



*Do elections in Zimbabwe
favour the rural woman?
Analysis of a survey on
women's participation in the
2013 elections*

**The Research & Advocacy Unit [RAU] & The
Women's Trust**

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Executive Summary

This report is a follow-up to the preliminary report produced by the Women's Trust (TWT) and the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) in early 2014 on the effectiveness of the *SiMuka! Zimbabwe, Woman, Get Counted! Register to Vote!* in getting women to register to vote and to vote. This report goes further to note that whilst it is encouraging to see women turn out to vote in elections, and even more gratifying to see that the turn out can be strongly increased by woman to woman advocacy, there is always need to conduct a reality check on the actual process of the election and its outcome. This report investigates whether what happened before, during and after the elections affects women's views of the elections and whether this differs for women in urban areas as for women in rural areas.

The data collected in this study was acquired through the administration of a 66 item interview instrument for individual interviews. The instrument was developed, building upon and expanding on the questionnaire developed for the first stage of the study. Enumerators were trained and the questionnaire was piloted, corrected, and then finalised. The enumerators were deployed into the same Districts as for the first phase, in an attempt to get a matched sample but the enumerators were unable to easily use the same subjects from the first phase, until the attempt to get a matched sample was then abandoned and the interviewers concentrated on getting as large a sample as possible. Except for those aged under 18 years of age, all women willing to be interviewed were included in the study.

The major findings of the study were as follows:

- Regarding experiencing electoral irregularities, rural women reported two significant irregularities with greater frequency than their urban counterparts. These were witnessing violence against women candidates and women participating in political violence against other women. Urban women, on the other hand, reported not finding their name on the voters' roll with significantly greater frequency than rural women.
- When it came to witnessing irregularities, there were significantly more urban women, who reported this than rural women with the irregularities such as witnessing people being bussed to polling stations, witnessing people voting more than once, witnessing people being turned away, witnessing people being referred to more than one voting ward, witnessing violence against women candidates and witnessing women in violence against other women.
- On whether the elections were "free and fair, rural women felt overwhelmingly that the elections were free and fair while the urban women did not.
- Concerning the question on whether elections were well run, the rural group was unanimous in their views that the electoral process was well-run, and significantly more so than the urban group, even though the urban group also had high numbers that agreed with these views.
- There was a very strong overall trend in both groups to support women candidates: 94% stated that it was important to vote for a woman. Most (73%) felt that it was important for political parties to reserve seats for women, but less than half (43%) felt that women were adequately represented in government.
- The peculiar finding was that although rural women felt that the political parties should reserve seats for women, they also felt that women are adequately represented in government. This is interesting because this view is actually not supported by the facts as there were fewer women candidates put forward (but

redressed to some extent by the quota system under proportional representation), and there certainly were a minimal number of women in executive positions in the government.

- Regarding support by older women towards younger women, both groups agreed that not enough of it was being done but the urban women identified a lack of solidarity (pull her down, or the “PHD syndrome”) as the significant reason for why there are so few women politicians, whilst rural women saw “culture” – presumably patriarchy – as the significant reason.
- Rural women were more likely to vote for female councillors or women candidates in preference to men, whilst urban women were likely to support a female candidate who is a new comer to politics at Parliament level. Presumably rural women see closer links to their local councillors than urban women.
- There were a small number of differences due to age (and rural residence). Under 30 year-old women were significantly more likely to report encountering voter registration problems, but less likely to have been registered before 2013 (unsurprising in view of the age of majority entry level for voters). They were also more likely to report not to have been assisted to vote, asked for assistance, or asked for assistance because of literacy. Older women were more likely to have been registered voters before 2013, requested assistance, and, if from a rural area, to have felt the elections were completely free and fair, and had complete freedom of choice.
- Concerning the Simuka Campaign, the findings indicate that SiMuka had a strong general effect. However rural women were significantly more likely to attribute SiMuka as the reason for their registering and voting than urban women. The rural women were also more likely to have heard about SiMuka through word of mouth while urban women were significantly more likely to have heard about SiMuka via the radio and television.

In conclusion the findings of the study are strongly supportive of the findings of all other reports on the elections. They show consistent differences between rural and urban women. The findings also show that women are no different to men overall, for, in the end a vote is a vote irrespective of gender. Thus, attempts to discourage citizens from registering and voting are unlikely to be gender-specific, for urban men and women as for rural men and women. An attempt to strengthen areas of dominance for a political party, is unlikely too to be gender-specific in rural and urban areas.

It is recommended that to ensure that rural and urban women’s experiences with elections are the same the following should be done:

- *Civil society should engage with ZEC to ensure that voter registration and voting meets minimal gender considerations particularly for the urban electorate*
- *There should be an intensification of advocacy campaigns using what works, i.e. woman to woman advocacy and workshops*
- *Efforts to empower female candidates to participate from all political parties should increase so that the female electorate has a pool of female candidates to choose from in supporting other women and is not confined to having just one female candidate from one party*
- *Efforts should be made to encourage the urban electorate to support female candidates at local government level and the rural electorate for national assembly seats.*

Introduction

A recent study on the effect of encouraging women to register and vote in the 2013 elections showed a dramatic increase in the number of women claiming to have registered and voted: there was a 68% increase in the number that claimed to have voted in the 2013 constitutional referendum and a 72% increase on those claiming to have voted in the 2008 harmonised elections¹. Whilst this is highly encouraging, it is also the case that the 2013 elections were marked by serious allegations of widespread irregularities, both in respect of voter registration and the polling process².

This paper reports on an analysis of the second phase of an investigation into whether Zimbabwean women could be encouraged to register as voters and whether this influenced their decision to vote in the 2013 elections. Women were interviewed before and after the elections, and before and after a campaign mounted by The Women's Trust (TWT) to encourage them to register and vote. The campaign involved a media campaign as well as the holding of workshops in 12 Districts in Zimbabwe. This report deals with the responses of 903 women interviewed after the elections, and specifically examines the differences (if any) between rural and urban women.

Background

The preliminary report noted the enormous improvement in the rate of voting by these women in 2013³, but what was also evident was the relatively low rate of voting prior to 2013, some of which is explained by age factors: a citizen can only vote when she has reached the age of 18 years.

According to this national survey, in 1980, 40% of women were eligible to vote, but only 20% did so. This had risen in 2008 to nearly all women being eligible to vote, but only about 70% doing so. A significant factor in the later years of Independence, and especially since 2000, has been political violence associated with elections, which may well have had a bearing on women's participation. However, it is evident from other Zimbabwean research that women see participation in politics as important and have increasingly participated in such, at least as voters⁴.

Women differ from men, both quantitatively and qualitatively, as was indicated in a recent analysis of the five rounds of the Afrobarometer surveys on Zimbabwe.⁵ Women are however not a homogenous population, and there are frequent references to the differences between rural and urban women. For example, a gender audit of the June 2013 Voters' Roll showed much higher voter registration rates for rural as opposed to urban women⁶. The registration rates in Harare (63%) and Bulawayo (78%) were considerably lower than in the mostly rural Provinces of Mashonaland Central, Mashonaland East, Manicaland, Matabeleland North, Matabeleland South, and the Midlands where the registration rates were all in excess of 90%. Mashonaland West, which has many small towns and urban centres, had a registration rate of 79%. So, at face value, it is either easier to register for

¹RAU & TWT (2014), *Does Encouraging Women to Register and Vote Make a Difference? A Preliminary Report on Women's Experiences with the 2013 Elections*. Report prepared by Caroline Kache, Researcher [RAU]. March 2014. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT and THE WOMEN'S TRUST.

²RAU (2014), *"Numbers out of Tune? An examination of the vote in Harmonised July 2013 Election. "Full Report*. Governance Programme, Research and Advocacy Unit [RAU] 10th April 2014, HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

³RAU & TWT (2014), *Does Encouraging Women to Register and Vote Make a Difference? A Preliminary Report on Women's Experiences with the 2013 Elections*. Op cit.

⁴RAU (2010), *Women, Politics and the Zimbabwe Crisis*, Report produced by Idasa (An African Democracy Institute), the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), the Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU), and the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe (WCoZ). May 2010. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT

⁵ RAU (2014), *Women and Elections in Zimbabwe: Insights from the Afrobarometer*. June 2014. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

⁶RAU & TWT (2013), *Gender Audit of the 2013 Voters' Roll*, July 2013. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

rural women or rural women are more motivated to vote. Voting, however, is just one aspect of participation in democracy, and small differences are found between rural and urban women⁷.

Examining women's views on democracy, this small desk study corroborated earlier work by Logan and Bratton (2006)⁸, which produced a number of findings in respect of women and democracy in Africa. This work was then extended by Logan (2008)⁹ in respect of the value placed on traditional leaders. Examining these general African findings for Zimbabwe, RAU found a number of differences.

Firstly, rural women have more support for one-party states and less rejection of one-man rule, both attitudes that seem supported by other studies, but are similar to urban women in their support for multi-party democracy. Secondly, they are much more likely than urban women to have voted in all the elections since 2000, presumably because the consequences for supporting ZANU PF in the rural areas are both beneficial and unlikely to lead to violence. Thirdly, rural women are much more supportive of traditional leaders as a whole, but this is varied by age and education: younger women and better educated women are less supportive of traditional leaders¹⁰.

A more recent small study, based on focus group discussions, threw some further light on the differences between rural and urban women¹¹. Examining women's experiences of the 2013 elections, the study found a mixed response to the elections, with some women having favourable views and others less favourable. Those having less favourable views noted most of the irregularities reported by observer groups and more detailed analyses of the elections. Unfortunately, no explicit comparison was done between rural and urban women, although it can be inferred to some extent that the latter group – those having less favourable views – seemed to be largely urban women, but this is contaminated by the number of women that were polling agents, and these seemed to be both rural and urban.

Bearing in mind these findings, we now turn to an examination of the post-election survey of women carried out by The Women's Trust (TWT) under the SiMuka campaign, specifically examining the differences, if any, between rural and urban women. The working hypothesis was that rural women would report differences in the ease of registering as voters, experienced fewer problems in voting, and would be more satisfied with the outcome of the elections.

⁷ RAU (2014), *Women and Elections in Zimbabwe: Insights from the Afrobarometer*. Op cit.

⁸ Logan, C, & Bratton, M (2006), *The Political Gender Gap in Africa: Similar Attitudes, Different Behaviours*. Working Paper No. 58. AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS.

⁹ Logan, C (2008), *Traditional Leaders in Modern Africa: Can Democracy and the Chief co-exist?* Working Paper No. 93. AFROBAROMETER WORKING PAPERS.

¹⁰ The findings on support for traditional leaders were not examined in the present analysis. However it was recently noted in meetings with the original sample that rural communities are easily intimidated and threatened to support a particular political party and be whipped into following a pattern. This is largely because the village head does a census and proximity of villages and polling stations means everyone knows each other and during elections they plant 'observers/gatekeepers' that they are watching their moves and vote. In urban and peri urban areas the female electorate in low density areas is less intimidated however in high density areas there are door to door campaigns and the electorate is forced to attend rallies and the likelihood of houses being targeted and labeled for a particular party is also predominate although because of the numbers and mobility of lodgers the electorate is less intimidated as compared to the rural electorate.

¹¹ Chirambadare, L & Dube, R (2014), *Darned, Damned and Doomed? Women's Participation in the 2013 Harmonised Elections*. June 2014. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT.

Methodology¹²

A 66 item interview instrument for individual interviews was developed for the study and enumerators were trained. The questionnaire was built upon and expanded on the questionnaire developed for the first stage of the study. The questionnaire was piloted, corrected, and then finalised. The interviewers were deployed into the same Districts as for the first phase, in an attempt to get a matched sample but the enumerators were unable to easily use the same subjects from the first phase, and thus the attempt was abandoned and the interviewers concentrated on getting as large a sample as possible. The only exclusion factor was age (under 18 years), otherwise all women willing to be interviewed were included.

The interviewers were all members of TWT community facilitation team, and most had participated in the first phase, thus minimising the amount of training needed. The separation of women into rural and urban was done on the basis of their response to the question about where the respondent usually lived: rural, urban, peri-urban, or farming community. The rural group was the combined “rural” and “farming community” respondents, whilst the urban group was the combined “urban” and “peri-urban” respondents.

The data was entered into a purpose-built Access database, cleaned, and analysed in SPSS (version 20). A total of 946 original questionnaires were received, with 903 complete questionnaires finally being available for analysis; this was a 96% return rate, which was a highly acceptable rate of return. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the overall sample by District.

Although there have been interesting findings about the comparatively stronger approval for traditional leaders by older rural women, this could not be tested with this data as the questions related to traditional leaders were restricted only to whether these should be involved in mobilising voters or choosing candidates. This was too restrictive a domain for useful cross-tabulations.

Since the data was mostly frequency counts, cross-tabulations were carried out testing the hypothesis that there were significant differences between rural and urban women in their reporting on the 2013 elections. Only significant scores ($p>0.01$) are reported.

Table 1: Breakdown of the survey sample by district

| District | No. | % |
|--------------------|------------|------|
| Bulawayo | 92 | 10.2 |
| Gokwe | 105 | 11.7 |
| Goromonzi | 0 | 0.0 |
| Gutu | 42 | 4.7 |
| Harare/Chitungwiza | 206 | 22.6 |
| Marondera | 52 | 5.8 |
| Matopos | 10 | 11.5 |
| Mazowe | 91 | 10.1 |
| Nkayi | 105 | 11.7 |
| Wedza | 0 | 0.0 |
| Zvimba | 2 | 0.2 |
| Zvishavane | 104 | 11.5 |
| Total: | 903 | |

¹² A more detailed description of the methodology and the demographic breakdown of the samples is provided in the first report. See again RAU & TWT (2014), *Does encouraging women to register and vote make a difference? A Preliminary Report on Women's Experiences with Elections*. Prepared by Caroline Kache, Researcher [RAU]. April 2014. HARARE: RESEARCH & ADVOCACY UNIT and THE WOMEN'S TRUST.

The sample was broken down into nearly equivalent numbers of rural (47.8%) and urban residents (52.2%), and, as can be seen from Table 2, this was mainly due to the wholly urban nature of the Marondera group.

Table 2: Breakdown by area of residence

| District | % Rural | % Urban |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Bulawayo | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Gokwe | 91.4 | 8.6 |
| Gutu | 71.4 | 28.6 |
| Harare/Chitungwiza | 0.5 | 99.5 |
| Marondera | 0.0 | 100.0 |
| Matopos | 68.6 | 31.4 |
| Mazowe | 51.1 | 48.9 |
| Nkayi | 97.1 | 2.9 |
| Zvishavane | 79.6 | 20.4 |
| Totals: | 47.8% | 52.2% |

There were a number of significant differences between the two groups in the demographic breakdown, all of which would be expected: the rural sample was older, married, more likely to earn their living through farming, and had primary school education only. The urban sample was more likely to have secondary education and to be self-employed.

Results

It is useful at the outset to consider how women might have responded to the SiMuka campaign by looking at the results of the actual elections in 2008 and 2013. The rationale here is that it is useful to compare what the women have said about these two elections with what actually happened in the voting. As can be seen from the table (Table 3), in all the districts sampled under the SiMuka campaign, there were increases in the number of voters in 2013 relative to 2008, notwithstanding the decreases in several Districts in voters registered¹³. It must be pointed out that there is dispute about the validity of the increased voting in 2013, but, as regards the SiMuka campaign, it is fair to point out that the findings of the second survey – of a very large increase in women stating that they had voted in 2013 – accord with the trend of the results of the poll.

¹³ Of course, the study cannot make any claims that the results represent any kind of trend since the sampling was not stratified nor random.

Table 3: Registration and Voting in 2008 & 2013: Voters' Rolls & Election results compared.

| | 2008 voters roll | 2013 voters roll | 2008 election | 2013 vote | % vote in 2008 | % vote in 2013 | Increase or decrease in vote in 2013 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Bulawayo | 315371 | 300743* | 77476 | 128211 | 24.6 | 42.6 | 18.1 |
| Gokwe | 260681 | 253933* | 137988 | 138164 | 52.9 | 54.4 | 1.5 |
| Goromonzi | 88642 | 97255 | 30310 | 67032 | 34.2 | 68.9 | 34.7 |
| Gutu | 119591 | 117316* | 54461 | 62286 | 45.5 | 53.1 | 7.6 |
| Harare/Chitungwiza | 780512 | 788959 | 307775 | 414991 | 39.4 | 52.6 | 13.2 |
| Marondera | 79963 | 79871* | 41497 | 44052 | 51.9 | 55.2 | 3.3 |
| Matopos | 46868 | 45738* | 16139 | 22318 | 34.4 | 48.8 | 14.4 |
| Mazowe | 96768 | 99781 | 37799 | 63693 | 39.1 | 63.8 | 24.8 |
| Nkayi | 54465 | 53092* | 16139 | 24635 | 29.6 | 46.4 | 16.8 |
| Wedza | 45281 | 47526 | 19166 | 28112 | 42.3 | 59.2 | 16.8 |
| Zvimba | 108407 | 106597* | 38921 | 66522 | 35.9 | 62.4 | 26.5 |
| Zvishavane | 57501 | 58902 | 24666 | 33490 | 42.9 | 56.9 | 14.0 |
| Total: | 2054050 | 2049713 | 802337 | 1093506 | 39.1 | 53.3 | 14.3 |

** denotes reduction in number of registered voters in 2013 compared with 2008*

As can be seen, in every District where the SiMuka campaign operated there were substantial increases in votes cast in 2013 relative to 2008. The range was variable, from 35% in Goromonzi to only 1.5% in Gokwe, but all Districts reported increased voting. It is also interesting that this increase occurred in the face of lowered numbers of registered voters in the 2013 Voters' Roll, but it should be noted, as a caution, that the numbers on the 2013 Voters' Roll are based on the June 2013 version of the Roll, and not the final Roll, which has never been released in electronic copy. However, if anything, the final Roll should have increased tallies for each district: the Voters' Roll increased from 5,727,902 in 2008 to 6,433,191 by 31 July 2012, an increase from 2008 of 12.3%. But, given all the many complaints about the state of the Voters' Roll, voter registration, and voting, we will not attempt to read too much into the voting, but merely note that the reports of the sampled women of increased voting fit with a pattern of increased voting against a pattern of reduced registration.

Registration as voters

80% of the group reported being registered voters before 2013, whilst only 72% reported still being registered voters in 2013. This is a curious finding, but supported by the data about registration (Table 3), and perhaps explained by the many difficulties reported by observers of the 2013 elections. However, it is evident (see Table 4) that any difficulties in being registered were significantly more common for urban women.

As can be seen, urban women reported encountering voter registration problems, finding registration offices inaccessible, experiencing long queues, and having no identification documents more frequently than rural women. Additionally, urban women were themselves more likely to have been turned away because they had no proof of residence or were in the wrong ward, and had witnessed other women being turned away. This is in accord with the general observations of the 2013 elections.

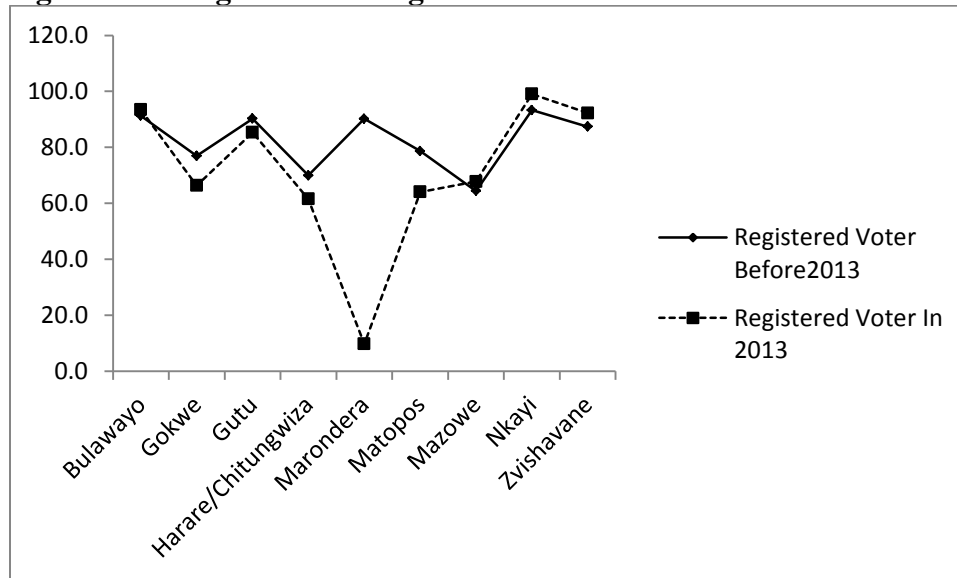
Table 4: Problems in voter registration [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|---|-------|-------|
| Registered Voter Before 2013 | 86%* | 74% |
| Registered Voter In 2013 | 84%* | 61% |
| Not previously registered (Alien) | 0% | 13%* |
| Not previously registered (No ID) | 0.2% | 3.4%* |
| Was previously Registered | 14% | 29%* |
| Encountered Voter Registration Problems | 12% | 27%* |
| Registration Office as inaccessible | 0.2% | 5.1%* |
| Queues were too long | 6% | 15%* |
| Could not register in 2013 (No ID) | 0% | 3%* |
| Witness Women Turned Away at Voter Registration | 29% | 43%* |
| Was turned away at Voter Registration (No Proof of Residence) | 16% | 24%* |

*(p=0.01)

One large difference emerged in the distribution of the responses in respect of the distribution across Districts. As can be seen from Figure 1, there were both increases and decreases in the numbers of registered voters in 2013, but there was an enormous drop in Marondera District between those registered before 2013 and subsequently, as well as significant drops in Matopos, Harare, and Gokwe. There is no obvious explanation for this much greater change in the Marondera group, except that the Marondera group was wholly urban, and urban women generally reported much greater difficulties in registering as voters than their rural counterparts, but why this should be more marked in Marondera than in the other urban settings is not clear, especially when Mashonaland East Province had the highest number of mobile registration centres - 100 for 22 Constituencies - of any of the ten Zimbabwean Provinces¹⁴.

Figure 1: Changes in voter registration: before and after 2013 elections



¹⁴ By contrast, Mashonaland West, with 22 Constituencies, had only 77 mobile registration centres, and Masvingo, with 26 Constituencies, had only 43 such centres.

Voting

It was a common observation of the 2013 elections that urban voters experienced more problems in voting than their rural counterparts, and this holds true for the women sampled in this study. The differences were not great in actual numbers, but the differences were statistically significant. It is noteworthy that urban women did not see the elections as free and fair (see Table 7), but rather, in contrast to their rural counterparts, saw many problems with the elections.

Rural women reported two significant irregularities (personally) with greater frequency than their urban counterparts, and these were witnessing violence against women candidates and women participating in political violence against other women. These were not reported with any great frequency, but nonetheless were more likely to occur in rural areas, as has been commonly reported in the past. Urban women, on the other hand, reported not finding their names on the voters' roll with significantly greater frequency.

Table 5: Voting in 2013 [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural % given first | Urban |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------|
| Decided not to Vote | 0% | 3% * |
| Prevented from Voting | 0% | 3% * |
| Name not in register | 0% | 3% * |

*($p=0.01$)

When it came to witnessing irregularities, rather than any direct personal experience of these, then there was much greater difference between rural and urban women, as seen in Table 6. Every one of these irregularities was significantly more frequent for urban women, and all were noted to be more frequent by observers to the 2013 elections.

Table 6: Irregularities observed in 2013 [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|--|-------|--------|
| Witness People being bused to polling station | 0.5% | 2.3% * |
| Witness People voting more than once | 0.7% | 3.4% * |
| Witness People being turned away | 20% | 34% * |
| Witness People being Referred to more than one voting ward | 1% | 11% * |
| Witnessed Violence Against Woman Candidate | 5% * | 2% |
| Witness Women in Violence Against other Woman | 4% * | 2% |

*($p=0.01$)

The women were also asked about whether they thought that the elections were “*free and fair*”, that there had been constraints put on their choices in voting; i.e. “*were they free to choose in voting?*” As can be seen from Table 7 once again there were significant differences between the rural and urban groups. Rural women felt overwhelmingly that the elections were free and fair.

Table 7: Satisfaction with election [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|--|--------|-------|
| Freedom of choice [Not Very Free] | 0% | 10% * |
| Freedom of choice [Somewhat Free] | 3% * | 0% |
| Freedom of choice [Completely Free] | 78% * | 4% |
| Election outcome [Not Free & Fair] | 0 % | 17% * |
| Election outcome [Free & Fair with Major Problems] | 0% | 23% * |
| Election outcome [Free & Fair with Minor Problems] | 2.3% * | 0.2% |
| Election outcome [Completely Free & Fair] | 80% * | 2% |
| Elections reflected will of the voters | 43% | 77% * |

**(p=0.01)*

Rural women also felt that their choices were wholly unconstrained in contrast to the urban women. This is difficult to interpret in the light of so many reports over the years indicating that rural voters are much more likely to experience intimidation or political violence than their urban contemporaries. However, it makes sense that women who felt that they were free to choose would also feel that the election was free and fair, and this finding also makes sense in the light of the earlier finding that rural women reported significantly less problems in being registered as voters. The final finding, that urban women were more likely to state that the elections reflected the will of the voters, given that they were more likely to see problems than rural women, is difficult to interpret. Is this a statement of resignation or acceptance of an unlikely result, or does it reflect a view that, because the elections were peaceful, this is a fair result? Could it also be a case in point that the survey was done soon after the elections and there was subtle fear in the electorate to voice their concern?¹⁵ This would require more investigation.

Overall, it would appear that the fact that the elections in 2013 were peaceful, (the absence of violence) did not reduce the oft-reported disparities between rural and urban voters: urban women reported irregularities significantly more frequently than rural women, and accordingly were less satisfied with the outcome.

Voting procedure

As can be seen from Table 8, the rural group was unanimous in their views that the electoral process was well-run, and significantly more so than the urban group, even though the urban group also had high numbers that agreed with these views.

Table 8: Views on election procedures [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Polling Station Opened On Time | 95%* | 86% |
| Ballot paper was easy to read (Presidential poll) | 95%* | 79% |
| Ballot paper was easy to read (House of Assembly poll) | 95%* | 79% |
| Ballot paper was easy to read (Local Government poll) | 95%* | 81% |
| Ballot papers were clearly marked | 98%* | 82% |
| There was enough information to register as a voter | 91%* | 78% |
| The electoral environment encouraged women to vote | 80%* | 64% |

**(p=0.01)*

So, there were no problems with the actual voting, but there was stronger approval from rural than urban women.

Voting for Women

There was a very strong overall trend in both groups to support women candidates: 94% stated that it was important to vote for a woman. Most (73%) felt that it was important for political parties to reserve seats for women, but less than half (43%) felt that women were adequately represented in government¹⁶.

¹⁵ Interestingly, a year after the results, women from Goromonzi and Marondera commented about having the wrong person in place of the one they wanted. An example was given where the councillors all belonged to one party and the MP to a different party. This was interpreted by the women that the MP was probably imposed because the likelihood of the electorate swinging between candidates and the party was very low. The presidential candidate was acceptable if he/she differed from the councillors, but it was not acceptable that the MP differed from the councillors. Is this also a reflection that electorate are likely to vote for a party and not the candidate.

¹⁶ The rural sub-group was significantly happier about representation in government than the urban sub-group.

Table 9: Views on voting for women [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|--|-------|-------|
| Parties reserve seats for Women | 83%* | 64% |
| Women are adequately represented in government | 51%* | 37% |
| Why are there so few women politicians (Pull Her Down) | 49% | 58%* |
| Why are there so few women politicians (Culture) | 37%* | 29% |
| Are there equal opportunities for young women in politics? | 45%* | 29% |
| Older women done a great job in supporting younger women | 38%* | 21% |
| Older women done nothing in supporting younger women | 14% | 27%* |

*($p=0.01$)

However, there were some interesting differences between the two groups, and it is worth noting these in a little detail. Rural women feel that the political parties should not reserve seats for women, and that women are *adequately represented in government*. This is interesting because neither view is actually supported by the facts: there were fewer women candidates put forward (but redressed to some extent by the quota system under proportional representation), and certainly a minimal number of women in executive positions in the government. Rural women also believe that there are equal opportunities for young women in politics and also that older women have done a great job in supporting younger women. It is also interesting that urban women identify a lack of solidarity (pull her down, or the “PHD syndrome”) as the significant reason for why there are so few women politicians, whilst rural women see “culture” – presumably patriarchy – as the significant reason.

Rural women are more likely to vote for female councillors or women candidates in preference to men, whilst urban women are likely to support a female candidate who is a new comer to politics. Presumably rural women see closer links to their local councillors than urban women.

Table 10: Voting for women candidates[rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|---|-------|-------|
| Vote for Female Candidate (Councillor) | 31%* | 25% |
| Vote for Female Candidate (New comer) | 2% | 5%* |
| Vote for Female Candidate (Just because is woman) | 33%* | 21% |

*($p=0.01$)

Age

As was pointed out in respect of the Afrobarometer findings, older women tend to have more conservative views in politics than younger women, and perhaps the combination of older age (over 30 years) and being rural may be a significant factor in the political choices of women. On examination of age as a factor, this did not appear generally to be significant in respect of these Zimbabwe women in general.

However, there were a small number of differences due to age (and rural residence). Under 30 year-old women were significantly more likely to report encountering voter registration problems, but less likely to have been registered before 2013 (unsurprising in view of the age of majority entry level for voters), not to have been assisted to vote, asked for assistance, or asked for assistance because of literacy. Older women were more likely to have been registered voters before 2013, requested assistance, and, if from a rural area, to have felt the elections were completely free and fair, and had complete freedom of choice.

SiMuka

There were a number of predictable differences due to residence, see Table 11. Although the findings indicate that SiMuka had a strong general effect, rural women were significantly more likely to attribute SiMuka as the

reason for their registering and voting than urban women, as well more likely to have heard about SiMuka through word of mouth. On the other hand, urban women were significantly more likely to have heard about SiMuka via the radio and television.

Table 11: Effects of SiMuka [rural vs. urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|--|--------------|--------------|
| Did SiMuka influence your decision to vote? | 78%* | 71% |
| Did SiMuka influence your decision to register ? | 83%* | 74% |
| Heard about the SiMuka Campaign (Radio) | 21% | 38%* |
| Heard about the SiMuka Campaign (TV) | 8% | 23%* |
| Heard about the SiMuka Campaign (Word of mouth) | 41%* | 27% |

*($p=0.001$)

Thus, a number of differences have emerged between rural and urban women in respect of registration and voting, and these can be understood more clearly in the more general context of Zimbabwean elections and politics.

Findings and Conclusions

Whilst it is always encouraging to see women turn out to vote in elections, and even more gratifying to see that the turn out can be strongly increased by advocacy (and especially women-to-women advocacy), there is always a reality check on the actual process of the election and its outcome. The 2013 elections were mostly seen as being seriously flawed by many observed irregularities, although the results have perforce resulted in the new government being accepted as *de facto* due to the overwhelming majority obtained by the ZANU PF party in the Presidential and National Assembly elections¹⁷. We will not comment here on the results, but confine the comments and conclusions to the findings emerging from the data.

The findings of the small qualitative study reported earlier are by and large found in this analysis. The previous study found that many women saw problems with voter registration and with voting, noting turn aways, assisted voting, irregularities with the Special Voting, and were dissatisfied with the outcome. But it was not possible to deduce any differences between rural and urban women. Here it can be seen that all these problems are reported by the SiMuka sample, but the problems are reported with much greater frequency by urban women. The significant differences can be shortly summarised in the following table. Here it must be noted that the differences found statistically often only relate to very small numbers, but it is the trend that matters.

Table 12: Problems with elections [rural vs urban]

| | Rural | Urban |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Problems in registering | No | Yes |
| Problems in voting | No | Yes |
| Elections well run | Yes | Yes |
| Witnessed irregularities | No | Yes |
| Satisfied with elections [fair] | Yes | No |
| Satisfied with elections [unfair] | No | Yes |
| SiMuka influenced registration | Yes | Yes |
| SiMuka influenced voting | Yes | Yes |

This is somewhat oversimplified as will be recalled from the detailed findings. For example, both groups found that the elections were well-run, but the effect was much greater for the rural women. There was also the paradoxical finding that urban women reported that the election results reflected the will of the voters, which was interesting given they also reported more irregularities. However, since those reporting irregularities were

¹⁷ The detailed results of the Local Council have still not been released by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, and thus it is not possible to make any comment upon the face validity of these results.

only a small number of the respondents, it can be concluded generally that most women did not experience anything untoward.

There was a much bigger effect for registration than for voting, however, and large percentages of urban women reported problems with registering as voters. For example, there was only a 2% drop in the number of rural women that were registered before 2013 and not in 2013, whilst the drop for urban women was much greater, 13%. Additionally, there was a significant difference in who was registered before 2013, 12% in favour of rural women. These two findings corroborate the findings elsewhere that there seemed to be bias towards making it easier for rural dwellers to register in 2013. Elsewhere, the problems that women have when obtaining official documents has been noted¹⁸.

There was also a range of other findings where the two groups showed other differences. Rural women were generally happier with support for women candidates, but there were differences in the two groups in why there were so few women politicians. Here there was the slightly paradoxical finding that rural women stated that women were adequately represented in government, but an equally large percentage stated that culture was an inhibitory factor: urban women saw this more as a matter of poor solidarity with women. The two groups were also different in whether they saw older women supporting younger women: rural women said *yes*, whilst urban women said *no*.

Finally, there was a much stronger effect by SiMuka on rural as opposed to urban women, and the two groups reported that this influence came about in different ways: through radio and TV for urban women, and through word of mouth for rural women, neither of which finding is surprising.

Thus, as a general conclusion these findings are strongly supportive of the findings of all other reports on the elections, and show consistent differences between rural and urban women. It is probably not surprising that women are no different to men overall, for, in the end a vote is a vote irrespective of gender. Thus, if there are to be attempts to discourage citizens from registering and voting, this is unlikely to be gender-specific, and, if there is an attempt to strengthen areas of dominance for a political party, this too is unlikely to be gender-specific.

Future recommendations

- *Engage with Zimbabwe Electoral Commission on ensuring that voter registration and voting meets minimal gender considerations particularly for the urban electorate;*
- *Intensify advocacy campaigns using what works, i.e. woman to woman and workshops;*
- *Empower female candidates to participate from all political parties so that the female electorate has a pool of female candidates to choose from in supporting other women and is not confined to having just one female candidate from one party;*
- *Encourage urban electorate to support female candidates at local government level and rural for national assembly seats.*

¹⁸ See Dube R, (2012) *Identity, Citizenship and the Registrar General: The Politicking of Identity in Zimbabwe*. July 2012. HARARE. RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY UNIT.