majoritarian electoral system as it is not representative enough. “Seating Members of Parliament get the Constituency Development Fund, but the PR MPs do not get anything, hence they are disempowered. They cannot even campaign. The Majoritarian system is not representative enough. The numbers of votes should remain as they are, not the calculations of 50%+1” (Key Informant 8, Senator, Midlands Province, personal communication, October 27, 2019).

The analysis given by KI8 was confirmed by the voters who expressed a perception of ineffectiveness of the PR system. In terms of the effectiveness of the PR system in representing in parliament, the voters expressed mixed views. The highlight of the responses that were gotten from Ward 15 was that, women do represent in political parties, but they are not voted for by the people, they are appointed, as a result, they lack the power to make independent decisions and they are unaccountable to the membership of the party. In the focus group discussion, one respondent talked about how women’s leadership is not better than men’s. Supporting this view, one respondent in the Focus Group Discussion said that, “*vakadzi vacho vanotungamirira vakangofanana nevarume, havatimirire sevakadzi, hazvina kusiyana plus vanongoba sevarume vacho*”, (the women leaders are the same as men, so they do not really represent our needs as women, there is no difference, plus they are also corrupt like men). These same sentiments were shared by the women in the urban Ward 8 whose

response was mostly that they do not see the difference between women's leadership and men's leadership. Some respondents acknowledged that the electoral processes do allow women participation, but women do not support each other.

4.2.1.2 The Electoral Processes

This section presents the findings of the data on the various particular electoral processes

KI 1 responded that, *“there were indeed some processes that promoted electoral integrity such as the following: election results were displayed at every polling station which limited rigging and ballot stuffing, voter registration was done openly and in ample timelines and also voter education was done through the various media which informed the voters”*, (KI 1 Lecturer in the Department of History Studies at Midlands State University. Personal Communication on 23 September 2019). In agreement, K I 6 noted that, *“every party held Primary Elections where they chose who would represent the party at the harmonized level and that each party was free to mobilize and lure people to vote for it”*. (Key Informant 6, Councilor, Ward 15, personal communication, October 8, 2019).

There were voters who also expressed an appreciation of improvements in the implementation of the electoral processes. The perceptions were as follows; there was smooth registration, peaceful casting of votes that they voted freely, campaign material was distributed to people in the grassroots, voter education was conducted; people were free to choose their candidates of choice and they welcomed the digital Biometric Voter Registration process. In addition, the focus group discussion in Ward 15 noted of the improvements such as that for the first time there were 23 political parties on the ballot paper which was the highest number in all the elections ever held in

Zimbabwe, however, other parties were not visible in campaigning. They were only seen on the ballot paper on the day of the elections.

These improvements were also confirmed by the election reports produced by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and Observer Missions. The improvements were in the areas of the legal framework, use of the BVR digital registration system, guaranteeing of fundamental human rights and freedoms, establishment of the Multi Party Liaison Committees, limiting the printing of excess ballot papers, voting according to one's registered polling station, the accreditation of a larger number of local and international observers as compared to the 2013 elections, increased political space to accommodate more players, (Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) 2018, African Union Election Observation Mission (AUEOM) 2018, European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) 2018, Southern African Election Observation Mission (SEOM) 2018).

On the other hand, other respondents perceived that the processes had mixed effects. KI 7 noted that, "*ZEC was not transparent on where they got the ballot papers, pictures of candidates were not clear, people would just vote for the name and party. However, though late, the voter's roll was availed for scrutiny and mobile registration increased the number of voters*" (Key Informant 7, Councilor, Ward 8, personal communication, October 21, 2019). The interviews of the voters revealed that public perception is that the processes do promote, but later on people realize that the processes did not promote electoral integrity when the results are announced or in the post-election period. Respondent 34 in ward 8 who was an independent observer representing one of the civil society organizations in the country in Jeka (Mberengwa West) said that, "*the processes did promote free and fair elections, everything was done transparently, assisted voters went with their trusted custodians and accompanied by the police as*

well. However, the voter's roll still had names of people who are deceased and those who do not exist; some voters were on the voter's roll were turned away because their identity cards were not clear, some because those were not their stations”

Some respondents totally disagreed that the processes did promote electoral integrity. This was alluded by KI 8 who noted that, *“in some cases, in Zvishavane, the V11 Forms were taken away by ZEC officials. ZEC officials were ZANU PF”*. To support this view, KI 2 noted a lack of openness and thorough information in the pre-election and election period. *“Processes are elitist whereby things are done in offices without grassroots. The registration process is not inclusive, as it is, the registration process is ongoing, but the noise is made in the last 6 months”*, (KI 2 Senior Multimedia Reporter at Newsday, personal communication on 30/09/19). Voters who also shared the same perception that the processes did not promote electoral integrity cited the following issues; voting cards were sold for \$3 after registration, hence others could not afford and could not vote, ZANU PF was telling people what to do during campaigns, announcing of results is not accurate in terms of numbers, the President and Cabinet were dissolved on paper after the pronouncement of the election date. Respondent 13 from Ward 8 said, *“The President and Cabinet must not be in office during elections such that he deploys soldiers for example Lord Sormes administered the elections after independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 and ensured a smooth handing of power from Smith to the new government”*.

In a focus group discussion held in Ward 8, at Machipisa Shopping Centre, the participants strongly disagreed that the electoral processes promoted electoral integrity. The perceptions were as follows; the results do not reflect the will of the people some even referring to that as the cause of the August 1 violence, all parties were indeed campaigning, but one party Movement for Democratic Change Alliance,

hereafter MDC A, was not campaigning as openly, irregularities between the number of people who voted and the results announced, the campaigning of the ruling party is very powerful but they do not deliver on electoral promises, nothing changed in 2018 as the electoral processes were not delivered. Moreover, some cited human rights violations and that results of elections are predetermined.

More so, the observer missions also noted and confirmed the above views which included the following; ZEC did not fully utilize the MPLCs particularly at the national level, not every political party was given the road map to the polling stations, ZEC did not fully address all the concerns raised by stakeholders about the ballot papers as well as the voter's roll, ZEC's independence from the executive branch and impartiality were questionable, the environment at the polls did not promote a level playing field because of undue influence on voters to vote in favor of ZANU PF and partisan actions by traditional leaders, manipulation of food aid and agricultural programs and abuse of state resources.

In addition, the BVR system only captured 78.6% of the total number of the eligible voters with a lesser number of registrants from the urban areas, ZEC's persistent lack of inclusivity and transparency, embroilment in a number of contentious issues, including the layout of the presidential ballot, modalities for printing and distributing ballots, poor procedures for confirming ballot security between printing and election day and the conduct of postal voting, a high degree assisted voters in some instances, results were posted at the polling station, but not all of them, lack of verifiability, transparency and traceability by the CD ROM format that ZEC used to display polling station figures in excel format as it was not an actual presentation of the V11 forms from each polling station, delays in the release of the voter's roll to stakeholders for scrutiny, the opposition and other civil society organizations felt that the voter's roll

was shared late and in a format that was not analyzable, hence inconsistent with the constitution. (EUEOM 2018, AUEOM 2018, SEOM 2018).

4.2.1.2.1 The Nomination Process

In terms of the nomination process, there were mixed perceptions. KI 3 appreciated the nomination process which was done in a clear and fair manner. He explained that *“one had to be a registered voter, have 5 references from the constituency of people who are registered voters, you had to take your documents to the court to be vetted, pay a registration fee of \$ ZWD 50. Candidates would freely mingle with each other. For instance in Zvishavane Ngezi, there were 5 parties and they all took part in a Peace March”*, (KI 3 Candidate for Member of Parliament, representing Coalition of Democracy, personal communication on 01/10/19).

Though in agreement of the generally fair nomination process, KI 6 brought another dimension of the nomination process not being fair at the political party primary elections level. He noted that, *“monitoring of elections is very loose at the primary level. Party leaders, members or those with positions of power perpetuate the divisions within the party. As a result the primary elections are not as free and fair”*. In support of KI 6’s view, the same perceptions were expressed in a focus group discussion held at Vhugwi business center. The discussion revealed that at the Primary level of elections, the processes did not promote free and fair elections and ultimately, electoral integrity. The discussion revealed that a candidate’s documents may just go missing, sometimes candidates are imposed by the party leadership, and for example they cited that the current Member of Parliament of Zvishavane Runde is not from the Chief Mazvihwa Area, unlike the former MP Gandiwa. They want someone from the area who understands them. In this regard, participant 15 said that, with others echoing, *“Uyu MP munyowani hatimuzivi, hatisati tambomuona. Akauya katatu pano*

mumisangano yedu kuZANU PF achiti vabereki ndirikutsvagawo basa, tikamuramba as takazongoona ariye ahwina pamaPrimary elections, tikatoshamisika”, (we do not know the current MP, we had never seen him until elections. He came 3 times here seeking candidacy in ZANU PF meetings and we rejected him, when the results were announced, he was the winner, we were surprised).

4.2.1.2.2 Campaigning, Media Coverage and Candidate Financing

In terms of campaigning and candidate financing, the perceptions were as follows; people cannot openly support the opposition party hence even when they hold rallies, the turnout is low, there was fear, the vote counting process is not done transparently, there was no level play ground as one party was not allowed to campaign, there was no physical violence, but there was structural violence and MDC A would hold meetings at night, not openly. Participant 6 said that, *“mamwe mapato seMDC anoita misangano yawo vusiku vasingaonekwe nekuti vanotywa. Ukangozikanwa kuti uriwe MDC uno makwa, kana kupisigwa musha, kana kushaikwa kana kuvurawa”* (Some political parties such as MDC hold their meetings at night, not openly because they are scared. If you are known to be supporting the opposition you become a target of victimization, or you disappear or have your home torched).

In addition, the voters also noted the issue of uneven media coverage. Respondent 48 in Ward 8 cited the issue of unequal media coverage, according to her, *“paground ose mapolitical party taimaona, asi paTV taingoona ZANU PF”* (on the ground all political parties were visible, but on the Television, only ZANU PF was covered).

In terms of candidate financing, KI 3 said that her party did not assist her with funding. She had to self-finance her campaign, including transporting the voters with special needs such as the elderly and those living with disabilities. On the other hand KI 7 expressed that his party did finance his campaign materials such as Posters and fliers,

however, everything else he had to self-finance. KI 6 also stated that for the greater part of the campaign, he funded himself. His party did avail funds, however, the funds arrived a few days before the election, which was already too late and the funding was very inadequate, hence the candidates from his party agreed to use the funding to remunerate the party agents who would be stationed at the polling stations so they would be motivated to promote their interests as a party. The elderly voters also confirmed that the candidates would provide their own individual transport to ferry them to the polling stations.

Moreover, Respondent 55 in Ward 8 noted that, all parties were freely campaigning, however, new small parties were talking to everyone door-to-door, however, ZANU PF and MDC were only focusing on those they already knew, their known supporters. Respondent 58 also alluded that there was level playing ground for all candidates, however. Media coverage was not even. Respondent 37 in Ward 8 said that *“when we are voting everything appears to be free and fair, though I’m not sure of what happens afterwards”*. The above perceptions were also supported by a report produced by the Media Monitors Assessment of the media’s coverage of the 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe in the period 31 May-22 July 2018. The conclusions of the report were that; *“while the election agenda dominated all media platforms and there was quite a bit of information on the elections, coverage of political players was largely unbalanced and it favored established political parties, especially ZANU PF”*, (Zim Sentinel, 2018)

Furthermore, in their 2018 report, ZEC revealed that the Commission set up a Media Monitoring Committee to monitor the media, with the assistance of the Zimbabwe Media Commission and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe for the 2018 general elections. However reports from the observer missions noted that the Monitoring

Committee was not effective, through use of the following descriptions of media coverage; state media was biased towards the incumbent Emmerson Munangagwa and the ruling ZANU PF party, vibrant and diverse, but polarized and partisan, both private and state-owned media showed a great degree of bias and carried out unequal coverage of activities of electoral contestants, (AUEOM 2018, EUEOM 2018, SEOM 2018).

Section 248 of the Constitution provides for the establishment of the Zimbabwe Media Commission whose appointment would be made by the President. Some of the functions of the commission include; promoting freedom of the media, to ensure fairness and diversity by monitoring broadcasting, ensure that the people of Zimbabwe have access to fair and wide information and to promote fair competition and diversity in the media. These functions, if properly discharged, would have enabled an equal coverage of all political parties on the media, thereby giving the citizens a wide diversity of information regarding the elections. Moreover, the appointment of the commission by the President, an interested party in the election could have undermined its independence, which is the same problem faced with ZEC which was supposed to be overseeing the execution of the commission's duties.

Moreover, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) is another media regulatory that is under the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services. Some of the functions of the body include; to encourage providers of public, commercial and community broadcasting services to be responsive to the need for a fair and accurate coverage of matters of public interest and for an appropriate coverage of matters of local significance, to encourage diversity in the control of broadcasting services and to put in place a regulatory environment that will facilitate the development of a broadcasting industry in Zimbabwe that is efficient, competitive and responsive to audience needs and the national interests, (Broadcasting Authority of

Zimbabwe, 2019). This means the body is meant to promote the broadcasting of diverse political views and all issues of public interest without discrimination and partisanship. However, being under the oversight of the Ministry which is part of the executive branch of government means that the President is also involved indirectly because he appoints the Minister who will have to serve his interests through patronage. This explains why the Media Commission established by ZEC may have failed to fulfil its mandate.

4.2.1.2.3 Results Management

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission 2018 report shows that everything was done procedurally, however data gathered from the Interviews shows that is not what was happening on the ground. Some of the responses include that; ZEC did not share the polling station road map with every political party, as a result, some parties did not have representative agents at the polling stations to sign and confirm the results on the V23C forms, at some stations, ZEC officials took away the V11 Forms that were supposed to be left with party agents for verification, once the results reached the national command center.

The ZEC report also presents data about the proceedings at the polling stations such as the increase in their numbers, staffing and operating time. However, the report is silent about the concerns raised by the other stakeholders and election observer missions of high incidences of assisted voters. This grey area was also confirmed by the data gathered from the voters from both the rural and urban where the elderly expressed suspicions of their vote being tempered with by those who were assisting them and in some cases being forcibly assisted, even though they insisted that they could still read and write. The data also showed that there were instances of voters who faked to be living with disabilities for reasons unknown.

Voters also expressed a lack of trust in the results management system. Respondent 4 in ward 15 openly said that, “*maresults tozongomahwa nevamwewo kuti zavabuda sei, hatizivi zvinoitika kumsoro ikoko*” (we hear the result outcome from the others. We do not know what happens at the top). In agreement, Respondent 19 in ward 8 said that, “*Iyezvino tirimuna 2019 asi maresults a2023 adovako kudhara*” (right now we are in 2019, but the results for the 2023 elections are already there).

4.2.1.2. 4 Lack of independence of the electoral processes from the influence of the Executive branch of Government

In addition, still on that note, Respondent 22 in ward 8 referred to the issue of the leaders that are appointed by the President, in line with the constitutional provisions, that, this undermines democracy, “*a government must be from the people, not appointments made by the President, for example after President Munangagwa Vice President Chiwenga is next and he was not voted for by the people. This impedes accountability*”. Another factor noted was the lack of independence of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission.

4.2.1.2.5 The Voting Process

In terms of the actual voting process, though data revealed that people voted peacefully, undue influence of which party to vote for was revealed in ward 15. This was confirmed by the sentiments made by the elderly men and women in the Focus Group Discussion that, “*isu musangano watinoziva iZANU PF, ndiyo yakatipa nyika ino, yakauya navaMugabe, kubva 1980 tichitanga kuvhota ndiyo yatinongovhotera*”, (the political party that we know is ZANU PF. It is the party that liberated this country and brought to us by Mr Mugabe, since 1980 when we first voted, we have always been voting for ZANU PF). In addition, Participant 13 in the FGD in Vhugwi openly concurred that, “*tongoita zvatinoudziwa kuti tiite, hatina zvatingaita*” (we feel

compelled so we just comply). The discussion also revealed that sometimes ballot papers of certain candidates may go missing, voters get surprised of the outcome as the results are not reflecting the will of the people and where to cast votes is discussed in community meetings called by the Councilor. In confirmation, Participant 5 said that, “*muno muVhugwi takabvumirana kuti tinongomaka pagomo reMasvingo*, (here in Vhugwi we agreed that we mark on the logo of the Masvingo hill which is the Great Zimbabwe as incorporated in the logo of ZANU PF). In addition, the data also revealed that the youth’s voice is suppressed and they are compelled to follow the elders in ward 15. Both male and female youth expressed that there is an invisible red tape that keeps them confined and in check. Respondent 11 in ward 15 said, “*ukada kutaura mumisangano unonzi urimwana mudoko iwe, hapana chaunoziva*”, (when you try to speak in meetings you are told that you are a child and you do not know anything).

Still on that note, In addition, the elderly expressed that they were assisted to vote, but they felt like those who assisted them did not really respect their choices. Another perception was that ballot papers are duplicated at night and staffed after the day of the election. They also expressed that they do not know what happens after they cast their votes as the voter education only teaches them up to that stage.

4.2.1.2.6 Electoral Dispute Resolution

The research also sought to establish how the voters perceived the electoral dispute resolution system with a particular focus on the Constitutional Court Presidential Challenge that was filed by Nelson Chamisa, the Presidential candidate for MDC Alliance. The data revealed that the greatest percentage of voters were not happy with the involvement of the court in the contestation of the results by MDC A from both the rural and the urban constituency, whereas a smaller percentage were happy. Although this similarity pattern was observed, the researcher noted that the difference

was in the reasons given by the respondents. It should be noted that this pattern was also observed in the Focus Group Discussions held in both constituencies.

KI 1 noted that an arbitrary solution had to be sought just like in the Go vs Bus in the United States election of the year 2000, (KI 1 Lecturer in the Department of History Studies at Midlands State University. Personal Communication on 23 September 2019). Voters also shared this perception that since the parties had failed to agree, there was need for a neutral body to arbitrate. There were those who were not informed about the court challenge because they did not follow events that happened after polling day. In agreement, KI 2 noted that the Judiciary is not a problem as an arbitrary body. However he noted that the independence of the Judiciary is compromised as it plays in the wings of the Executive and it operates in a partisan manner. *“For instance the Chief justice is appointed by the President; the late and former Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku openly stated that he is ZANU PF”*, (KI 2 Senior Multimedia Reporter at Newsday. Personal Communication on 30/09/19).

In addition, to the above factors KI 4 stated that the intervention of the Judiciary in the contested electoral outcome depends on the application of the Rule of Law and people’s confidence in the system, (KI 4 Programs Coordinator, Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network. Personal Communication on 02/10/19). KI 5 emphasized that when these factors are not addressed, then the decisions of the courts will be questioned and it also undermines public confidence in the courts, (KI 5 Director, Electoral Resource Center, personal communication on 08/10/19).

In light of the above, KI 7 argued that the court ruling was not fair because the court is the one that gave Munangagwa power. MDC A was also not supposed to file a complaint to the Judiciary as it is not independent. It was a waste of time, (KI 7 Councilor, Ward 8. Personal Communication 21/10/19). KI 8 also argued that the

judiciary is captured. *“In a ‘lawful’ country, the courts have the right to have the final say on elections. However, in this country, the gun rules, not democracy”*, (KI 8 Senator, Midlands Province. Personal Communication 27/10/19).

On the other hand, perceptions from voters in ward 15 were that; MDC A was not supposed to contest the results as the voters had decided through the ballot, MDC A had to accept defeat and that MDC had lost the elections, which is why they did not have evidence to prove otherwise. However, in ward 8, the pattern observed on the responses was that the voters were not happy with the legal and court system in general. As a result most of them felt that MDC A’s court contest was a waste of time since the outcome was known. Reasons given were that; the court was discriminatory to MDC A as they were not giving them a chance, the judiciary is not independent and it acts in a partial manner. Respondent 49 even said, *“The judges are appointed by the President”*, in support, another respondent had the same sentiments that, *“all the judges of the Con Court were appointed by the incumbent except for Makarau. So no matter how much evidence was presented, the court would have shot them down”*. In addition, participant 14 in a focus group discussion held at Machipisa shopping centre said, *“the judges are members of ZANU PF. The evidence of V11 forms that they wanted was not practical because they remain at the polling stations, instead they should have requested the V23 forms”*.

Those who were not informed about the event gave the explanations of load shedding which hindered them from following events, some respondents were the Sections AA and SQ where there is no electricity since the establishment of the township by Shabannie Mine so they do not have electronic gadgets, some said they do not follow events on the national broadcaster, ZBC as the content is heavily censored, whilst

others simply did not care about anything that followed after the results were announced.

The 2018 ZEC Report states that during the course of the election, there was a total of 80 cases, with the Presidential Constitutional Court Challenge being one of them, but was dismissed. The AUEOM (2018) and the EUEOM (2018) reports also noted that the handling of electoral disputes was done in a swift and transparent manner, though the handling of administrative complaints by ZEC was slow and ineffective. In addition, the EUOM, (2018) also noted that the handling of the Presidential results legal challenge by Nelson Chamisa, Presidential candidate for the MDC Alliance was also handled in a timely and transparent manner though it was rejected by the court on the basis that their claims were unproven. This is however in contrast with the data gathered from the interviews. The data revealed that in the face of a contested electoral outcome, there was need for an arbitrary intervention, through the Constitutional Court as the highest judicial remedy body for election dispute as provided for in the Electoral Act.

4.2.1.2.7 Legal Reforms

The data gathered in the research showed a widespread appreciation of the legal reforms that were implemented to improve on electoral integrity in the 2018 harmonized elections. The ZEC report gives an outline of the legal reforms that were effected during the 2018 elections such as the revision of the Code of Conduct to also include civil society organizations, traditional leaders, civil servants and members of the security establishment, provisions to promote the participation of women and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms, elections to be observed by the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission and a widened definition of ‘intimidation’ to include ‘misleading another person by stating that he or she could determine or

discover how they had voted'. The data gathered from the research shows that the enforcement of the Code of Conduct was partial. Whilst it was extensively enforced on civil society organizations, it was not as effective in regulating the behavior of traditional leaders in influencing the people's votes and the use of extensive force exhibited by the army in the post-election August 1 Violence where six people were shot dead by the soldiers.

Even though there was the establishment of the Motlante Commission to investigate this, the data gathered in the research in both Ward 15 and Ward 8 as well as in the Key Informant interviews shows that the Commission was not effective. The question asked to the respondents was, "How effective was the Motlante Commission in establishing legitimacy and electoral integrity in the post-election period?"

The respondents unanimously agreed that the Commission was not effective in establishing electoral integrity of the 2018 elections because of the following reasons; it was commissioned by President Munangagwa who was also an interested party by being a Presidential candidate for ZANU PF and the Commander for the Defense Forces, it was composed of other candidates such as Lovemore Madhuku, Charity Manyeruke a ZANU PF bigwig and headed by Motlante the former Vice President of South Africa in the ANC Party which is an ally of ZANU PF., results were inconclusive, the recommendations have still not been implemented, the victims and those affected have not been compensated, the Commission exposed a series of rigging strategies that had been used by ZANU PF through testimonies. More Reasons given were that its mandate was not clear, some of the findings were not conclusive such as that it was never established who had given the order to shoot. The August 1 violence and the behavior of the soldiers has also been condemned by the reports of the observer missions shared in this research.

There is also Section 5 for promoting the participation of women in elections. This was also confirmed by the interviews held when the respondents indeed felt that the processes did promote the participation of women, despite the internal political party fights that were divisive during the primary elections.

Section 133A which increased the definition for intimidation to include influencing another person to disclose how they voted. This was confirmed to be happening in the rural ward 15 where the youth expressed that they voted for ZANU PF as it is the tradition, hence they avoid to be labelled as rebellious. In addition, the elderly also confirmed that these issues are discussed at community meetings and that is where they advise the young ones of the guideline that an X is placed on the ZANU PF logo, regardless of the candidate's potential for delivering. So this can be interpreted as intimidation as the youth expressed that they felt their voice was not heard and the electoral processes were not inclusive of their concerns. In spite of these positive legal reforms, data from the key informants showed that there is still need for more to be done in terms of legal reforms. This includes; the alignment of the Electoral Act with the Constitution as this causes a lot of confusion. However, constitutional law dictates that whenever there is a discord between the constitution and any other law, the constitution shall prevail. This means that if the constitution is silent on these changes made to the electoral act, they may not be as effective when faced with conflicting constitutional provisions.

Furthermore AUEOM (2018) noted the need to align the electoral act with the constitution which undermines the independence of ZEC and impedes the enjoyment of political rights as well as the absence of legal provisions regulating campaign funding and expenditure as well as the misuse of public resources. Some respondents also noted that the improved legal framework may be useless if there are weak

institutions to ensure enforcement. It was also noted that the law does not provide for the punitive measures for those that violate it.

4.2.2 Perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District on the qualification of the 2018 General Elections as a benchmark for Electoral Integrity

The research also sought to examine the perceptions of the electorate on whether the 2018 general elections achieved electoral integrity. The question asked was that, “In your analysis, do you think the 2018 Harmonized Elections achieved electoral integrity?”

An observed pattern from both constituencies is that the smallest percentage of the voters believe that the elections were free and fair. To be exact, out of a total of all the 103 respondents that were interviewed, only 16 voters believed that the 2018 elections were free and fair, hence they can be used as a benchmark for an election with electoral integrity. A greater population in the rural believes that they were free but not fair whereas a greater population in the urban believes they were not free and fair. The reports gave a mixed cocktail of views about the elections, ZEC (2018) only stated that the elections were held under generally peaceful conditions, it was silent on quantifying the integrity of the elections. The EUEOM (2018) noted that many aspects of the 2018 general elections failed to meet international standards, hence the elections lacked electoral integrity. The SEOM (2018) also noted that the pre-election and election phases were in line with the regional standards set, hence there was integrity, however, the SADC report is silent on the mission’s assessment of the post-election period, leaving the interpretation open to subjectivity.

The data collected from the interviews also confirmed the above information. One of the questions asked was that, “In your view, do you think the August 1 post-election violence affected the integrity of the elections?”

Key informants unanimously agreed that the August 1 post-election violence did taint the integrity of an election that had been obtained in the pre-election and election period. Reasons given can be concluded to say even though the protests were justified, they were premature. There was a disparity of views between the rural and the urban population. In ward 8, 29 out of 58 voters believe that the post-election violence did not taint the integrity of the elections whereas in opposite 27 out 45 voters in ward 15 believe that the violence tainted the integrity of the elections. In both constituencies there is a small percentage of people who are not well informed about the event. The urban population felt that the protests and the violence did not affect the integrity of the elections because the protests were just an expression of frustration by the voters who felt the election had already been stolen during the campaigns and on Election Day by ZANU PF and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission. In addition, the urban population also felt that the protesters were practicing their democratic right to protest.

On the other hand, a greater number of voters in the rural Ward 15 felt that the August 1 protests and violence tainted the integrity of the elections because of the following reasons; violence at any given point is unjustified, the protesters had no right to protest because the results had not yet been announced, hence they put ZEC under pressure to release the results before they were fully prepared. The observer missions also noted that the August 1 violence did reverse all the gains that had been obtained in the pre-election and election periods. The reports cited the excessive use of force by the security forces that left 6 civilians dead and 14 injured, raiding of the MDC A Headquarters, arrest of 27 MDC A staff involved in the vote tabulation, seizure of the MDC A computer equipment, arrest of members of the opposition in some parts of the country and abuse of rights by the state, (AUEOM 2018, EUEOM 2018). This

therefore shows that the August 1 violence did taint the integrity of the 2018 general elections.

4.2.3 Impact of electoral contestation on the wellbeing of citizens

The research also sought to establish how the socio-economic wellbeing of citizens is affected by continued electoral contestation, bearing in mind that public perception is that their lives should improve after elections, when those voted for, deliver on their promises. The question asked here was, “What do you think is the impact of contestation of electoral legitimacy on the welfare of the citizens?”

KI 2 noted that Electoral contestation does have an impact on the welfare of the citizens. *“The nation lacks healing and reconciliation, social cohesion, the politics is polarized, people want to remain in power and that is toxic. Economically, there is a lack of the social safety net, poor delivery of social services and lack of employment. Cohesion feeds into the politics (polarization) as a result, there is no unity and the country cannot move forward”*, (KI 2 Senior Multimedia Reporter at Newsday. Personal Communication on 30/09/19)

KI 4 added that, *“contestation of electoral legitimacy impedes development, increases voter apathy for example in the Bi-Elections voter turnout was 25% compared to 80% in the 2018 harmonized elections”*, (KI 4 Programs Coordinator, Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network. Personal Communication on 02/10/19). KI 5 concurred and stated that, *“the impact is devastating as it affects nation building through; polarization, intolerance, de-stabilization, selective application of the law, partisan distribution of aid and public disorder (demonstrations mean people cannot go on about their daily business)”*, (KI 5 Director, Electoral Resource Center. Personal Communication on 08/KI10/19). KI 6 also agreed and added that, *“after elections, people expect the candidates to deliver. Contestations waste time to be utilized for development”*, (KI 6

Councilor, Ward 15. Personal Communication 08/10/19). KI 7 also submitted that, *the illegitimate President is not accountable to the electorate. That is why he is not making efforts towards development*”, (KI 7 Councilor, Ward 8. Personal Communication 21/10/19)

The voters from both wards shared the same perceptions and had the following responses; contestation wastes time that should be channeled towards development, it has become harder and harder to survive in the country because of the stalemate, instead of engaging in dialogue to push the country forward, ZANU PF and MDC A are still pulling against each other.

However, KI 8 argued otherwise, and said that;

“I do not think that the contestation affects the citizens in any way. When we walk out on Munangagwa in Parliament, it does not affect the ordinary citizen. ED did not win the election. Our war is with him because we are representatives of the people. What affects the welfare of the people is the lack of legitimacy as people hear only negativity out of everything he says and the policies that are implemented. It like they are testing and experimenting with people’s lives”, (KI 8 Senator, Midlands Province. Personal Communication 27/10/19)

4.3 Discussion and Interpretation

This section of the Chapter gives a detailed discussion of the meaning of the above data which was analyzed according to themes. The discussion and interpretation of the data will be guided by the research objectives and questions and outlined in Chapter 1.

4.3.1 Perceptions of the electorate on the effectiveness of electoral processes and systems in promoting Electoral Integrity

The data suggests that the electorate appreciated the improvements in processes that were implemented during the 2018 general elections. These gave everyone an equal

chance to participate, either as candidates or as voters. The improvements were highlighted in areas of the legal reforms, voter registration, vote casting, electoral dispute resolution and establishment of institutions such as the Media Monitoring Committee and the Motlante Commission. Consequently, the data also points to the fact that the effectiveness of these reforms and institutions depended on the strengthening of the institutions, application of the law equally and less interference of the Executive branch of government in their operations.

Subsequently, the data also points to the fact that despite the improvements noted in the electoral processes implemented in 2018 as compared to the 2013 elections in Zimbabwe, the elections still ranked low on electoral integrity because of the following reasons; exclusiveness of the registration process, selective application of the law, suppression of civil society activities, poor results management, lack of full implementation of legal reforms and the electoral law, lack of public trust in the judiciary and election management institutions, the electoral processes were elitist and did not include the people in the grassroots, public awareness of the electoral processes did not include the whole electoral cycle as focus was only made on the last 6 months before the election, fear by the opposition to openly campaign and support, partisan behavior by traditional leaders in the rural communities, lack of qualitative primary elections held at the political parties, ZEC not discharging its mandate effectively in a professional, not partisan way, uneven media coverage and insufficient electoral financing to ZEC and the candidates. What this means is that even though the rules allowed everyone to participate in the 2018 general elections, some candidates had better chances of winning than others whilst some voters could not openly support the MDC A in fear of victimization and intimidation. Looking elsewhere, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) of South Africa regulates political party funding through

the Political Party Funding Act of 2018, the annual disbursement of public money to political parties through the Represented Political Parties Fund (RPPF) and the establishment of the new Multiparty Democracy Fund (MDF) to accept and disburse private donations to political parties and requiring full disclosure of all donations above an annual threshold by political parties and donors and imposing certain restrictions on the source and use of such donations, (IEC,2020). Thereby, showing the measures put in place by the electoral commission in South Africa to ensure equal political party and candidate financing which ZEC could emulate.

As stated above, the data illustrates a lack of fairness at the political party level of the Primary Elections across all political parties that were represented in the research. This is because of a lot of manipulation of the processes at the primary elections level resulting from lack of strong monitoring mechanisms for ballot casting and vote counting as well as divisions perpetuated by the party leadership. As noted in ward 15, the implications of such conduct is that the candidates would not be accepted by the electorate which would also mean lesser support and engagement. To curb this problem, the data shows that the electorate prefers candidates who reside in their constituencies, whom they know very well, to those candidates who would have been imposed.

Furthermore, the data points to the fact that the conduct of ZEC as the election management body compromised the quality of the elections through; exclusion of some stakeholders such as civil society organizations, selling of voter registration cards, lack of openness about information, irregularities on the voter's roll and being partisan in favor of ZANU PF, not ensuring equal media coverage just to mention a few. What this indicates is that as the electoral management body, ZEC failed to equalize the playing field. The elections were held on a tilted ground where rules were

the same on paper but did not apply equally in practice. As a result, the elections were not fair. The failure by ZEC to carry out its mandate fully can be a result of the Commission's lack of independence from the Executive branch of government. Appointments at ZEC are as follows; the Chair must be a judge or qualified to hold office as a judge and is appointed by the President after consultation with the Judicial Service Commission. The other members are appointed by the President from a list of not fewer than twelve nominees supplied by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders (Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013, Article 238 (1) (b)). One of these eight is designated as Deputy Chairperson (Electoral Act, Sixth Schedule, 6), (EISA, 2018).

Moreover, it is also important to note that the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders is made up of the Speaker of the National Assembly (Chairperson), President of the Senate (Deputy Chairperson), Deputy Speaker, Deputy President of the Senate, Minister of Finance and two other Ministers appointed by the President, the Leader of Government Business, the Leader of the Opposition, Chief Whips of all parties represented in Parliament, the President of the National Council of Chiefs, eight members elected by Parliament, four from each House and two members appointed by the Speaker of the National Assembly and the President of the Senate. (Parliament of Zimbabwe, 2020) therefore, this shows the high level of the President's involvement in the appointments of the members of ZEC which may compromise their impartiality. However, it is of great significance at this point to mention the practices in independent commissions elsewhere in Africa. In South Africa, Members of the IEC are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the National Assembly, following nominations by a National Assembly inter-party committee, (Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (IESA), 2019). Additionally, in Kenya, the Commissioners of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), are

appointed by the President and confirmed by the Parliament for six year terms and by law, no commissioner can be a member of a political party, (Online Kenya Constitution, n.d.). This indicates the checks and balances that are put in place to curb excessive influence of Presidential power on the appointments and operations of the electoral commissions in South Africa and in Kenya.

Subsequently, in terms of electoral dispute resolution, the data illustrates a lack of trust in the court system by the electorate who continuously expressed that the highest judges of the bench acted in a partisan manner in favor of ZANU PF as some of them are card holding party members such as the late Chief Justice Chidyausiku and that the judiciary is captured by the state. The research notes that undermining of the doctrine of separation of powers compromised the independence of the Court. This is because of the involvement of the Executive in the appointment of the judges through the President and the administration through the Ministry of Justice and Parliamentary Affairs. Additionally, the data also highlights that even though both constituencies were highly unhappy with the outcome of the Constitutional Court proceedings, the pattern differed on the reasons given between the urban and the rural population. In ward 8, the pattern observed was that the voters were not happy with the legal and court system in general which would reflect dissatisfaction with the government in general whilst the conservative ward 15 felt that the courts should not have been involved in the first place, the results of the votes should have been respected.

Furthermore, in terms of perceptions on the effectiveness of the electoral system, the data points to the fact that Zimbabwe has a robust, hybrid electoral system which ensures to cater for the different groups of society such as women, traditional leaders and those living with disabilities. However, the data also suggests that the effectiveness of the hybrid system relies on its implementation in line with the constitution. I

addition, the data also suggests the ineffectiveness of the Proportional Representation system that enables more women representation in Parliament by reserving 60 seats. This means that, even though the women are present in parliament, their capacity to fully represent the concerns of women is thwarted by their subservient position to their appointers and seating Members of Parliament as they do not receive any form of financial support such as the constituency development fund. The implication is that they cannot even campaign or mobilize support, hence their re-appointment remains at the mercy of their appointers instead of the electorate whom they represent. Moreover, the data also illustrates a lack of support of the appointed women by other women within political parties as they view them as conniving with the men who are 'corruptible'. Hence, the women in political parties prefer to vote for their PR representatives to having them appointed by men.

To resume, the research also indicates dissatisfaction with the First-Past –the –Post system which was used in the Presidential Elections where the winner had to get 50% +1 of the total votes casted. The electorate felt that this did not reflect the will of the people as it left other candidates without any recognition, which is vital for granting legitimacy to a government. A government that is representative of the true will of the people would make the electorate feel involved and would truly reflect a multi-party democracy, thus it would be legitimate and accountable.

Incidentally, the data also shows a pattern in the disparity of views about the electoral processes and systems between the rural and the urban electorate which the researcher suggests could be embedded in the political culture of the 2 constituencies. The rural population is conservative, controlled by the state through influence of traditional leaders, the control by the state of who goes in and out of the communities which also controls the infiltration by civil society organizations and private owned local and

international media who act as the watch dogs of the state, and also the rural population was mostly affected by electoral violence in the previous elections in Zimbabwe where some had their homes torched, some tortured and arrested or even killed by alleged state apparatus and ZANU PF militia youths. Therefore they are haunted by any sights of violence, hence their intolerance to it. Whereas the urban political culture is different, the society is liberal, enlightened, they are exposed to international trends on the importance of fundamental rights and freedoms such as those of expression and association and the individualistic nature of the society enables them to interact and associate with whoever they identify with. Moreover, the openness of the society allows the heavy presence of the media and civil society organizations and this also enables the international community to see and monitor what is happening. As a result, the grip of the state is tamed, though the state tries to regulate these agents by the law and regulations of how they should operate. Consequently, this liberal culture influences the urban population's orientation towards demanding accountability and transparency through whatever means which can be lobbying, advocacy or even mobilizing protests.

4.3.2 Perceptions of the electorate in Zvishavane District on the qualification of the 2018 General Elections as a benchmark for Electoral Integrity

Data shows that to a lesser extent, the 2018 general elections can be used as a benchmark for electoral integrity. Though revealing disparities on the quantification, the data illustrates that the electorate's perceptions were that the 2018 harmonized elections failed to meet the benchmark of electoral integrity. Whilst the ward 15 electorate felt that it was free but not fair, the ward 8 electorate felt that it was not free and fair. The data also highlighted the negatives and positives that were observed.

This therefore means that the ‘new’ dispensation still has a lot to prove on that it is really a new government with a departure from the historical legacy of political crises caused by lack of electoral integrity. Additionally, this also means that the efforts of governments’ re-engagement into the international community may be reversed, thereby by perpetuating isolation from international trade and cooperation. In addition the data shows a significant lack of acceptance of the electoral outcome by the electorate which is crucial to granting legitimacy to the government. As a result, this may fuel voter apathy in the upcoming 2023 harmonized elections. In addition, the negative perceptions may result in the lack of support for government initiatives and policies by the citizens.

Furthermore, the data also indicates that the August 1 post-electoral violence reversed all the gains of a peaceful election that had been gained in the pre- electoral and electoral periods. This suggests a continuation of a culture of violence in Zimbabwean politics which was a characteristic of elections in the ‘Mugabe era’. The implication of such is that the society will continue to be polarized along political lines, hence perpetuating disunity and lack of nation building.

4.3.3 Impact of electoral legitimacy contestation on the well-being of citizens

Data gathered from the research indicates that the continuous contestation of electoral legitimacy has a negative impact on the well-being of the citizens because of the following reasons: after results are announced; those who won should be able to deliver and this can be difficult if a lot of time is spent on contestations and fights of legitimacy, when the nation lacks national healing and social cohesion because of political polarization, it will always be difficult to move forward as a united people working towards the development of the nation, the disrespect of election outcomes on one hand by those defeated and the greed to stay in power by the incumbents is

very toxic and divisive, hence the country stays polarized on political lines which impedes unity of purpose.

Moreover, contestation also causes citizen apathy, whereby citizens cease to participate in electoral processes and policy making which are also key towards development. This also impedes nation building because of intolerance, destabilization, selective application of the law, partisan distribution of aid and demonstrations which mean that people cannot go on about their daily business.

Furthermore, an illegitimate leader is not accountable to the electorate, hence they will not be committed to developing the nation and improving the lives of the electorate. In addition, lack of legitimacy on a leader will take away credibility of anything he says or does in the eyes of the citizens, hence this impedes citizen engagement in development processes.

Finally, the denial by MDC A to legitimize President Munangagwa may also affect how the government is viewed by the international community and affect its efforts of re-engagement. Re-engagement will mean economic development through attraction of foreign direct investment, access to loans and foreign aid, uplifting of the economic sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe which can improve Zimbabwe's terms of international trade and create jobs. Therefore this shows how the continuous contestation is affecting the wellbeing of citizens to a greater extent.

4.4 Summary

The Chapter focused on presenting, analyzing and interpreting the data that was collected by the researcher. The data was analyzed through coding of similar patterns observed in the data collection as well as content analysis. The analysis was guided by the research objectives and which were outlined in chapter 1. These included; to assess

the Zimbabwe electoral processes and systems implemented during the 2018 harmonized elections, to assess whether the 2018 general elections passed the benchmark of electoral integrity and to assess the impact of contested electoral legitimacy on the welfare of the citizens. Data was collected from key informants, qualitative interviews from 2 constituencies of ward 8 in the urban and ward 15 in the rural of Zvishavane District as well as the 2018 election reports from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), African Union Election Observer Mission (AUEOM) and Southern African Election Observation Mission (SEOM). Data analysis and interpretation revolved around the themes guided by the research objectives. Two major events that made the media headlines in the post-election were also analyzed, the August 1 violent protests that happened in the capital city of Harare and the Motlante Commission of Inquiry that was established by President Munangagwa.

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the whole research focusing on critical areas which shaped the research. It seeks to summarize the previous chapters and give relevant recommendations. The chapter also aims to answer the research questions and to meet the objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary

Chapter 1 contained the introductory elements of the research. These included the background of the study which explained the build-up of the reasons which led to the need for the research. The statement of the problem elaborated the problem that the research sought to address which is the perceptions of the electorate on the continuous contestation of elections in Zimbabwe, particularly the 2018 general elections. The statement of objectives explained the aim of the research which was to understand the perceptions of the electorate on the extent to which the 2018 harmonized elections achieved electoral integrity. The objectives of the research were clearly explained as well as the questions that the research seeks to answer. The chapter also explained why the research would be so important by elaborating how the findings would be used and who would benefit from the suggested recommendations. The delimitations of the study were also stated, which included; the conceptual framework, the geographical and the time delimitations. The limitations of the study were also explained which included; accessibility of the respondents, difficulties in securing appointment with the key informants. The researcher also explained how she overcame these challenges.

Chapter 2 explored the various literature available on the issue of elections and electoral integrity. The chapter took a funnel approach in the discussion, that is, from the international, regional and national perspective. The themes discussed in the

chapter include the following, an overview of electoral integrity worldwide, the global state of democracy, democracy in Africa, media coverage of elections in Zimbabwe, civil society in Zimbabwe, electoral management bodies, electoral dispute resolution, the electoral process of Zimbabwe and general politics in Zimbabwe. In addition, the chapter included the Conceptual Framework of the study which was built on the two variables namely; elections and electoral integrity. The chapter also identified academic gaps which the research sought to fill through field work data collection.

Chapter 3 presented the processes that the researcher undertook to collect, analyze and organize the data as well the ethical considerations that had to be taken into account. These include the following; the research design which was qualitative. The research was a case study of the 2018 general elections in Zimbabwe. The Research Population included the various stakeholders who were involved in the management of the elections (qualitative population) and the voters who were drawn from two wards in Zvishavane Runde and Ngezi constituencies. The research used a non-probability method of purposive sampling. The research employed both primary and secondary methods. The research tools included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions for primary sources. Secondary sources included text books, e-books, e-journals, e-articles, e-newspapers and reports from local and international electoral management bodies as well as international electoral research institutions on electoral integrity. In addition, the chapter also looked at the data collection procedure that was followed in the research. The chapter also discussed the analysis of data which was content analysis, thematic analysis and analysis of data from the qualitative interviews for qualitative data. Ethical considerations that were taken into account include observing the confidentiality of the respondents, participation by informed consent, avoiding harm to the participants, respect for the human rights and culture of the participants,

acknowledging and citing authorities of the secondary data gathered as well as maintaining objectivity at all stages of the data collection.

Chapter 4 focused on presenting, analyzing and interpreting the data that was collected by the researcher. The data was analyzed through coding of similar patterns observed in the data collection as well as content analysis. The analysis was guided by the research objectives and which were outlined in chapter 1. Data was collected from; key informants, qualitative interviews from 2 constituencies of ward 8 in the urban and ward 15 in the rural of Zvishavane District as well as the 2018 election reports from the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC), European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM), African Union Election Observer Mission (AUEOM) and Southern African Election Observation Mission (SEOM). Data analysis and interpretation revolved around the themes guided by the research objectives. Two major events that made the media headlines in the post-election were also analyzed, the August 1 violent protests that happened in the capital city of Harare and the Motlante Commission of Inquiry that was established by President Munangagwa.

Chapter 5 gave an overview of the whole research focusing on critical areas which shaped the research. It sought to summarize the previous chapters and give relevant recommendations. The chapter also aimed to answer the research questions and to meet the objectives of the study.

5.3 Conclusions

Basing on the data that was gathered and analyzed in this research. The researcher made the following conclusions:

- It can be concluded electoral integrity varied between the different periods of the 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe. Electoral integrity was

very high in the pre-electoral period, moderate in the electoral period and very low in the post-electoral period. In consequence, the events of the post-election period tainted the image of the 2018 general elections. These included the August 1 violent protests and the Motlante Commission of Inquiry which the research proved was ineffective in redeeming the integrity lost on the post-election period.

- The hybrid electoral system in Zimbabwe does promote electoral integrity as it promotes participation of people with special needs and those living with disabilities. However, the Proportional Representation is not effective as a means of representing the needs of women. Additionally, the Majoritarian system does not fully represent the will of the people.
- The continuous contestation of electoral outcomes does have a negative impact on the socio-economic well-being of the citizens.
- There is a continuity of politics of domination by ZANU PF and politics of opposition by MDCA. There is also a continuity of the politics of fear among the supporters of the opposition and allegations of electoral fraud. However changes in political culture were also noted in the absence of electoral violence during the campaigns and polling day, media coverage of opposition parties, though minimal and the expansion of the political space to include new political parties; including 4 women presidential candidates.
- In spite of the efforts towards inclusion of the civil society by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, CSOs were still excluded in some processes. ZEC did not fully disclose information regarding certain

processes, the code of conduct was heavily enforced against CSOs than any other stakeholder and the non-alignment of the electoral laws to the constitution led to legislation conflicts that hindered the full execution of the CSOs' mandate.

- The ability of ZEC to fully discharge its mandate in an effective way was compromised by the lack of independence of the Commission from the Executive branch of government in terms of appointments of the commissioners as well as inadequate funding.
- The disparities observed in the views of the rural and the urban population were informed by the respondents' experience of life as voters and the political culture in their setting of residence. That is why the urban respondents were liberal and the rural respondents were mostly conservative. On why they voted for their party of choice, the rural voters showed that they voted for ZANU PF because it is custom and the norm whereas the urban population voted for MDC because they had seen its results of better living conditions during the Government of National Unity that was there in 2009-2013.
- Leaders of political parties do not fully understand their role as the custodians of the party's integrity and ideology as well as the implications of their style of leadership on the integral image of the party as a potential governing party or government. More so they do not appreciate the role of political parties as the pools of identification and training ground for future national leaders as well the source of mobilization for citizen support and engagement. Consequently this results in lack of trust by the party membership, lack of inclusion, flawed primary elections which reflect in a

poor choice of candidates presented at the national level elections, hence resulting in incompetent and illegitimate leaders and public officials, citizen disengagement, polarization of party members and the entire citizenry, party leadership inciting the members to engage in immoral activities such as violence, among other things.

- People generally do not understand the difference between ‘Free, Fair and Credible’ elections and ‘Electoral Integrity’. They think, the two variables mean the same thing. However, the research found that ‘electoral integrity’ is part of the variables that result in Free, Fair and Credible Elections because for elections to be qualified as such they must be done line with the accepted international standards and norms set by regional and international bodies.

5.4 Implications

- The findings of the research and the conclusions made above show that Zimbabwe is generally moving in a direction towards democratic consolidation. However, this can only be achieved if there is political will from the stakeholders to effect the necessary electoral reforms in the areas mentioned above so that elections are qualitative and public trust is regained in them. This will also help in the efforts by government of re-engagement into the international community. In addition, credible elections will eliminate contestations which impede development and ultimately the well-being of citizens.
- The continued incapacitation of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission as the sole electoral management body to discharge its mandate fully may mean that

electoral integrity may continue to be compromised in Zimbabwe. Consequently, electoral outcomes may continue to be contested by the losers, which the study revealed has a negative impact on the well-being of the citizens.

- The lack of trust by the citizens in government and the electoral management institutions may eventually result in citizen apathy, where they do not participate in the political activities and processes
- The continuation of the politics of domination and opposition by ZANU PF and MDC A, respectively means a continuation of a political culture of a people divided along political lines which may impede unity, development and nation building.
- The continued suppression of civil society activities may lead to frustration and ultimately the collapse of the civil society which is one of the tenets of a proper democracy.

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

- There is need for all the stakeholders to implement the electoral reforms required in Zimbabwe so that the country improves on electoral integrity. This includes; the alignment of the electoral laws with the constitution, electoral financing, the timely addressing of grievances raised by stakeholders, strengthening of government institutions and restoration of integrity in electoral management institutions to regain public trust.

- There should be checks and balances on the influence of executive power over the appointments of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Judiciary. One way could be through giving more power to the Legislature. As seen in other countries such as South Africa and Kenya in Africa, more power is given to the Parliament through recommending and confirming the candidates chosen by the President. Parliament is comprised of the representatives of the citizens, which in Zimbabwe would be through the Senate and the National Assembly, hence this would indirectly represent the will of the people.
- As the Electoral management body, the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission should review the 2018 general elections and implement reforms suggested by all stakeholders to avoid the same issues to be raised in the forthcoming 2023 elections.
- Despite differences in areas of specialization, civil society should unite and have a clear mandate which feeds into nation building without being partisan. They should follow the regulations set by the state on the parameters and requirements for their operations. This will help the state and citizens to understand them, how to deal with them and how to perceive them, ie whether as partners or enemies.
- Political parties should encourage women to participate in politics by ensuring affirmative action within their structures. The promotion of women participation should also be done on the basis of merit not appointments of patronage. If possible, they should be voted for so that they have the full support of their fellow female members.

- The elected leaders should work to deliver on the electoral promises and also be accountable to the citizens to improve their lives so that they continue to see the purpose of elections.
- Political parties should understand their important role in national elections and in nurturing future national leaders. As such they should be managed with integrity, inclusion and professionalism.
- The eradication of the culture of violence has to begin from the political parties within their structures. The starting point would be to disband the youth militia groups in political parties. In addition, the leaders should lead by example and shun the culture of violence and destabilization in any way.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

- The study noted that there is no correlation between electoral integrity, democracy and development. This was observed in a study carried out by Norris, Comma and Frank in 2014 where electoral flaws were noted in established democracies and economies such as Italy, Japan and the United States in 2014 and a contrasting good performance in emerging economies such as the Republic of Korea, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Lithuania, Rwanda, Chile, Argentina and Mongolia. In agreement, Lewis, (2019) noted the consistent orientation of developing countries towards democratization, despite their low income. Therefore there is need to investigate the factors that determine electoral integrity, other than democracy and the level of a country's development.
- In defining 'Legitimacy', the words given in the research revolved around the following; acceptability of a regime to its subjects, recognition in

international relations, legality and reasonableness of a regime, rule of law, accountability, checks and balances of power, free and fair elections and inclusion, (Mazrui 1967, Solijonov 2016, Banard 2002, Dyzenhaus 1999, Evans and Newnham 1998, McIntosh 2013 and McLean and McMillan 2009). However there is a different school of thought which argues that 'Legitimacy' is but just a self-proclaimed status that the African state has adopted to survive through state failure and collapse or when the government is unable to project its power. So the word is just a scapegoat tool for state survival and authority against those elements against it. This state is described as the 'Post-Colony' where generally African citizens suffer in a post-colonial state which survives through coercion and compliance rather than consent, (Gatsheni-Ndlovu, 2011, Mbembe, 2011 and Mazrui 1967). Therefore this pokes the mind of an existence of a conflict in the views of defining a universal understanding of the concept of 'Legitimacy'. There is need for further research to establish whether there is an Afrocentric and Eurocentric view of legitimacy or these can be harmonized to create a universal paradigm.

- The research also showed that there is a Eurocentric and Afrocentric view of 'Civil Society'. This brings problems of understanding the proper role and functions of civil society to the CSOs, citizens and the state. Therefore there is also a need to further research on the concept of 'Civil Society' so that there is a universal understanding of the concept.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 : APPROVAL LETTER FROM AUREC

3



**AFRICA
UNIVERSITY**
(A United Methodist-Related Institution)
INVESTING IN AFRICA'S FUTURE

**AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS
COMMITTEE (AUREC)**

P.O. Box 1320 Mutare, Zimbabwe, Off Nyanga Road, Old Mutare-TD (Tanzania) 00075/010286600 aures@africauniv.edu website: www.africauniv.edu

Ref: AU1064/19 10 September, 2019

Adele Mchilo
C/O CBPLG
Africa University
Box 1320
MUTARE

RE: ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL INTEGRITY IN ZIMBABWE: CASE OF THE 2018 GENERAL ELECTIONS

Thank you for the above titled proposal that you submitted to the Africa University Research Ethics Committee for review. Please be advised that AUREC has reviewed and approved your application to conduct the above research.

The approval is based on the following:


- a) Research proposal
- b) Questionnaires
- c) Informed consent form

- **APPROVAL NUMBER** AURECAU1064/19
This number should be used on all correspondences, consent forms, and appropriate documents.
- **AUREC MEETING DATE** NA
- **APPROVAL DATE** September 10, 2019
- **EXPIRATION DATE** September 10, 2020
- **TYPE OF MEETING** Expedited

After the expiration date this research may only continue upon renewal. For purposes of renewal, a progress report on a standard AUREC form should be submitted a month before expiration date.

- **SERIOUS ADVERSE EVENTS** All serious problems having to do with subject safety must be reported to AUREC within 3 working days on standard AUREC form.
- **MODIFICATIONS** Prior AUREC approval is required before implementing any changes in the proposal (including changes in the consent documents)
- **TERMINATION OF STUDY** Upon termination of the study a report has to be submitted to AUREC.

Yours Faithfully



**MARY CHINZOU – A/AUREC ADMINISTRATOR
FOR CHAIRPERSON, AFRICA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

AFRICA UNIVERSITY
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (AUREC)

10 SEP 2019

APPROVED
FOR THE CHAIRPERSON, AUREC

APPENDIX 2 INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Interview Guide of a Study of perceptions of the electorate on electoral integrity in the Zimbabwe 2018 general elections: A case study of Zvishavane District.

By Adele Mcilo (MPPG 171124), a Masters Student Studying Public Policy and Governance at Africa University

1. Are you aware of the electoral systems and processes being implemented in Zimbabwe?
2. Do you think the current electoral systems and processes being implemented in Zimbabwe promote a free, fair and credible election?
3. What do you think is the impact of contestation of electoral legitimacy on the welfare of the citizens?
4. How do you feel about the outcome of the intervention of the judiciary in the contested Presidential electoral outcome?
5. In your analysis, do you think the 2018 Harmonized Elections achieved electoral integrity?
6. In your view, do you think the August 1 post-election violence affected the integrity of the elections?
7. How effective was the Motlante Commission in establishing legitimacy and electoral integrity?

APPENDIX 3 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION INSTRUMENT

A Study of Perceptions of the electorate on electoral integrity in the 2018 harmonized elections in Zimbabwe: A case study of Zvishavane District.

By Adele Mcilo (MPPG 171124), a Masters Student Studying Public Policy and Governance at Africa University

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDE

1. What do you know about the Zimbabwe electoral processes and electoral system?
2. Do you think the electoral processes and the electoral systems implemented in the 2018 harmonized elections promoted electoral integrity?
3. What do you think of the intervention of the Constitutional Court in the contested Presidential outcome and the ruling they gave?
4. Basing on your experience in Zvishavane. Do you think the 2018 Harmonized elections (from the Post-electoral to the Post-electoral period) achieved electoral integrity?
5. What is the effect of contested electoral legitimacy on the well-being of citizens?