

**The Representation of South African Women Politicians in the Sunday Times  
during the 2004 Presidential and General Elections**

**Thesis**

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## **Dedication**

To my husband Edwin Phiri and my daughter Chiluya

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## **Abstract**

This study analysed the representation of South African women politicians in the Sunday Times' election news during the 2004 Presidential and general elections, by drawing on perspectives from cultural studies, the constructionist approach to representation and the sociology of news production. Using content analysis and critical discourse analysis, the study found that very few women politicians were used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times, and that when women politicians were figured, the paper tended to present them in ways that serve to sustain women's subordinate status in society.

Using content analysis, the study analysed 106 news items published between January 1, 2004 and April 30, 2004, and found that of all the 588 identifiable news actors/sources counted, 135 were women and 453 were men. Of these, only 7.67% (or 26) were women politicians and 92.33% (or 313) were men politicians. On average however, the amount of words allocated to a woman politician was more than that allocated to a man politician. The discourse analysis also revealed how the Sunday Times managed to reproduce textually the hegemonic power relations between women and men, by constructing different subject positions for women politicians and men politicians, which generally tended to be negative and positive respectively. In the representation of women politicians, the study revealed patterns that tended to ascribe them negative personality traits, accentuate their passivity and dependency on men, and construct them as incompetent political leaders.

This study's conclusions pose a challenge to the role of the national newspaper in the transformation of gender relations and the promotion of equal access to political and decision-making positions, and to the news media. News discourse, as a social practice, both determines and is determined by the social structure in which it is produced. By systematically reproducing subordinate subject positions for women in the news, the Sunday Times helps to further women's subordinate status in society. Particularly, as part of the broader social cultural context that is embedded in patriarchal and gender ideologies, the Sunday Times does not merely reflect but actively and effectively constructs the reality it claims to be representing.

# CHAPTER ONE

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.0. Introduction

This study analyses the representation of South African women politicians in the Sunday Times during the 2004 Presidential and general elections, investigating the relationship between the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times and their material existence in society, in terms of the percentage of the members of parliament they represent. Drawing on insights from cultural studies and working from a constructionist approach to representation (Fiske 1987; Hall 1997, 2001; Kellner 1995), the study looks at how the Sunday Times creates frameworks for understanding South African women politicians through the meanings it offers its readers in the news reports. In this study, I use the word politician to refer to anyone who had previously held or was currently holding an elected office, or who was a candidate on the electoral list at the national level during the 2004 elections. Consequently, such persons are referred to as a women politicians or men politicians depending on their gender. By men politicians and women politicians, I am referring to men and women in state or government politics, and the terms men politicians and men in politics, or women politicians and women in politics will be used interchangeably in my discussions. However, I use the terms men and women, as opposed to male and female, to emphasise the study's focus on gender as a social construction, as opposed to the biological construct sex.

The media, rather than passively reflecting reality, actively and effectively construct the reality they claim to be representing (Bennett 1995; Fiske 1994). Language, one of the representational systems of the media, is a social practice that is both socially shaped and socially shaping, such that it determines and is determined by the social structure (Fairclough 1992b, 1995; Dijk 1997). Thus, the media, as language users, both reflect and contribute to the shape of the social order, including the subordination of women in patriarchal society. These arguments also apply to the copy of the Sunday Times.

The first of seven chapters, this chapter provides a general outline of the research study, by briefly explaining the social historical context of South Africa (the country in which the study is being conducted) and highlighting the problem that the subordinate

status of women in society is also epitomized in the mainstream media representation of women politicians. The chapter also highlights the objective of the study, which is to further our understanding about how the Sunday Times creates frameworks for understanding South African women politicians, and briefly specifies the research methods that were used. It also provides a brief summary of the study's key findings and then ends with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

### **1.1. Background to the Study**

Before the enfranchisement of white South African women in 1930, women were excluded from any parliamentary or provincial franchise, and were not regarded as partners in politics (Walker 1979) or as an electoral constituency until in the early 1990s (Hassim 2003). For a long time, indigenous, imperialist, colonialist and apartheid policies and practices rendered African (and black South African) women socially, economically and politically subordinate (Bernstein 1975; Imam 1997; Mama 1997; O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Poinsette 1985; Qunta 1987 and Staudt 1986). This had debilitating effects on black women's political organisation and participation in national politics, and consequently, South African women constituted only 2.7% of all parliamentarians during the apartheid era (Hassim 2003:105).

At the inception of the new South African democratic government in 1994, the state set up to restructure and transform the South African society and its institutions. One of these objectives was to advance the position of women and promote gender equality in all spheres, through constitutional and other deliberate measures (Hassim 2003; Goetz and Hassim 2003; Myakayaka-Manzini 1998). Within this framework, the government also aimed to increase access and participation of women to political power and decision-making positions, through such measures as affirmative action and quota systems in parliament, and by 2004, the government had achieved a 30% representation of women in parliament (Goetz and Hassim 2003:2).

The study on the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times should therefore be understood within the context of the following.

(a) The year 2004 represents 10 years since the inception of the democratic state and 10 years since the ANC government put in place measures aimed at advancing the position

of women in society and increasing women's participation in the political realm and in decision-making positions;

(b) The Sunday Times news texts being analysed represent four months' coverage of electoral news prior to the presidential and general elections;

(c) During the 2004 elections, most of the major political parties, following the ANC's lead, had increased the representation of women politicians on their candidate lists<sup>1</sup>.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study**

Worldwide, women have occupied positions of both political and social weakness in relation to men (Walker 1979). As alluded to earlier, this weak position is also epitomised in the mainstream media representations of women. The media do not simply reflect but actively construct reality. There is a discrepancy between the number of women politicians in society and the number of women politicians in media representations of that society. Furthermore, certain subject positions that serve to sustain women's subordinate social status are constructed for them in the news. Given these kinds of presentation, the Sunday Times plays an active role in the reproduction and sustenance of women's subordinate socio-political position.

Although relatively few studies have been conducted on gender and the media in South Africa (see MISA/GL 2003), studies that specifically analyse the representation of women in the media are scarce. The significance of this study, therefore, is that it attempts to contribute towards the existing literature on gender and the media, and specifically towards studies on the representation of South African women in South African media.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, on the ANC's national list, 35.4% of the candidates were women, on the PAC's list 33.64%, on the IFP's list 31.82% and on the DA's list 31.59%. Other parties, such as the ACDP and the Independent Democrats had about 31.8% and 30.33% women candidates respectively (Sunday Times, April 11, 2004 page 2).

### **1.3. The Purpose and Goals of the Study**

The media create ‘frames for understanding’ issues, events or persons (Braham 1982; Hall 1990). The purpose of this study, as alluded to above, is to further our understanding about how the Sunday Times creates ‘frameworks’, through the repertoire of representations that it provides for its readers’ understanding of South African women politicians. The main goal is to investigate the relationship between the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times and their material existence in society, and be able to state whether the Sunday Times’ representation of women politicians serves to sustain or transform the subordinate status of South African women.

### **1.4. Assumptions of the Study**

There are two main assumptions guiding this study. Firstly, compared to their material existence in society - 30% of all parliamentarians in 2004 were women (Goetz and Hassim 2003) and 52.2% of the 2001 population were women (SSA 2003) - South African women politicians are numerically under-represented in the Sunday Times. Secondly, when women politicians are figured, the manner in which they are represented serves to sustain women’s subordinate social and political status.

### **1.5. Theoretical Framework**

This study draws mainly from the theoretical insights of cultural studies, the constructionist approach to representation and the sociology of news production. Cultural studies’ insight that societies are divided unequally along lines of, among other things, gender (Fiske 1987; Kellner 1995; Storey 1996), and the view that gender is a social construction that brings to the fore issues of hierarchy and power, and is implicated in matters of representation (Baker 2000; De Lauretis 1987), are particularly useful for this study. Furthermore, cultural studies’ concerns with culture, meaning and power enable the exploration of the relations between media culture and society (Nelson et al. 1992). Since social struggles - including gender struggles between women and men - are played out in the texts of media culture (Kellner 1995), the cultural studies framework provides a very useful approach for identifying how the struggles for differences in

power between women politicians and men politicians are constructed in the Sunday Times' news.

Texts, news texts included, draw upon the representational systems of society, such as language, to represent their interpretations of reality meaningfully. The constructionist theory of representation, which recognises the social character of language in conveying meanings (Hall 1997), is therefore useful for demonstrating how the Sunday Times, rather than passively reflect, actively and effectively constructs the social political reality it represents. The sociology of news production, and specifically the journalists' use of the ideological and gendered news values in the selection and presentation of events (and sources) as news (Hartley 1994), is also important in explaining the active role that the Sunday Times plays in the representation of women politicians, and the implied social effects of such representations.

### **1.6. Methods, Procedures and Techniques of the Study**

For this study a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies, specifically content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA), is used in a two-phase research process. As several scholars (Bryman 1988, 2001; Berg 1998; Deacon et al.1999; Denzin 1989) have outlined, the triangulation or combination of different methods is beneficial for any study since each method can reveal different aspects of the same phenomena. Furthermore, the researcher may obtain a better and more substantial picture of the phenomena under study, and one method can strengthen the weakness of the other. So for instance, while the quantitative analysis indicated that women politicians were on average given more presence in the news, the qualitative analysis revealed how the substance of what was represented served to entrench further the differences in power between women and men politicians.

For the study, I sampled a four-month period - January 1, 2004 to April 30, 2004 - of election news coverage. All publications during the sampled period, apart from the three publications that were missing<sup>2</sup>, were read and their content analysed initially to identify and quantitatively code all news items that focused on the 2004 South African elections. A news item is defined here as any 'news story', 'editorial', 'feature article' or 'letter to

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<sup>2</sup> The three publications that were missing were for February 8 and 29, March 28 and April 25.

the editor' that made specific reference to the 2004 South African elections and was locally produced with these elections being its main focus. Consequently, all such news items were coded for the variables of genre, space, gender and the amount of coverage or space allocated to men politicians and women politicians, including references made to such subject matters as personality, potential for office, physical traits and family relations. The significance of these variables for the study is provided in the methodology chapter.

This content analysis was followed by a critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1989; 1992; 1995a) of two feature articles with typical-case representations of women politicians for the meanings and frames that the Sunday Times provides for the readers' understanding of South African women politicians. This analysis was mainly a qualitative expansion on the quantitative findings from the content analysis.

### **1.7. Thesis Outline**

In the next chapter (Chapter 2) of the thesis, I discuss the historical context within which this study is conducted. The chapter gives a brief overview of some of the historical factors - indigenous patriarchal practices, the influences of imperialism, colonialism and apartheid - that affected and helped constitute the contemporary subordinate social political position of South African women politicians. It also provides an overview of some of the opportunities occasioned for South African women during the transition from apartheid to democracy, including the increased participation of women in politics. The chapter ends with a brief historical overview of the South African press to locate the Sunday Times politically and economically on the South African press landscape.

The third chapter explains the theoretical perspectives deriving from cultural studies and discourse theory that inform this study, and outlines my use of the terms 'gender' and 'representation' in this study. Furthermore, the 'factual' and 'objective' view of news is challenged by arguments that news is a social construction that affects and is affected by the social structure. The chapter shows, for instance, how journalists' reliance on news values affects the representation - both the occurrence and the manner - of South African women politicians in the Sunday Times' electoral news items.

A discussion of the methods and procedures used to analyse news items from the Sunday Times' coverage of the 2004 elections is then presented in the fourth chapter. This chapter discusses and justifies the research design - a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods - adopted for the study, and carefully outlines the two-phase research process and techniques used. This is done in line with the objectives and goals of the study.

The fifth chapter presents and discusses the findings from the quantitative analysis. The findings indicate that women politicians were numerically underrepresented or infrequently used as news sources in the Sunday Times electoral news even though on average, women politicians were given relatively more space than men politicians. The analysis also reveals that references to such subject matters as personality, potential for office, physical attributes and family relations were mentioned in the presentation of both men politicians and women politicians, but that there were more references to such topics in the representation of women politicians than in the representation of men politicians. These findings provide the basis for the qualitative analysis in the sixth chapter.

A qualitative examination of two news texts from the sample is provided in Chapter 6 to establish the substance of what is represented about women politicians, given the fact that women politicians were given more space. Of importance, are the meanings and frames that the Sunday Times created for the readers' understanding of women politicians. This is done in order to distinguish between the question of quantity and quality of representation. Here, I identify and discuss some of the main patterns of representation that were used. The analysis reveals that the Sunday Times tended to construct different subject positions for men politicians and women politicians that serve to sustain the status quo. It shows how, for instance, the Sunday Times tended to construct women politicians as incompetent political leaders and as being dependent on men. The analysis also revealed that women were represented consistently as passive recipients and benefactors of men politicians' actions.

The last chapter is the conclusion to the study. It presents a summary of the main findings and discusses the main issues arising from the study. In this chapter, I also suggest how the Sunday Times may change its representation of women politicians and suggest areas for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE HISTORICAL FACTORS AFFECTING THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL POSITIONS OF SOUTH AFRICAN WOMEN

#### 2.0. Introduction

Women, in most societies, represent the most oppressed segment, even though they constitute the majority of the population (Nkululeko 1987). This chapter provides a brief overview of the historical dimensions of the cultural, social, political and economic issues that affected African women's social and economic lives and imposed limitations on their political authority. By 'African women' however, and following Mohanty (1991:5), I eschew any homogeneous configuration of African women who share a gender and a race, and therefore experience life equally. This is because even gender, as Daymond et al. (2003) assert, must always be defined through race, class, ethnicity, culture and other coordinates in order to achieve any meaning and consequently, the heterogeneity of women entails that they engage with social and political factors in different and complex ways. Nevertheless, this chapter also appraises the kinds of power that the historical circumstances occasioned for African women.

My discussion takes a historical approach to analyse the social, economic and political positions of African women in three different historical eras: the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. This is important for the purposes of contextualising the study, and further offers an understanding of the contemporary subordinate social and political status of South African women, including how society and the media perceive them. The discussion begins with an overview of the impacts of European colonialism on the status of African women in general, with a particular focus on Southern African women. Given the subject matter of my study, I shall look specifically at how colonialism and apartheid affected both the social lives and political organisation of black South African women. Imperial practices and apartheid policies, together with indigenous patriarchal tendencies, significantly altered the gender relations and contributed towards the subjugation and subordination of black women, by provoking both certain conditions and certain perceptions and representations of women. Rather than institute new (or equal) forms of relations between black and white, men and women, apartheid practices, as du Toit

(1971) outlines, intensified and essentially continued imperial and colonial relations of domination of white over black, and of men over women.

An examination of a historical phenomenon like colonialism forms an important part of the study of gender and Third World politics (Waylen 1996). Moreover, as Bernstein (1975) outlines, the subject formation of South African women can only be understood within the context of the effects of apartheid. Thus, it is important that I provide such background, by tracing when, why and how African women came to occupy their contemporary status.

This chapter also explains how the new democratic government is attempting to transform gender relations and advance the social and political position of women in South Africa. It outlines some of the measures - constitutional and deliberate - that have been put in place to achieve this goal, and reveals how this has resulted in women representing 30% of all members of parliament. The chapter ends with a brief historical overview of the press in South Africa to locate the Sunday Times.

### **2.1. Historical Perspectives on the Changing Social, Economic and Political Status of African Women**

Women across the globe have occupied positions of both political and social weakness in relation to men (Walker 1979). Since the late nineteenth century, women, worldwide, have fought for their inclusion and participation in government. Walker (1979:17-22) outlines that for South African women, this struggle started with the formation of the Durban based Women's Enfranchisement league in 1902 when they demanded their political right to vote. This demand was met with the enactment of the 1930 Women's Enfranchisement Act No.18, even though it only catered for adult white women, to the exclusion of black women (Walker 1979; Poinsette 1985:95). Prior to enfranchisement, the colonial South African government excluded women from any parliamentary or provincial franchise. Women were not regarded as partners in politics (Walker 1979) or as an electoral constituency until in the early 1990s during the transition from apartheid to the democratic state (Hassim 2003).

Several scholars (Hay and Stichter 1995; Imam 1997; O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995) have outlined how the contemporary situation of African women has been shaped

by several historical forces, which include among others, the influences from colonial conquests in the fifteenth century. As mentioned earlier, an understanding of contemporary gender relations in the Third world can only be complete with some analysis and discussion of the colonial period (Waylen 1996:47). The ‘enemies’ of African women, particularly in Southern Africa, as Qunta (1987:15) observes, are colonialism and imperialism, white racism, class and sexual oppression. This was especially true in South Africa where the apartheid regime used this combined form of oppression to preserve economic and political power in the hands of a white minority (Poinsette 1985; also see Marks 1987).

Bernstein (1975), O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995), Qunta (1987) and Staudt (1986), attest to the devastating impact that colonialism and Western ideology had on the social and political position of African women. The word ‘ideology’ is used here according to Thompson’s (1990:56) definition to refer to meanings “which serve to establish and sustain relations of domination”. The processes of colonial occupation, the development of capitalism, and the ‘modernisation’ in Africa, as Imam (1997:7) asserts, have frequently meant a decrease in African women’s economic autonomy, their access to resources, status and security. Furthermore, through the imposition of Western conceptions of state and society, and of women and their appropriate gender roles, colonial practices altered the status of African women and reduced their independence and freedom (O’Barr and Firmin- Sellers 1995:189; Qunta 1987:36). As Macdonald (1995) and Staudt (1986) outline, Western ideas about gender are most explicit in the public-private dichotomy in politics and the belief that women’s affairs belong in the private realm. The idea of separate realms is a key part in the process of securing female subordination, and the assumptions underlying the separation are very significant to the study of gender and politics (see Ballaster et al. 1991; Waylen 1996).

This Western gender regime is an effect of European modernity. Rowbotham (1981:1-3) outlines how during the transformation of Europe from an agricultural society to an industrial society, the division and specialisation of labour began, and new kinds of social differentiation become marked. The new class and sexual division of labour which capital brought into existence had negative consequences for European women, as they were slowly forced out of trade and were restricted to the home.

In illustrating the many ways in which colonialism affected African women, many scholars (Daymond et al. 2003; O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Waylen 1996; Qunta 1987) look comparatively, though not chronologically, at the social political conditions and positions of women in pre-colonial and colonial Africa. Daymond et al. (2003) subvert the linear chronological ordering of history by developing an understanding of African women organised around contestations of such issues as fertility and land, and by foregrounding the unevenness of the processes of change both over the whole region and in the lives of specific women. Similarly, O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) base their arguments around political processes to gain an insight into what happened, in general, to African women, why and how. Though not talking strictly in terms of pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods, the issues and processes with which these scholars are concerned can be traced to particular periods.

On the other hand, Waylen (1996) examines the varied nature of the colonial experience, and its varying and contradictory impact on gender relations. He explores both the varying characteristics of certain pre-colonial African societies and some of the numerous ways in which indigenous gender relations interacted with the new forms of social, economic and political organisation introduced by the colonisers to produce new patterns. These pre-colonial gender relations are the effect of the political struggle, power and resource distribution within pre-colonial African polities. With a specific focus on Ghana, Tsikata (1997) takes an historical mode to analyse the gender implications of state policies and institutional arrangements by looking at the colonial state of 1901 and moves through the different state regimes to the present neo-colonial state. There is a tension, of course, between the written and the oral tradition that contains this historical record since there is, as Mohanty (1991) asserts, no apolitical scholarship. Most kinds of scholarship are not mere productions of knowledge about a certain subject but direct political and discursive practices, which are purposeful and ideological. The literature cited here is the feminist scholarship that, as Mohanty (1991:53) outlines, intervenes into particular hegemonic discourses and counters the totalising imperative of previous bodies of knowledge.

Drawing on the above and other scholars' arguments, I shall briefly illustrate the changing position of African women regarding their diminished social status, their loss of

personal and economic autonomy, and more specifically their loss of political authority, from the pre-colonial through to post-colonial times. My discussion, accordingly, is organised chronologically around historical periods, which I consider useful for tracing the processes that reinforced the subordination of African women. As such, I shall be talking about pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial (contemporary) societies. By pre-colonial societies, I am referring to indigenous African societies, those societies in which hunting, gathering and/or agriculture constituted the main mode of production. Colonial society is understood here in a broad sense to refer to the period characterised by the European occupation and political control of Africa, including the introduction and development of a cash economy. Given the legacy of apartheid in South Africa, and taking into account du Toit's (1971) argument about apartheid above, postcolonial is understood here in a very limited sense to refer to the period following the election of the first democratic government. The grid I am using to divide African history into these periods is not derived from any scholar or writer in particular but from my own desire to provide a linear chronological outline of historical events.

### **2.1.1. The Position of African Women in Pre-Colonial Society**

Staudt (1986), Qunta (1987), and O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) all attest to the autonomy, authority and control over their lives that African women had in pre-colonial society. African women on a continent-wide scale, Qunta (1987:23) argues, enjoyed great freedom and had both a legal and social equality, which, among other things, enabled them to become effective heads of state and military strategies. Much of this autonomy stemmed from their economic resources since they were economically productive and played a central role in agriculture in many parts of Africa (Qunta 1987; Waylen 1996). Regardless of the kind of society they lived in, women derived their political status from the key role they played in production.

So for instance, indigenous Egyptian women, as Qunta (1987:29) asserts, participated in the public affairs of society. In Nigeria, women had their own structures of power, which dealt with issues that concerned them, including, among others, the regulation of markets (see Waylen 1996). And in countries like Swaziland, Botswana, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Congo, “[w]omen took part in public life and had the right to vote, they

could become queens and enjoyed a legal status equal to that of men” (Diop 1974, cited in Qunta 1987:41). Similarly, in South Africa, Nkululeko (1987:86) argues that women were active and prominent members of their societies and some of them were heads of state. From these statements, we can deduce that African women were active members of and played important roles in their societies.

The issue of gender, however, exists in most societies, with complementarities and competition pervading all levels of cultural and social life, including pre-colonial societies (Assie-Lumumba 1997; Johnson 1986; Mama 1997). It should be noted though that no universal patriarchal framework exists that Western feminist scholarship attempts to counter and resist apart from, as Mohanty (1991) argues, a particular world balance of power within which any analysis of culture, ideology and socioeconomic conditions necessarily has to be situated.

The pervasiveness of gender inequality is discernible in the organisation of roles in pre-colonial society. Even in matrilineal societies with women in more powerful social positions, as Assie-Lumumba (1997) outlines, there were several indicators of gender inequality. Hence, while there was no continuous formal political leadership in the hunting and gathering societies of central and southern Africa, each sex had its own sphere of activity, over which its leaders exercised control (O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995). Hafkin and Bay (1976), and Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) have categorically pointed out that whether the society was matrilineal or patrilineal, African women usually

(1) had political control over some areas of activity, be it farming, marketing, trading, or household and family affairs; (2) had political institutions (usually councils) to decide how to rule their own affairs or to influence the affairs of men; and (3) were not subject to general control by men as much as they were autonomous in their own areas of responsibility (cited in O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995:192, my emphasis).

This argument is corroborated by Bernstein’s (1975:19) argument that though “women occupied a subordinate position [they] attained a high degree of independence in some roles” (my emphasis). Waylen (1996) also notes the different but complementary roles played by men and women, and Staudt (1986) observes how other women exercised power and authority in many ways, both directly over women and indirectly over the whole community when their sphere of influence governed the behaviour of others.

Noteworthy is the fact that the European sex/gender system, which arose in modernity (Rowbotham 1981) did not easily apply to pre-colonial African polities. Hay and Stichter (1995) and O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) outline that unlike women in Western societies, African women were not confined to a 'private' realm and excluded from a 'public' realm. There were gaps also between what nineteenth century Western observers saw and what they understood about middle-class European women. For instance, they sometimes noted the independence of African women and other times their abject state of dependence. Western observers, as (Hay and Stichter 1995:191) observe, talked about how hard African women worked in the fields in contrast to the men, and wondered at their ability to maintain households and raise children while appearing to lack sufficient material resources.

The above statements undoubtedly point to the fact that women and men may have played different political roles. Since they had separate spheres of operation, it can be argued that certain kinds of 'parameters' within which each group would function were set. An examination of the organisation of contemporary politics would reveal similar tendencies where men and women are allocated to different political activities and roles, to those that are perceived as masculine or feminine respectively. Somehow, this relates to the gender regime of European polities before the separation between domestic and industrial life was clearly marked, and trades that related directly to the work of women in the household existed as part of the larger political economy (Rowbotham 1981).

As mentioned earlier, regardless of the gendered nature of these activities, in most of the matrilineal societies - the dominant social system in Africa - women were not excluded from participating in public life, and enjoyed a wide spectrum of powers and responsibilities (Nkululeko 1987; O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Qunta 1987). As Mama (1997) outlines, the ideology of the domesticity of women is a Western ideology that the colonists imposed on Africans. Prior to that, as Assie-Lumumba emphasises, "African women were not confined to a domestic domain" (1997:304). These remarks, however, do not preclude the existence of a gender system in pre-colonial Africa (Johnson 1986; Mama 1997; Waylen 1996). The point is that while gender relations in pre-colonial society were not characterised by equality, they often entailed greater interdependence than in modern societies, where women depend on men (Waylen

1996:50). Of course, women were subordinate to men in pre-colonial society, but they enjoyed a range of powers and responsibilities.

The advent of colonialism exacerbated the subordination of women, and through the enforcement of patriarchal tendencies and other practices, transformed the nature of pre-colonial gender relations in ways that seriously intensified the oppression and diminution of women's pre-colonial prominent status (Johnson 1986; Mama 1997). The changes in African gender relations, as Mama (1997:69) emphasises, may well have been one of the most dramatic sites of struggle and change. The gendered position of contemporary African women can be examined against the domestication of the middle-class woman in European modernity, which has been assumed the norm for all women. The following section takes a critical view of the ideologies and policies that the colonists imposed on Africa, and outlines some of the negative consequences they imposed on the living conditions of African women and how these affected their political organisation.

### **2.1.2. African Women in Colonial Society and the Effects of Apartheid on Black South African Women**

The advent of colonialism and Christianity profoundly altered the political, social, economic and cultural systems of pre-colonial society in ways that were detrimental to African women (Johnson 1986; Daymond et al. 2003; Mama 1997; O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995). The colonisers, as several scholars (Mama 1997; Pereira 1997; Sobopha 2005; Waylen 1996) outline, brought with them different cultural constructions of gender that, together with missionary discourse, served to intensify the subjugation and subordination of African women. Poinsette (1985:108) points out how European authorities had a profound belief in the limited capacity of women, which made them ignore women in power or those who shared power with men at the time of colonial occupation during the transfer of power from colonists to South Africa. Missionary discourse, on the other hand, found resonance with the ideology of domesticity promulgated by colonists by emphasising patriarchal authority in the home as the basis of 'family life' (Pereira 1997). Within the new bourgeois family of Western European modernity, as Rowbotham (1981:3) outlines, the role of the woman was mainly supplementary, with the man supporting his wife from his wages. However, under the

racist hierarchies of colonialism, as Daymond et al. (2003:26) outline, the middle-class aspirations of the ideology of domesticity were impossible to fulfil where African women had various family positions in the extended family kinship structures of indigenous African polities and the poverty of many urban households prompted them to work outside the home.

In South Africa, colonialism also took the form of apartheid, a racial segregationist system that had devastating impacts on the social realities of African women and adversely affected their political organisation. Although apartheid is historically associated with the National Party, which came to power on a platform of separatist ideology in 1948, and over the next 40 years became a dominant aspect of every South African's life

[t]he foundations of apartheid had already been laid well before 1948 by laws which deprived blacks of the franchise, set aside special areas for black occupation, restricted the right of Africans to enter urban areas, and obliged them to carry passes (Dugard 1978:55, cited in Poinsette 1985:95).

The legalisation of apartheid in 1948 ushered in an era in which a whole range of existing and new discriminatory legislative measures, which drastically altered the society and profoundly affected the social lives and political organisation of South African women, would be reinforced or established. As mentioned earlier, the apartheid state, rather than alter, actually strengthened and extended the social and political relations established under colonialism. Thus, apartheid South Africa was characterised by racial division, with the effect of privileging and prospering the politically dominant white minority over the majority blacks (Bernstein 1975; van Zyl Slabbert 1971). These changes had the consequence of subordinating and marginalising African women socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

During the apartheid era, black women were economically disempowered and lost their fundamental rights and freedoms. Several scholars (Bernstein 1975; Johnson 1986; Nkululeko 1987; Poinsette 1985 and Waylen 1996) have elaborately documented the impact of apartheid, and all attest to the fact that the statutory controls of apartheid often affected (black) women more harshly than men. Because of apartheid, black South African women found themselves at the bottom of the economic, social and political

ladder (see Bernstein 1975; Poinsette 1985). Different Acts of apartheid legislation, in conjunction with colonial conceptions of women, worked together to effect the conditions under which black women lived. The lives of women on the reserves - the majority of the population but without any rights to farmland and regarded as 'non-productive' and 'idle' (Bernstein 1975; IDAFSA 1981; Poinsette 1985) - was characterised by extreme poverty and hardship. This instability forced women to exert greater strength and show higher qualities of character and endurance than the men, and saw the emergence of a single, independent black woman who began to support herself and become head of an independent household.

Embedded in colonial state structures and policies was a public-private ideological distinction derived from European modernity's gender regime that meshed with pre-colonial gender relations (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Staudt 1986; Waylen 1996). However, as mentioned earlier, this distinction was socially constructed as it developed during the industrial revolution when capitalism in nineteenth century Europe broke down the old forms of social relations both at work and between men and women in the family (Bernstein 1975:58; Macdonald 1995:48; Rowbotham 1981:55). As the division was entrenched, the public became identified with influence and power, and the private with moral value and support. In bourgeois discourse, this split developed gendered attributes, with men being thought of as 'naturally' occupying the public arena and women the domestic and private.

The political, within this dichotomy, is defined as masculine in a very profound sense that makes it hard to incorporate women on the same terms as men and excludes many of those activities that women engage in as not political (Waylen 1996:3). Men, as such, are public actors in the political process and economic breadwinners on whom women depend, while women support men in the private domestic sphere, and stabilise a political process in which they have little direct stake (Staudt 1986:201). In this socially constructed domestic domain, O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) observe, women are expected to be both silent and subordinate. The power to speak bestows upon the person authority to provide their own definition of issues or reality, while the silenced one is left at the mercy of the one with the power to speak. In patriarchal society, the man assumes the power to speak over the women.

The colonial gender ideologies of domesticity excluded African women from the colonial labour market and marginalised them from being absorbed in the colonial political state. The colonial state, according to Mama (1997:70), was almost exclusively male, and as it developed, replaced indigenous political systems, some of which had afforded women substantial participation in the political life of their communities. Furthermore, the colonists formalised and privileged men's institutions by establishing administrative systems through indigenous male authorities and their institutions, at the exclusion of pre-existing women's political structures (Parpart and Staudt 1990; Waylen 1996). As African women were excluded from decision-making centres, they lost their institutional authority (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Walker 1975).

Colonial law also affected African women in various negative ways (Bernstein 1975; Daymond et al. 2003; Nkululeko 1987). For instance, the state decreed by legislation, e.g. in the Black Administration Act No. 38 of 1927 and the repressive Natal Code of Black Law, that the African woman be considered a minor, no matter what her age actually is. Within these laws, women were regarded as feeble-minded, in need of protection from and always subject to the authority of the men (Nkululeko 1987:81; Bernstein 1975:19). This perception prevented women from holding public office and they were not allowed to obtain professional qualifications.

There are several echoes between colonial discourse and apartheid discourse for African women in both education and labour. Apart from their political privilege, colonial African men were also privileged over women in areas such as employment and formal education (Assie-Lumumba 1997; also see Daymond et al. 2003). This was marked in the operation of the highly gendered homelands policy in apartheid South Africa, which relegated African women to reserves that had very limited employment opportunities and lacked basic facilities like schools and hospitals. The few women who could find employment mainly worked as labourers or domestic servants on nearby farms, and in both town and country, domestic service was the main occupation of African women (Bernstein 1975; IDAFSA 1981; Poinsette 1985). Very few black women were employed in the professions available to them in teaching and nursing. Furthermore, black women were often allocated the labour that white women disavowed in their quest for liberation from the European sex/gender system.

The nature and magnitude of European policies and practices affected the social and educational realities of women in Africa (Assie-Lumumba 1997; also see Daymond et al. 2003). Western education was based on unequal gender relations, where boys received the education that prepared them for public life and girls received the education that made them good housewives (Assie-Lumumba 1997:304). As African conceptions of gender changed with the imposition of Western ideology, differential access to education ensured and gender relations were demarcated in new ways as boys rather than girls were chosen to be educated (Daymond et al. 2003:15). For South African girls, the education made available to them was very limited and fraught with patriarchal ideologies (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; UN 1978; also see Staudt 1986).

Girls' education was useless to wage employment and instead confined women to occupations associated with family life and household economy (Poinsette 1985). Inevitably, women's access to employment was very limited, as even those jobs designated as 'female' work were reserved for black men (Meer et al. 1990:53; UN 1978:15). By denying them education, colonial legislation assured that women played only a secondary role in the emerging cash economy.

O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995) and Waylen (1996) outline how the creation of a cash economy based on the control of indigenous, often migrant male labour contributed to the marginalisation of African women both economically and politically. The migrant labour system, replicated over much of Southern Africa, constituted the most important single factor in the lives of South Africans, more so especially for black women, living in the reserves (Bernstein 1975; Poinsette 1985). The central position of men in this cash economy was assured by an array of policy decisions.

The colonial legal system affected, among others, the economic order especially with regard to mobilising and controlling labour (Daymond et al. 2003:12). The apartheid government strategically used legislation such as the Bantu Urban Areas Act, the influx control and pass laws that implement the migratory labour policy to control wage labour (Bernstein 1975; Poinsette 1985). These laws, together with the artificially created housing shortages for women and the ban on migration (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995), also had the effect of restricting women's freedom of movement to cities where there were more jobs. Even then, as Bernstein (1975) and Poinsette (1985) outline, the

jobs available to women in the cities were mainly occupations connected with household needs, such as the food and garment industries. This had the consequence of restricting women's lives into one space, the domestic realm. Bernstein (1975), Poinsette (1985) and UN (1978) also outline how these laws had impact on political activism when they were used to relocate political agitators and those perceived to be dangerous to white control to the reserves.

The political activities and struggles of South African women can only be assessed within the context of the general national liberation struggle, i.e. from the innumerable campaigns in which both women and men participated. Several scholars (Bernstein 1975; Kuzwayo 1985; Lewis 1994; Nkululeko 1987; Pinnock 1997; and Poinsette 1985) have documented the women's launch of the defiance campaign against the oppressive apartheid laws. Bernstein (1975:53-54) also notes the participation of women and their organisations in the underground resistance and the armed struggle to the end of apartheid in 1961.

The pass laws, according to Bernstein (1975) and Pinnock (1997), were one of the most repressive apartheid laws. Consequently, when the colonial government first attempted to impose passes on them in 1913, urban African women, through their numerous organisations, put up a lengthy and vigorous resistance, and fought against the curtailment of their freedoms and rights (Bernstein 1975; Cheryl 1996; IDAFSA 1981; Lewis 1990, 1994; Poinsette 1985). Hundreds of women marched to the city centres in the Orange Free State in 1913 to reject the passes, and the intensity of this campaign forced the authorities to relax the enforcement of passes for women, and government's attempts to enforce the pass laws among African women nationally was abandoned.

The formation of the non-racial Federation of South African Women (FSAW) in 1954 played an important role in the mobilisation of a wide range of women and the consolidation of the anti-pass action (Bernstein 1975; Lewis 1994; Pinnock 1997). The 1913 demonstration, together with several others that followed, fed into the second historical march of August 9, 1956 (after the October 1955 march of 2,000 women) in which 20, 000 women marched to the Union Building to demand for the removal of passes for women and the repeal of the pass laws (Pinnock 1997; UN 1975). The

activities of this day have had a lasting impression on the political activities of South African women.

The Anti-Pass Campaigns, as Pinnock (1997:318) asserts, played a significant role in the re-emergence, after 40 years, of African women into the political arena. The 1955 March on Pretoria and the burning of passes in Winburg under the leadership of ANC Women's League Lillian Ngoyi carried with them an important symbolic value, which contributed towards the construction of a new self-image by the women. These actions represented a kind of defiance, a rebelliousness, which contradicted the prevailing submissive, humble and 'passive' subordinate constructions of the 'ideal' women.

Several scholars (Driver 1988; Marks 1987; Pinnock 1997) have examined relations between African women and other subjectivities. Driver (1988) notes how white colonial women tended to operate on and reproduce a discourse of "civilised" and "primitive", "agent" and "victim". Another scholar, Daymond (2003:18), notes how white colonial women saw themselves as rescuers of African women, but rarely questioned the impact of their foreign and profoundly disempowering attitudes towards African women, and usually failed to address the social and material contexts of African women's lives. On the other hand, women were perceived as labour units by the colonial state, as harmlessly inferior by African men and as passive adult with rights of the minor in a traditional African social order especially in the reserves (Pinnock 1997:319). However, Pinnock (1995; 1997) also outlines how throughout the 1950s, and with the help of the media, African women succeeded in building a new gender identity through the mobilisation of thousands of African women and their participation in the political struggles.

It should be noted here that during the political struggles, women's political movements and activities were severely hampered by the apartheid legislation through the banning of political organisations and the banning, arresting or detaining of individual women. Also, unlike many organisations in the first world, black women's movements in South Africa rarely evolved independently of race and class mobilisation (Lewis 1994), and in most of these movements, women participated as nationalists rather than feminists (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995; Waylen 1996). Though proportionately smaller in numbers than men and scarcely in top leadership roles, individual women played outstanding roles as organisers, speakers and leaders.

Given the nature of apartheid South Africa, the intensity of racial, class and gender differentiation also adversely affected the organisation of women in trade unions. A complex assemblage of factors worked against the employment and unionising of black women in the industry, and ultimately, the ‘organisation’ of women’s political existence was affected. The history of South African black women in industrial labour, as several scholars (Bernstein 1975; IDAFSA 1981; Meer et al. 1990) have noted, was characterised by the dual burden of race and sex domination, which excluded African women from a range of professional occupations, skilled trades and other industrial occupations.

Since the majority of African women were employed in agricultural and domestic work, they remained excluded both from the right to unionise, and from the protection of labour laws (Meer et al. 1990). In addition, because of their comparatively small numbers in industry, black women in general lacked the experience in work-solidarity relationships that have often provided a training ground for men as political leaders (Bernstein 1975). The incentive for employing African women’s labour was their cheap wage rate. Meer et al. (1990:56) outline how in the limited range of industries that employed black women, management contrived to see women as ‘subordinate’ since they entered the labour market less equipped in comparison to men.

In trade unions, women were noticeably absent from executive and other positions. Consequently, whilst the vast number of workers in the garment and leather industries in Natal were women, union bosses and officials were men, who assumed leaderships “naturally”, and women almost as “naturally” tended to relegate that leadership to them (Meer et al. 1990:79). Despite their relative under representation in industrial occupations, black women, especially in the garment and food industries where the majority of workers were women, were active and prominent in the field of labour organisation and the trade union movement (Bernstein 1975:38). Emma Mashinini for instance, played a central role in the founding of COSATU (Lewis 1990; Mashinini 1989; Poinsette 1985). Still, in comparison to their male counterparts, women were paid less than men were even when doing equal work in equal jobs.

The classification of white and black women’s bodies also affected the industrial employment of black women, and the organisation and unionising of women. Black women’s bodies were classed differently from white women’s bodies, often using

imperial cultural constructions of Africans that were dehumanising. Mama (1997:66) outlines how racism in colonial South Africa enabled white women to acquire and enjoy 'honorary male' status, while African native women were defined as 'primitive' and 'backward'. The construction of black women's bodies is well exemplified in the manner in which Sarah Baartman's physique was displayed and spoken about (Mama 1997). In a comparison aimed at proving that the African race was an underdeveloped human species, Baartman's physique was compared to the physical appearance of white women, and the race of African women depicted as inferior and that of white women as superior (Meena 1992:8, also see Lewis 1996:95-96).

With all the changes explained above, African women increasingly found themselves with reduced social status and diminished political authority. It is evident from the foregoing discussion that colonialism and apartheid played a crucial role in the subjugation and subordination of (South) African women. Postcolonial, independent governments did not reverse the marginalisation of women, even where women had been active participants in nationalist and liberation movements. Women in Africa today, O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995:189) assert, remain politically underrepresented and economically disadvantaged. Nevertheless, the transition from apartheid to a democratic government in South Africa provided an opportunity for South African black women to engage effectively in their own struggle.

### **2.1.3. South African Women in the New Democratic South Africa**

The inception of a democratic state in 1994 reshaped the terms under which South African women engaged with politics (Hassim 2003). Whereas women constituted about 2.7% of all parliamentarians during the apartheid era, they constituted 27.7% of all parliamentarians after the first democratic elections (Hassim 2003:105). Since 1994, women's access to political power and decision-making has improved (GPF 2005), and presently, as a result of the government's affirmative action measures and quota systems to increase the number of women in politics, 30% of parliamentarians are women (Goetz and Hassim 2003:2).

As Goetz and Hassim (2003) outline, most transitions towards democratic governance are accompanied by expectations of broader political participation and greater social

equity, which includes increased political participation of women. After a long struggle against an apartheid system of government characterised by institutional racism, patriarchy and oppression, a new democracy was ushered in on 27 April 1994 with the mandate of advancing the country towards a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist society (GPF 2005). The democratic state of the Republic of South Africa is founded on several values, which include the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racism and non-sexism (<http://thor.sabinet.co.za>). From the opening of South Africa's first democratic and representative parliament on 24 May 1994, South Africa embarked on a process of transformation. Through the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), the new democratic government set out to restructure and transform South Africa's society and its institutions. It set out to consolidate democracy by eradicating social and economic inequality, through legislative and other measures, and to redress gender discrimination in the political spheres.

The transformation of gender relations is one of the government's key objectives (Myakayaka-Manzini 1998; GPF 2005). According to Myakayaka-Manzini (1998:1), the government undertook various measures to advance the position of women and to promote gender equality in all spheres. These objectives can be traced back to the emergence of the Freedom Charter in 1955 when the Congress Alliance called on people, including African women, to state their demands for equal rights and freedom in a democratic South Africa (Lodge 1990; Pinnock 1995). Representing the first policy document of the mass movement of oppressed people to set out objectives for a non-racial democratic South Africa, the Charter reaffirmed the multiracial character of South African society and promised equal status for all national groups. These demands were finally realised in the 1996 Constitution.

Within this new environment, women played a remarkable role and ensured that gender equality, including clauses that affect women's rights and lives, was inserted as a core principle of the new constitution (Goetz and Hassim 2003; GPF 2005; Myakayaka-Manzini 1998). Critical rights such as the right to equality, the right to freedom and security, as well as rights aimed at improving the quality of life for women in society, for instance, the right to education, the right to property, access to adequate housing and health care services, have all been included. Several legislative measures, such as the

National Commission on Gender Equality Act No. 39 of 1996, have been put in place to advance the objectives of the new government. Apart from the government's measures, the increase in women's political participation has also been fostered by the work of women in several movements. As political processes through which political leaders are elected, elections are an important aspect of politics, and the participation of women as electoral candidates enables us to see what advances have been made in the participation of women in politics.

Despite the efforts outlined above, women in contemporary Africa are both politically underrepresented and economically marginalized (O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995). They are underrepresented in the sense that numerically, very few of them hold political offices, or participate in formal political organisations. Representing about 52.2% of the 2002 South African population, only 30% of all 2004 members of parliament are women. Furthermore, Goetz and Hassim (2003) outline how political parties remain male-dominated at all levels, while women's participation is often relegated to a feminised and marginalised 'women's wing'. We can document this invisibility at all levels, local and national. However, whether there are differences or not between white women and black women is outside the scope of the current study.

One of the factors that explain why there are very few African women in politics, according to O'Barr and Firmin-Sellers (1995:202), is because, "politics is viewed by most men and women as the [distinctive men's] sphere of action, one in which women are both unwelcome and ineffective". In addition, as Mama (1997:75) outlines, women in post-colonial Africa are continuously treated in ways that uphold the outmoded and colonial ideal of female domesticity, and so perpetuate the marginal and inferior status afforded to them by the colonial culture.

Nevertheless, the transition period from apartheid to democracy also opened up a space in which a more focused attention to issues specifically concerned with women's oppression can be addressed. Lewis (1994:171) outlines how, in the history of the national liberation movement, gender began to be acknowledged as a legitimate political issue only during the 1980s, in the context of the broader political transition when the first moves to set up organisations that focused explicitly on women's liberation were

established. This is not to say, however, that interest in the specific liberation of women was not present during the liberation struggle.

Opposition politics during the 1980s in South Africa were dominated by organisations whose major objective had been to mobilise women for the national liberation struggle as opposed to mobilising them for women's liberation (Hassim 1991:65). For some time, nationalism continued as the major theme in women's politics, taking priority over specifically feminist demands. The women's political activity was often located in a masculinist 'national' liberation struggle playing significant roles in public and political affairs, as opposed to mobilising them for women's liberation (Lewis 1990; Hassim 1991; Kuzwayo 1985). Hassim (1991) outlines how black women who were politically active tended to get involved in broader campaigns against apartheid or in the trade unions, rather than take up women's issues per se. Gender, as Lewis (1994:171) points out, was always a secondary issue in the anti-apartheid struggle that would be addressed only after the waging of the struggle against apartheid.

Feminism has the political commitment to the liberation and empowerment of women, both as an end in its own right and as a means to improving society as a whole (Mama 1997b:415). Feminism is used here according to Tsikata's (1991) definition as "the recognition of the systematic discrimination against women on the grounds of gender and a commitment to work towards change" (cited in Meena 1992:2). The focus on gender, rather than sex, as an analytical category, as Imam (1997) and Sow (1997) outline, recognises the heterogeneity of women, and allows us to analyse gender relations in terms of their interrelations with other systems of stratification, i.e. with the historical, social, economic and political context, and with class, age or cultural membership. However, most African scholars, according to Meena (1992), considered feminism as a foreign import that had no relevance to the African situation, while others regarded it as an ideology of the petty bourgeoisie.

In South Africa, though many organisations refused to engage with feminism for some time, the transition period created a space for a feminist movement to emerge to challenge these existing forms of women's organisations for the first time since the 1950s. As Hassim (1991) outlines, it was only in the early 1990s that it finally became possible to extend the debate beyond whether feminism has any relevance to South

African women's struggles. Hassim (1991) outlines that the first signs of such a shift were made clear at the Malibongwe conference held in Holland in January 1990, and later that year when the 'Statement on the Emancipation of women in South Africa' was issued by the National Executive Committee of the ANC.

Feminist theories have only recently become academically and politically visible, and debates about feminism and power were largely undeveloped and often actively resisted (Lewis 1990; Hassim 1991). According to Imam (1997b:421), theoretical and practical concerns surrounded the entry of feminism in the academic world. The practical concerns centred on the issues of how to get more women into the academic world and into positions that were more powerful, as well as how to propagate the teaching methods and curriculum developments which could be grouped as feminist. Theoretical concerns, on the other hand, have since given rise to feminist epistemology. Women's studies started out as small study groups within the women's movement, in which women reflected collectively on their experience. This intellectual change was seen as both an end in itself and as a prerequisite for the political action necessary to complete the liberation of women. African women scholars, according to Imam (1997b), are generally showing greater receptivity to feminist methodology. However, this study, despite acknowledging the inequalities of society and viewing gender as a social construct, does not necessarily take account of feminist epistemologies and methodology.

To introduce gender analysis into the social sciences is to question simultaneously the status and the roles of men and women in social stratification. Gender analysis, according to Sow (1997), is especially concerned with the impact of these interrelations on the respective situations of men and women, and with access to resources, knowledge, technology, family and social power. Fundamentally, gender analysis highlights the necessity of considering ideology, subjectivity and consciousness, and the role of these non-material processes in politics, production relations, democratic processes and the state (Imam 1997:23). It acknowledges the inequality of social relations between the sexes, and then analyses the degree, forms and consequences the inequality takes in order to transform them (Sow 1997). Ultimately, it is a matter of recognising that relations are by nature about power relations, and "in this respect, women tend overall to have largely unequal relations with men, be they in Northern or Southern Societies" (Sow 1997:45).

Women do not enjoy the same autonomy as men with regard to their status, roles, material and intellectual production, and it is particularly difficult for them to participate in or take control of the social and political institutions that determine their living environments. As pointed out earlier, the women's weak position in relation to men, both socially and politically, is a global phenomenon (Walker 1979).

The struggle of South African women for recognition as equal citizens with equal opportunities was primarily the struggle against apartheid, for national liberation (Bernstein 1975; also see IDAFSA 1981). However, as Bernstein (1975:59-60) argues, "the victory of [the] struggle against apartheid [was also] the absolute condition for any change in the social status of women as a whole". This participation, thus, was also an expression of their deep concern for their own status as women. Lewis (1994:160) observes how the complex intertwining of race, class and gender can easily lead one to conclude that gender struggles are absent, when in fact; they are bound up with other political struggles. Women's organisations and politics, Lewis (1994) insists, have consistently registered women's self-awareness and self-interest. Indeed, in addition to the campaigns and activities involving both sexes in the struggle to achieve national liberation, women also campaigned on issues primarily affecting them as women.

## **2.2. Locating the Sunday Times within the Sociohistorical Context**

Media institutions, as part of reality, operate within societies, and are both affected and affect the social, political and economic conditions prevailing at any particular moment in a particular context. Historically, the press in South Africa was divided along three main newspaper markets: English, Africans and Black (Jackson 1993). According to Jackson (1991:31), the existence of these readerships, rather than apartheid per se, is the determining factor underlying the division of the South African press. However, as Tomaselli and Tomaselli (1987) observe, all sections of the South African (white-owned black-oriented press, the English and Afrikaans language newspapers) supported the hegemonic bloc in different ways, emphasising different factions within it. Nevertheless, during apartheid, the media had its share of repressive laws when over 100 laws were enacted in a bid to restrict an already divided press (Louw 1990).

The English newspapers, to which the Sunday Times belongs and hence my focus in this section, have a lengthy history and often distinguishing record of opposing apartheid and abuses perpetrated under the policy (Jackson 1993:32). However, some critics have pointed out that the English press was structurally limited in opposing apartheid, since it was owned by white capital and therefore had stakes in maintaining the conditions conducive to the continued accumulation of capital (Tomaselli and Tomaselli 1987; also see Naude and Froneman 2003).

South Africa's press reflected the country's political and economic realities of white dominance. Until recently, whites owned and controlled major sectors of the South African media. Ownership, management and editorial control of virtually all of South Africa's mainstream press was in white hands (Jackson 1993:36). Two groups - Argus and Times Media Limited (TML) - that were controlled by Anglo American Corporation dominated the English-language press (Tomaselli and Tomaselli 1987).

The Sunday Times newspaper has its roots in the mining establishment, and was part of the South African Associated Newspapers that was later renamed TML (Tomaselli and Tomaselli 1987; Mervis 1989). However, we cannot overlook the need for economic survival of these papers. For any mainstream paper in South Africa, Jackson (1993:83) argues, profitability is an indispensable requirement of editorial autonomy. Like other papers, the Sunday Times had to attract adequate advertising revenue to survive within the social political milieu, and thus found itself catering to the business community and the upper section of society (Tomaselli et al. 1997).

Before 1996, the Sunday Times was wholly owned by TML that had overall control of the English print media (Louw and Tomaselli 1991; Emdon 1998). Jackson (1993) and Hachten and Giffard (1984) observe how the English language newspapers dominate the South African press, and contribute the largest amount to the nation's total circulation, of which the Sunday Times is a part. During the 1990s, because of the political and economic changes in ownership and editorial leadership of a number of South African major newspapers, the Sunday Times came under the control of a Black-Empowerment company in control of Johnnic Holdings (Emdon 1998; Naude and Froneman 2003).

Today, as the largest national weekly, the Sunday Times has the largest circulation at the moment and a very broad, diverse readership of over 3 million people (Jackson 1993;

Emdon 1998), and continues to cater to the upper middle class, though not necessarily white and more specifically to the business community.

### **2.3. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have outlined how the economic, social and political position of contemporary South African women politicians were affected by patriarchy, colonial practices and apartheid legislation, which altered the gender relations of pre-colonial society. Taking a historical review of the circumstances and positions of African women in pre-colonial, colonial and contemporary society, I have shown how this study reads gender as a social construction that varies across time and place, and raises issues of hierarchy and power. Within the changing social political conditions, I have shown that women were figured and represented differently in the formal sectors of labour and politics.

The entrenchment of the division of labour, with men primarily located in the public and women in the private realms had the effects of discarding women from the centres of decision-making and politics. Representations of the passive and subordinate women subject to the authority of men were widespread. For women who make breakthroughs into the public realm, derogatory representations are employed.

In this chapter, I have also illustrated how the new democratic state is attempting to transform gender relations and advance the position of women, both socially and politically through various measures. Given the fact that women now have an opportunity to participate actively in the country's politics, it is important to analyse the representation of women politicians during the 2004 elections in the Sunday Times, in terms of both frequency and manner of representations. Having provided the much needed background information of the social historical context, the next chapter outlines the theoretical framework that informs this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I outlined how the role and status of (South) African women varied across time and place, by showing historically the changing position of women in society, and emphasised how women occupy subordinate positions in relation to men both socially and politically across the globe. Taking into account these issues, this chapter outlines the theoretical perspectives that inform this study, with the main argument that the Sunday Times does not just reflect but is actively involved in the construction of the subordinate social political position that South African women politicians currently occupy. This chapter is divided into three sections.

The first section provides a discussion of the cultural studies approach and discourse theory, paying particular attention to their assumptions, concerns and insights, in order to highlight their usefulness for the study. In the second section, I outline how I use the terms 'gender' and 'representation' in this study. The third section outlines the critical debate on the 'factual' and 'objective' view of news by illustrating how news is socially constructed, and how definitions of what 'news' is affects the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times' electoral news, in terms of both frequency and manner. I begin by looking at the theoretical perspectives of cultural studies below.

#### **3.1. Theoretical Perspectives**

##### **3.1.1. Cultural Studies: A Brief Introduction**

The early formation and development of cultural studies proper is associated with the works of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, Edward Thompson and Stuart Hall of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the early 1960s (Inglis 1990; Kellner 1995; Turner 1992). According to Kellner (1995) and Turner (1992), Williams's emphasis of the interconnection between culture and communication, and their connections to the society - including their political conflicts and discourse - in which they are produced, circulated and consumed was particularly important for cultural

studies. Later, Williams offered the anthropological definition of culture as the “whole process” by means of which meanings and definitions are socially constructed and historically transformed, and called on a “cultural materialism” that analysed all forms of significations within the actual means and conditions of production.

This kind of analysis, Kellner (1995) asserts, focuses attention on the need to situate cultural analysis within its socio-economic relations, i.e. within the context that constitutes (and constrains) it and in which it should be read and interpreted. It also focuses on the material effects of media culture, insisting that its images, discourse and signs have material effects on audiences (Kellner 1995:43). Culture, therefore, must be situated within a theory of social production and reproduction, specifying the ways that cultural forms serve either to further social domination, or to enable people to resist and struggle against domination.

What this suggests for this study therefore is that, to analyse adequately the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times, I must situate the electoral news reports within the system of production in which they are produced and received, and identify how they are implicated in relations of power between men politicians and women politicians. This study therefore, intends to follow Kellner’s proposed kind of analysis, by analysing the Sunday Times’ electoral news reports within the diverse social and competitive economic context of news production in South Africa. It also takes into account the prevailing unequal relations of power between women politicians and men politicians, and the role of the electoral news reports in the reproduction or transformation of the status quo.

Hall’s theoretical contributions to British cultural studies, according to Inglis (1993), have been influential in the break between political and non-political methods and inquiry in cultural studies, and in the endorsement of the power of language as the instrument of consent and coercion, and its function in societies. Kellner (1995) also indicates how the structuralist enterprise and the development of both the ethnographic and media studies strand in cultural studies found their focus during Hall’s decade as director of CCCS. According to Turner (1992), Hall also rejected the conventional contrast between organic culture and mass culture, and developed the influential distinction between popular art

and mass art, and Dahlgren (1997) outlines how cultural studies has argued that this distinction is always in part a question of power relations within society.

The focus of British cultural studies at any given moment was mediated by the struggles in the prevailing political conjuncture and their major work was thus conceived as political interventions. According to Kellner (1995:36), the early focus on class and ideology derived from the British cultural studies scholars' acute sense of the oppressive and systemic effects of class in British society and the struggles of the 1960s against class inequality and oppression. Consequently, studies of ideology, domination and resistance, and the politics of culture directed these scholars toward analysing cultural artefacts, practices, and institutions within existing networks of power and of showing how culture both provided tools and forces of domination and resources for resistance and struggle. This political focus intensified emphasis on the effects of culture and audience use of cultural artefacts, and from the 1960s, British cultural studies began to show how media culture was producing identities and ways of seeing and acting that integrated individuals into the mainstream culture (Hall and Whannel 1964, cited in Kellner 1995:36).

From its early formation, cultural studies has since broadened in both context and method and has become historical and global. Thus, we talk about American cultural studies, Australian cultural studies and African cultural studies. Given the range of traditions of cultural studies, this study mainly draws on, but is not strictly limited to, British cultural studies. This is mainly because of its complex engagement with Marxism (Fiske 1987:254; Nelson 1996:280), and the fact that some of the Marxist assumptions that underlie all the British work in cultural studies (outlined below) seem to be very useful for this study. Kellner (1995) and Storey (1996) point out how Marxism, has played an important role from the beginning of cultural studies.

Cultural studies is a critical and multidisciplinary approach to the study of culture and society, and draws on methods from different academic disciplines to examine relations of culture and power (Baker 2000; Inglis 1993; Kellner 1995). It draws on such disciplines and theories as sociology, economics, politics, history, communication studies, literary and cultural theory. So for instance, Kellner (1995:4) draws on social theory, history, communication and cultural studies to explain some of the meanings and effects of popular cultural forms, and attempts to show how some cultural texts are

involved in political and cultural struggles during particular historical moments. He uses film theory, social history, political analysis, ideology critique and other modes of cultural criticism to analyse cinematic films. He does this to illustrate how certain films articulated specific ideological positions and helped reproduce dominant forms of social power that served the interests of societal domination, or of resistance to the dominant forms of culture and society, or how indeed they had contradictory effects, during the Age of Reagan.

Turner (1992) also outlines how cultural studies is informed by a Critical Marxist theory that has contested the 'economism' of earlier Marxist interpretations of culture and explanations of how existing relations of power have been instituted and legitimated. Thus, while earlier Marxist approaches tended to view culture as totally determined by economic relationships, cultural studies has insisted on the 'relative autonomy' of culture, arguing that culture is neither simply dependent on nor simply independent of economic relationships.

Cultural studies has also been influenced by the recent developments in critical theory. Most notably, it has drawn on strands of critical theory which seem to offer more sophisticated tools for analysing the reproduction of social inequality, and relations of dominance and subordination at a cultural level. Furthermore, Corner (1983:270) has outlined that the strongest influences upon media research within cultural studies has been structuralism, whose defining characteristic has been the central employment of the linguistic paradigm in political and social inquiries. Billing (1997) and Franklin et al. (1996) outline how cultural studies has been deeply influenced by the works of structuralist thinkers such as Althusser and Foucault. Accordingly, it has drawn on critical insights from discourse theory deriving from the work of Foucault. The turn to language or what may be called the 'linguistic turn' is linked to Saussure's theorisation of language as consisting of the *langue* and *parole*.

For Saussure, as Hall (1997) outlines, the *langue* consists of the general rules and codes of the linguistic system, which all its users must share if it is to be used as a means of communication. *Parole*, on the other hand, consists of the particular acts of speaking or writing that an actual speaker or writer produces using the structure and rules of the *langue*. Since *langue* - the social part of language - could be studied scientifically,

semiotics and linguistics took this and turned it into their subject of study, thus instituting the 'linguistic turn'. Semiotics, as Inglis (1990) outlines, has shown how language comes together in a structure, while linguistics has developed means of formal descriptions (Johnson 1996), such as the analysis of forms of narrative. What Saussure offered was a formal system capable of analysing all cultural codes on the analogy of language, while his focus on how language actually works enables us to examine representation as a practice (Hall 1997).

Critical cultural studies, according to Kellner (1995:4), conceptualises society as a terrain of domination and resistance and engages in a critique of domination and of the ways that media culture engages in reproducing relationships of domination and oppression. Thus, for analysis, as Johnson (1983:4) outlines, cultural studies depends on a critique of empiricism as a culturally-reductive theory, and critiques the positivism of social science, of empiricism in history and of models of 'bias' or 'distortion' in leftist media critiques. Golding and Murdock (2000:7) also outline how it draws on a theoretically informed understanding of the social order in which communications and cultural phenomena are being studied. Emerging from critical perspectives within several disciplines, cultural studies has significantly influenced such academic disciplines as English studies, sociology, media and communication studies, linguistics and history (Franklin et al. 1996; Johnson 1983).

Several scholars (Dahlgren 1997; Hall 1990; Nelsons et al. 1992; Sparks 1996; Storey 1996) have engaged with cultural studies; yet, they all attest to the difficulties involved in trying to provide a definition of cultural studies. It is not even possible, Sparks (1996:14) argues, to point to a unified theory or methodology, which is characteristic to cultural studies or of cultural studies. Even when cultural studies is identified with a specific national tradition like British cultural studies,

it remains a diverse and often contentious enterprise, encompassing different positions and trajectories in specific contexts addressing many questions, drawing ... from multiple roots, and shaping itself within different institutions and locations (Nelson et al. 1992:3).

However, because cultural studies in any given context cannot be just anything, some scholars (Bennett 1992; Inglis 1993; Johnson 1983) have provided definitions that are worth mentioning.

Cultural studies can be defined, according to Johnson (1983), as an intellectual and political tradition, in its relations to the academic disciplines, in terms of theoretical paradigms, or by its characteristic objects of study. For him, “[c]ultural studies is about the historical forms of consciousness or subjectivity, or the subjective forms we live by, or ... the subjective side of social relations” (1983:11). Inglis (1993:28) argues that, “cultural studies connote the study of human values, their changefulness and their recogni[s]able commonality” (his emphasis). Bennett (1992) refers to cultural studies as a term of convenience for a fairly dispersed array of theoretical and political positions, which, however widely divergent they might be in other respects, share a commitment to examining cultural practices from the point of view of their involvement with, and within, relations of power. The assortment of these definitions suggests that cultural studies is diverse, and Johnson (1996) and Nelson et al. (1992) attest to its interdisciplinary nature.

Although the definitive attributes of cultural studies cannot be fixed, Dahlgren (1997) and Grossberg (1996) outline that there is a set of concerns and an array of theoretical and empirical orientations within cultural studies from which media research greatly benefits. For a study that is interested in the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times, and particularly in its construction and provision of meanings for the readers’ understanding, an explanation of the basic assumptions, the main concerns and commitments provides a fruitful way for the understanding of cultural studies. Firstly, there are core theoretical elements, as Dahlgren (1997) observes, which cluster around the themes of culture, meaning and power that need to be explained.

### **3.1.1.2. ‘Culture’ in Cultural Studies**

Culture, as an analytic theme and as a perspective on the media (and social life), continues to grow (Dahlgren 1997). Inevitably, as Nelson et al. (1992) outline, all traditions of cultural studies are motivated by the broad impulse to identify and articulate the relations between culture and society. Culture plays a significant role in every realm of contemporary society, and the concrete struggles of each society are played out in the texts of media culture (Kellner 1995). There is, however, no single, unproblematic definition of ‘culture’, and Hall (1996a:33) outlines how the concept remains a complex

and contested one. Nelson (1992:4) also indicates how Williams (1958), in appraising the complexity of this term, argues that 'culture' "is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language". This statement perhaps, Baker (2000) and Grossberg (1996) assert, indicates the contested character of culture and cultural studies.

Williams (1977) and Thompson (1994) outline how different scholars have used the concept of culture differently through its historical development. For sociologists, culture may be regarded as,

the interrelated array of beliefs, customs, laws, forms of knowledge and art ... which are acquired by individuals as members of a particular society and which can be studied scientifically (Thompson 1994:128).

According to this definition, these beliefs and customs, among other things, form a 'complex whole', which is characteristic of a certain society, distinguishing one society from others that exist at different times and places. The study of culture, thus, involves the scientific analysis, classification and comparison of the constitutive elements of different cultures. For anthropologists, culture is,

the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms, including actions, utterances and meaningful objects of various kinds, by virtue of which individuals communicate with one another and share their experiences, conceptions and beliefs (Thompson 1994:132).

Cultural analysis, as such, involves the interpretative explanation of these patterns of meanings embodied in symbolic forms. Within the literary and artistic traditions, Dahlgren (1997:52) outlines that culture is seen as something produced by artists and writers, and can be analysed aesthetically.

Within cultural studies, however, culture was extracted from the literary-aesthetic view, and made into a concern for social analysis. Accordingly,

culture is understood both as a way of life - encompassing ideas, attitudes, languages, practices, institutions, and structures of power - and a whole range of cultural practices: artistic forms, texts ... mass produced commodities (Nelson et al. 1992:5, emphasis in original).

The term culture, as used in the phrase cultural studies is, according to Fiske (1996:115), neither aesthetic nor humanistic emphasis, but political. Culture is a way of living within an industrial society that encompasses all the meanings of that social experience (Fiske

1987). It is not just a body of texts; it is part of lived experience (Dahlgren 1997). Lived experience is an absolute value in itself, and is the moral measure of historical and political meanings. It is, as Inglis (1993) argues, the conceptual term that ties together the individual and history. Consequently, culture is a contested and conflictual set of practices of representation, which are bound up with the processes of formation and re-formation of social groups (Frow and Morris 1996). It represents the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, language and customs of any specific society (Hall 1996a). What this implies, therefore, is that culture is concerned with the production and the exchange of social meanings between members of a society or group, i.e., with the various ways we make sense of the world (Baker 2000; Dahlgren 1997; Hall 1997).

In this study, culture is understood in the sense that it is used within cultural studies as a contested set of representations, and according to William's notion of culture as the 'whole process' through which meanings and definitions, say of women politicians, are socially constructed and historically transformed. What this implies for this study therefore is that the electoral news texts of the Sunday Times are viewed as consisting of competing representations of the world, and as being involved in the social construction of the subordinate status of women politicians.

The materialism of cultural studies, according to Dahlgren (1997), takes a constructionist and dialectical perspective on culture, arguing that people and social institutions in specific historical circumstances produce culture, which in turn helps to produce and reproduce society. Nelson et al. (1992) outline how, by conceiving culture relationally, cultural studies argues that the analysis of all forms of cultural production (news texts included) must be considered in relation to other cultural practices and to social and historical structures. The analysis of a news text or discourse therefore, must be considered in terms of its competitive, reinforcing and determining relations with other objects and cultural forces (Nelson 1996). Cultural studies delineates how cultural artefacts articulate societal ideologies, values, and representations of gender, race, and class, and how these phenomena are related to each other (Kellner 1995).

This study is motivated by the commitments of cultural studies and attempts, therefore, to analyse the relation between the Sunday Times news texts (as cultural

products) and the society, which comprises of unequal relations between men and women.

### **3.1.1.3. The Question of Meaning and Power**

A cultural studies perspective, as alluded to earlier, is centrally concerned with meaning (Dahlgren 1992; Inglis 1993; Nelson 1996; Fiske 1987, 1996), that is, with the generation and circulation, including the struggles over meaning that shape and define the terrain of culture. Therefore, as Dahlgren (1992) outlines, cultural studies analyses how meaning is structured, articulated and circulated in various settings. Murdock (1995) states that cultural studies tells us how, for instance, discourse is organised in complex patterns of meaning and how these meanings are reproduced, negotiated and struggled over.

A key contribution of cultural studies to the analysis of mass communication, according to Corner (1983:266), is therefore the

emphasis on the signifying or symbolic conventions and practices by which media meanings get made and through which the defining, semantic power of media systems variously contributes to a public imagery and consciousness.

Hall (1997) outlines how the production of meaning, according to the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, depends on language, which is a system of signs. While the sign consists of the signifier (or the form i.e. the actual word or image) and the signified (or the corresponding idea or concept in our head associated with the form), and both are needed to produce meaning (Hall 1997; Inglis 1990; Thompson 1994), it is the difference between signs that produces meanings. On the other hand, it is the relation between signs, fixed by our cultural and linguistics codes, which sustains representations.

Much of cultural studies' work, as Baker (2000) observes, is centred on questions of representation, i.e., on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us. Johnson (1983) also outlines how cultural studies is necessarily and deeply concerned with relations of power. It is therefore interested in the cultural differences between ways in which different cultural groups are represented in and through media texts (Burton 2002:37). Cultural studies concerns with the ways in which meanings may be implicated in power relations is important for this study, since it is concerned with power relations between women politicians and men politicians.

For analysis, however, Nelson et al. (1992) outline that cultural studies does not have a methodology to call its own but, as indicated earlier, draws on methods from other disciplinary practices depending on the matters of concern for the particular study. Therefore, methods such as textual, content or discourse analysis can all provide important insights and knowledge. So for instance, Kellner (1997) outlines how cultural studies has deployed a wealth of critical theories to unpack the meanings of the texts, or to explain how texts function to produce meanings. Regardless of the strand adopted however, cultural studies methodologies are typically interpretative.

However, interpretative methods, as Hall (1997) asserts, are inevitably caught up in a 'circle of meanings', as interpretations are always followed by other interpretations in an endless chain, and never produce a final moment of absolute truth. Inglis (1993:230) also outlines how meaning is a social production, a practice, which does not necessarily turn into knowledge. Consequently, a cultural studies scholar refuses the position of objective scientist and assumes that of living participant, with his or her own allegiances and deep commitments. Values, as Inglis (1993) insists, cannot be separated from any human activity or inquiry, cultural studies alike.

#### **3.1.1.4. Cultural Studies: Its Assumptions and Concerns**

Virtually all the founding assumptions of cultural studies are Marxist. Marxism, according to Storey (1996), informs cultural studies in two fundamental ways. Firstly, to understand the meanings of culture we must analyse it in relation to the social structure and its historical contingencies (Storey 1996:3). One such starting point is,

the belief that meanings and the making of them (which together constitute culture) are indivisibly linked to the social structure and can only be explained in terms of that structure and its history (Fiske 1987:254).

The social structure is held in place by, among other forces, the meanings that culture produces. History and culture are not separate entities, since culture helps constitute the structure and shape the history (Storey 1996:3). History and texts are inscribed into each other. It is because of this constitutive nature that cultural studies emphasises the importance of culture.

Secondly, cultural studies assumes that capitalist societies are societies divided unequally along class, gender, race, including nation, age group and religion, among other axes of difference (Fiske 1987; Kellner 1995; Storey 1996). Cultural processes, as such, intimately connect with these social relations, and society, conceived as a hierarchical and antagonistic set of social relations, is characterised by the oppression of subordinate other (Kellner 1995). These social relations are understood in terms of social power, that is, in terms of a structure of domination and subordination that is never static but is always the site of contestation and struggle. Since culture is one of the principle sites where this contestation takes place in the form of the struggle for meanings that serve the interests of the dominant classes, culture is neither an autonomous nor an externally determined field, but a site of social differences and struggles (Fiske 1987; Johnson 1983). In culture, we find a continual struggle over meaning, in which subordinate groups attempt to resist the imposition of meanings that bear the interest of dominant groups. This, according to Fiske (1987:256), is what makes culture ideological. Ideology is argued to be inscribed in the cultural and social practices of society.

Ideological analysis, as Storey (1996) and Inglis (1995) outline, is a central preoccupation of cultural studies, and a long-standing concern of this has been with the way the mass media operate ideologically to sustain and support prevailing relations of domination (Golding and Murdock 2000). Although this study is mainly an ‘analysis of discourse’ and not an ‘analysis of ideology’, there is a link between discourse and ideology, and between ideology and power (Thompson 1984:4), that cannot be ignored here. This is because even for an analysis of discourse, if a concept of ideology is totally abandoned, several aspects of media power become more difficult to explain. As MacDonald (2003:51) has outlined,

the benefit of approaching the media through a discursive analysis remains one of exploring the varied and often subtle guises that the power/knowledge relationship adopts, but an analysis of the implications of this invites a return to ideology.

There are many competing definitions of ‘ideology’ (Thompson 1984; Storey 1996). Thompson (1994) uses the concept of ideology to refer to the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of power. Ideology, according to Althusser (1994:123), does not represent the real world or the system of the real relations that

govern the existence of individuals, but a representation of “the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence”. For him, ideology also has a material existence, since the ‘ideas’ or ‘representations’ which make up ideology always exist in apparatuses such as the media, and are inscribed in social practices that include language (Althusser 1994:125). He also argues that all ideology functions in ways that transform individuals into subjects; it hails or interpellates individuals as subjects (Althusser 1994:130). Within the critical paradigm of cultural studies however, Storey (1996:4) outlines how Hall’s (1982) formulation is generally accepted as the dominant definition. “Ideology”, according to Hall (1995:88), “is a function of the discourse and of the logic of social processes, rather than an intention of the agent”. Ideological statements, though made by individuals, are a product not of individual consciousness or intention but rather, as Hall contends, pre-date individuals and form part of the determinate social formations and conditions in which individuals are born (1990:9). As Hall asserts,

ideologies are the frameworks of thinking ... about the world - the ‘ideas’ which people use to figure out how the social world works, what their place is in it and what they ought to do (1996:19; emphasis in original).

Ideology, therefore, refers to those images, concepts and premises which provide the frameworks through which we represent, interpret, understand and ‘make sense’ of some aspect of social existence.

In modern society, the media form one of the major sites where meaning is produced (Hall 1997; Bennett 1995), and this is what makes media key spheres of operation in the production, reproduction and transformation of ideologies (Hall 1990). Ideologies, as Hall (1990) further outlines, do not consist of isolated and separate concepts, but in the articulation of different elements into a distinctive set or chain of meanings. One way in which ideologies are transformed is by articulating the elements differently, thereby producing different meanings. Lewis (2005) and Sobopha (2005), for instance, outline how some South African women artists were able to articulate certain photographic elements in the representation of women and evoke different meanings altogether.

As may be evident now, cultural studies, among other things, is devoted to studying the politics of signification. As a result, it is concerned with all those practices, institutions and systems of classification through which particular values, beliefs,

competencies, routines of life and habitual forms of conduct are imparted to members of society. One of the systems through which values and beliefs, among other things, are imparted to the members of society is through language.

The significance of language for an understanding of culture and the construction of knowledge has risen to the top of the agenda within cultural studies for two main reasons. Firstly, language is the privileged medium in which cultural meanings are formed and communicated, and secondly, language is the medium through which we form knowledge about ourselves and our place in the social world (Baker 2000; Fairclough 1995; Hall 1995). Cultural studies, and rightly so, has argued that language (or news) is not a neutral medium for the formation of meanings and knowledge about an independent objective world 'existing' outside of language. Rather, language and its use in discourse, is constitutive of those particular meanings and knowledge.

The theory of language, therefore, stresses the activity and effectivity of signification as a process that actively construct the cognitive worlds rather than simply passively reflecting a pre-existing reality (Bennett 1995:287; also see Fiske 1994:4). We can only access this reality through language by putting it into discourse, and reality has the potential to be differently constructed. This view is at the heart of the constructionist theory (Hall 2001:73). Language, including its use in news, according to Fairclough (1989:4), rests upon common-sense assumptions which are ideologically shaped by relations of power (for instance between men and women), and can contribute to the domination of some people by others.

In the production of meaning, signs can convey meanings that are consensus at the descriptive level, but may at the same time, connect to broader themes and wider meanings, at which point they enter into general beliefs, conceptual frameworks and values of society, i.e., into the wider realms of social ideology (Hall 1997).

Cultural studies, as Grossberg asserts,

is concerned with describing and intervening in the ways 'texts' and 'discourses' (i.e. cultural practices) are produced within, inserted into, and operate in the every day life of human beings and social formations, so as to reproduce, struggle against, and perhaps transform the existing structures of power (1996:180).

It has been particularly concerned with analysing the structure of media texts and tracing their role in sustaining systems of domination (Golding and Murdock 2000:84). A note should be made however that a text, within cultural studies, is important as a site where cultural meanings are made accessible to us, but not as a privileged object of study itself (Turner 1992). At its most distinctive, cultural studies is aimed towards understanding the ways in which power relations are regulated, distributed, and deployed within industrial societies.

The main concerns here are matters of power and representations of and 'for' marginalised social groups including those of gender (see Baker 2000:5). So theoretically, cultural studies is concerned with analysing the forms and operations of power and inequality, and integral to this is the production of knowledge (Franklin et al. 1996). This requires us to identify the operation of specific practices and of what they accomplish in specific contexts (Nelson et al. 1992). This includes such cultural practices as news texts in the Sunday Times.

### **3.1.1.5. The Choice between Culturalism and Structuralism**

There are two main paradigms - 'culturalism' and 'structuralism' - that divide cultural studies both theoretically and methodologically (Hall 1996a; Johnson 1983). Only one of these appears to be useful for analysing the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

Culturalism - the dominant paradigm - opposes the residual and merely reflective role assigned to 'the cultural' by classical Marxism, and defines culture as

both the meanings and values which arise amongst distinctive social groups and classes, on the basis of their given historical conditions and relationships, through which they 'handle' and respond to the conditions of existence; and as the lived traditions and practices through which those 'understandings' are expressed and in which they are embodied (Hall 1996a:38, his emphasis).

What this quotation highlights, as Golding and Murdock (2000) and Baker (2000) outline, is the active and creative capacity that this strand accords people (and audiences) in the construction of shared meanings and continual struggles to make sense of their situations. It also authenticates the position that is accorded to 'experience' in any

cultural analysis. Culturalists, as Hall (1996a:38) observes, tend to read structures of relations in terms of how they are 'lived' and 'experienced'.

In line with these theoretical perspectives, empirical work which is emphasised explores the way that active human beings create cultural meanings (Baker 2000), taking into account how they interpret media artefacts and incorporate them into their worldviews and lifestyles (Golding and Murdock 2000). For this reason, "'cultures' must be studied as a whole, and in situ, located, in their material context" (Johnson 1983:20, his emphasis). Methodologically, the culturalist strand stresses the importance of complex, concrete descriptions, which grasp particularly, the unity of cultural forms and material life. Accordingly, as Johnson (1983) asserts, it prefers social-historical recreations of cultures or the 'ethnographic' cultural description, or those kinds of writing which recreate socially located 'experience'.

Hall (1996a) outlines how the arrival of 'structuralism'- as initiated by the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure's theorisations of the sign and language (Inglis 1990; Hall 1997; Thompson 1994) - interrupted the culturalist strand in cultural studies. While culturalism argues that experience is the ground where consciousness and conditions intersect, structuralism argues that people can only experience conditions in and through the categories, classifications and frameworks of the culture (Hall 1996a:4). Therefore, structuralism stresses the relative independence or effective autonomy of subjective forms and means of signification (Johnson 1983). The question of signification in the structuralist strand is essential for the constructionist approach to representation.

A structuralist understanding of culture, as Baker (2000:16) observes, is concerned with the 'systems of relations' of an underlying structure (usually language) which makes meaning possible. Turner (1992) also outlines how structuralists see culture as the primary object of study, and approach it by way of analysing the representative textual forms. Thus, the forms and structures that produce cultural meanings are at the centre of attention.

Theoretically, structuralism privileges the discursive constructions of situations and subjects, and prefers methods that help uncover the mechanisms by which meaning is produced in language, narrative or other kinds of sign-system (Johnson 1983). It focuses

on the analysis of cultural texts (media texts included), and approaches them as mechanisms for ordering meaning in particular ways (Golding and Murdock 2000). Within this framework, language looms as the most essential concept through being appropriated as a model for understanding other cultural systems (Turner 1992).

The strand of cultural studies that I will be engaging with is the kind influenced by poststructuralist theories of language, representation and subjectivity, rather than that which is concerned with the ethnography of lived experience. Post-structuralism, as Hall (1997), Inglis (1995) and Thompson (1994) outline, developed from the realisation of the two limitations of structuralism - its lack of attention to the referential aspects of symbolic forms and its tendency to abstract symbolic forms from the social-historical context and processes within which these forms are embedded. Apart from taking into account these two issues, post-structuralism enables us to focus on issues of power.

The diversity of cultural studies is matched by the availability of various models of cultural studies research. There are three main models of cultural studies research: production-based studies, text-based studies, and studies of lived culture (Johnson 1996). This study is text-based.

### **3.1.1.6. The Nature of Cultural Studies' Text-Based Studies**

Text-based studies, focusing on the forms of cultural products, have usually concerned the possibilities of a transformative cultural practice (Johnson 1983). Media texts, as Kellner (1995) outlines, can either advance progressive positions and representations of such issues as gender and race, or articulate reactionary forms of sexism and racism. A media text, as such, consists of competing representations that reproduce existing social struggles and encode the political discourses of the era. Because the forms of media culture are intensely political and ideological, a text requires a political reading in order to discern how it embodies different political positions and its political effects.

Accordingly,

[t]his means not only reading texts in a socio-political and economic context, but seeing how the internal constituents of its texts either encode relations of power and domination, serving to advance the interests of dominant groups at the expense of others, or oppose hegemonic ideologies, institutions, and practices or contain a contradictory mixture of forms that promote domination and resistance (Kellner 1995:56).

A 'text' within cultural studies is an object of study which is no longer studied for its own sake, nor even for the sake of social effects it may be thought to produce, but rather for the subjective or cultural forms which it realises and makes available. Thus, as Johnson (1996:97) outlines,

[t]he text is only a means in cultural studies; ... it is a raw material from which certain forms ... of narrative, ideological problematic, mode of address, subject position ... may be abstracted. It may also form part of a larger, discursive field or combination of forms occurring in other social spaces with some regularity (his emphasis).

Consequently, by looking at the Sunday Times' news reports, as Johnson (1983:50) outlines, "it is possible to look for the signs of the production process in a [news item]", by looking closely at the specifically cultural conditions of production, such as the codes and conventions on which a news item draws and the ways in which it reworks them. Johnson (1983) also outlines how such an analysis would have to include a wider range of discursive material (i.e., ideological themes and problematics) that belong to a wider social and political conjuncture. It is also possible to read such texts as forms of representation, provided it is realised that we are always analysing a representation of a representation. The ultimate object of cultural studies is the social life of subjective forms at each moment of the circulation, including their textual embodiments (Johnson 1983), criticising the forms of culture that foster subordination (Kellner 1995:32).

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that a cultural studies approach would be useful for this particular study. Cultural studies, as Hall (1996b:30) has noted, can help us understand, for instance, that the Sunday Times plays a part in the formation or constitution of the reality that it reflects. It is not that there is a world outside, 'out there', which exists free of discourses of representation. Saussure's theory of the sign that posits a duality between signification and reality has been rejected by the theory of language, which stresses both the independent materiality of the signifier and the activity and effectivity of signification as a process (Bennett 1995).

Discourse theory has been a significant strand in poststructuralist theory, challenging traditional understandings of the relationship between knowledge, power, and politics. As Franklin et al. have argued,

[t]he notion of discourse provided an alternative to the concept of ideology which had been developed within Marxist-influenced [c]ultural [s]tudies to explore the cultural aspects of the reproduction of inequality (1996:259).

The next section briefly explains some of the perspectives from discourse theory that, together with the cultural studies' perspectives already explained above, seem to be useful for an analysis of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

### **3.1.2. Discourse Theory and Media Texts**

The study of discourse emerged in the 1960s in several disciplines in the humanities and the social sciences. According to Thompson (1984), to introduce the concept of discourse is to open an avenue for the investigation of the relation between language and ideology. The concept of discourse is originally associated with the works of Foucault in the 1970s, and his theoretical contributions to the theory of discourse and his influence upon the social sciences and humanities cannot be ignored in any discourse analysis.

Discourse, according to Foucault (1979), is both an instrument and an effect of power (cited in Young 1981). Discursive practices are characterised by “a delimitation of a field of objects and a definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, making it impossible to think outside them” (Young 1981:48). What interested Foucault, Hall (2001:72) argues, were the rules and practices that produced meaningful statements and regulated discourse in different historical periods.

For an analysis of media texts, Fairclough (1992b) argues that Foucault's (1972) theoretical insights about the constitutive nature of discourse and the inter-dependence of discourse practices of a society or institution are particularly important. What these insights suggest is that discourse actively constitutes the social, including the objects and social subjects, and that any given type of discourse practice is generated out of combinations of others and defined by its relationship to others. Foucault's recognition of the political nature of discourse (Fairclough 1992b:55) or the discourse of power (Inglis 1990:107) is also important to media theory.

Foucault's discourse analysis, however, did not include discursive and linguistic analysis of real texts (Fairclough 1992b). Furthermore, as Fiske (1994) asserts, Foucault's work described discourse as a technique of power in a monodiscursive society

and as a technique of inequality, but not a terrain of struggle. In a socially diversified and multicultural society such as South Africa however, any analysis of culture must uncover processes of discursive contestation by which discourse works to repress and marginalise others, to struggle for visibility and for access to the media, and by which they fight to promote and defend the interests of their respective social formations.

Though text and talk had been analysed before in literary scholarship, history and mass communication research, it was during the 1970s and 1980s that various branches of communication studies witnessed a growing awareness of the usefulness of detailed discourse analysis of media texts (Deacon et al. 1999; van Dijk 1997). Discourse studies, according to van Dijk (1997), is an autonomous domain of study with its own characteristic objects and phenomena, theories, methods and principles. Discourse is one of the major terms with which all forms of linguistic analyses are concerned.

In addition, Fairclough (1995a) outlines how recent social theory has produced important insights into the social nature and functions of language in contemporary societies. He then argues that, in order to develop a form of discourse analysis that contributes to social and cultural analysis we need to combine these insights with traditions of close textual analysis, which have developed in linguistics and language studies. Discourse analysis differs from linguistics analysis in that it focuses on what statements are made rather than how they are made (Fiske 1994). At the theoretical level, as Fiske (1994:3) observes,

‘discourse’ challenges the structuralist concept of ‘language’ as an abstract system (Saussure’s langue) and relocates the whole process of making and using meaning from an abstracted structural system into particular historical, social, and political conditions.

The concept of discourse, though still contested (Fairclough 1992a; van Dijk 1997), becomes important in the context of the use of language in social life and with the relationship between language use and social structure.

The common-sense notion of ‘discourse’ usually refers to a form of language use, public speeches or more generally of spoken language or ways of speaking (van Dijk 1997:1). This however, does not tell us what discourses are, how they function, or how to analyse them (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002). In linguistics, discourse is more

commonly used to refer to extended samples of either spoken or written language (Fairclough 1992a:3; Hall 2001:72). This preserves the emphasis upon higher-level organisational features and the situational context of language use. Fairclough (1995a), whose method for critical discourse analysis is employed in this particular study, takes this linguistic sense of discourse, but extends it to include semiotics, i.e. the study of signs. However, it is Foucault's conception of discourse that is widely used in social theory and analysis, wherein he referred to the different ways of structuring areas of knowledge and social practices (Fairclough 1992a:3). Discourses in this sense do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, but construct or 'constitute' them.

Deacon et al. (1999) outline how linguistic forms of discourse analysis have become more influential as the analysis of media texts and representations have exposed the assumptions and values that are wrapped up in the construction of even relatively simple grammatical forms, such as news headlines. Linguistics has also been significantly helpful in illuminating different facets of the structures of media texts and in tracing the means by which language use in the media contributes to the ongoing production of social conceptions, values, identities and relations of power and authority in society.

There are various strands of linguistic analysis including Fairclough's (1992b; 1995) 'critical discourse analysis (CDA)', Fowler and others' 'critical linguistics' (1979), Bell's (1991) studies of news stories and van Dijk's (1997) analytical work on media discourse. Foucault's social perspectives upon discourse have been a major influence in the development of discourse analysis as a form of social analysis (Fairclough 1992b:5). It is possible, working from such an understanding, to see the way in which discursive rules are linked to the exercise of power and to ascertain how the forms of discourses are both constituted by, and ensure the reproduction of, the social system, through forms of selection, exclusion and domination. Discourses in this sense are manifested in particular ways of using language and other symbolic forms. As Fairclough (1992b:4) points out,

[d]iscourses do not just reflect or represent social entities and relations, they construct or 'constitute' them; different discourses constitute key entities ... in different ways, and position people in different ways as social subjects ... and it is these social effects of discourse that are focused upon in discourse analysis.

Fairclough views this understanding of discourse as the more social-theoretical sense of discourse that attempts at drawing together language analysis and social theory.

Fairclough (1992b), Thompson (1984) and van Dijk (1997) have identified certain characteristics and principles that are common to ‘discourse analysis’. These include, among others: the focus on naturally occurring expressions; the consideration of the context; a treatment of discourse as social practice; and attention to the meaning and functions of discourse.

### **3.1.2.1. Characteristics and Principles of Discourse Analysis**

#### **3.1.2.1a. Focus on Naturally Occurring Expressions**

One of the principles of discourse analysis, as mentioned above, is the exclusive focus on actually or naturally occurring talk and text or instances of expression (van Dijk 1997; Thompson 1984). Unlike much work in formal linguistics, discourse analysts avoid imaginary examples and focus on ‘real data’, such as conversations or actual news texts.

#### **3.1.2.1b. The Role of Context**

Context, in the study of discourse, plays a fundamental role in the description and explanation of text or talk (van Dijk 1997). The importance of the contextual aspect of any symbolic form was stressed earlier in my discussion of the cultural studies approach (Inglis 1993; Kellner 1997). Although there is no explicit theory of context, it encompasses the structures of all practices of the social situation that are relevant for the production or reception of discourse (van Dijk 1997), and can include, in this case, the history of colonisation woven in with the history of social practices around ‘gender’ which construct hierarchy (Hall 2001). This is why I paid particular attention to some of the social historical circumstances of South African women in Chapter 2.

Mediated communication is always a contextualised social phenomenon. Production and reception processes of media messages are situated activities, which take place in a complex array of social conditions underlying the production and circulation of those messages (Thompson 1995; Radway 1984). As Hall (1995a) outlines in his articulation of the circuit of culture, each of the stages of the communication process, i.e., the production, circulation, distribution/consumption and reproduction, is a determinate

moment, which is however, only a differentiated part of the whole process within the wider socio-cultural and political structure. Communication is always embedded in social contexts which are structured in various ways and which, in turn, have a structuring impact on the communication that occurs (Thompson 1995:11).

Theoretically, discourse studies emphasise both the properties of text and other characteristics of the social situation that may systematically influence text (van Dijk 1997). Thus, in the analysis of texts, one should move from the text to its context, to the culture and society that constitutes the text and in which it should be read and interpreted (Kellner 1995). As such, discourse can never be abstracted from the conditions of its production and circulation in the way that languages can (Fiske 1994). The news texts, their producers and the institutional matrix in which they are deployed, together with the newspaper readers who receive media messages, are always located in specific social-historical contexts, which are typically characterised by relatively stable relations of power. In the interpretation of messages, Thompson (1995:41) emphasises, many assumptions and expectations that readers bring to the process of interpretation are of a broader social and historical character.

Context features not only influence discourse, but discourse may typically also define or change such context characteristics (van Dijk 1997:19). In this sense, texts in many ways signal their contextual relevance, they reflect both local and global discourse practices relevant to their production and reception. For media texts, global contextual constraints may include the organisational and institutional structures or procedures of news production, some of which will be explained in the latter sections of this chapter.

### **3.1.2.1c Discourse as Social Practice**

A third principle that is common to discourse analysts is treating discourse as a social practice. Discourse, according to Fairclough (1992:28), is “more than just language use: it is language use ... seen as a type of social practice” (his emphasis). Within this sense, both spoken and written discourses are forms of social practice in socio-cultural contexts (van Dijk 1997), and language use is relative to social, political and cultural forms (Jaworski and Coupland 1999). It is language accented with its history of domination, subordination and resistance (Fiske 1994). Viewing language use as social practice

implies, as Fairclough (1995a) points out, firstly that language is a mode of action, and secondly, that language is a socially and historically situated mode of action, in a dialectical relationship with other facets of the social. What is meant by dialectical relationship is that language is socially shaped, but is also socially shaping – or socially constitutive. Discourse, therefore, both reflects and shapes the social order (Jaworski and Coupland 1999); it is both determined and affected by its social conditions (Fiske 1994). Fairclough's (1995a) CDA explores the tension between these two sides of language use; the socially shaped and the socially shaping.

This perspective acknowledges that language is a social phenomenon, a part of society and not somehow external to it (Hall 1997). It also means that language is a socially conditioned process, conditioned by other (non-linguistic) parts of society. Language users, in this sense, are engaged in discourse not merely as individual persons, but also as members of various groups, institutions or cultures. Through discourse, as van Dijk (1997) argues, language users may enact, confirm or challenge comprehensive social and political structures and institutions.

### **3.1.2.1d Attention to Meaning and Function**

Both language users and analysts are, according to van Dijk (1997), after meaning in their understanding and analysis. The concept of discourse that discourse analysts use theoretically “includes some essential components [that question] who uses language, how, why and when” (van Dijk 1997:2, his emphasis). This enables us to focus not only on the actual users of language as a form of communication in particular situations and contexts. It also enables us to focus on forms of representation in which different social categories, different social practices and relations are constructed from and in the interests of a particular point of view or conception of social reality (Deacon et al. 1999). Changes in discourse practice contribute to change in knowledge, (including beliefs and common sense), social relations, and social identities (Fairclough 1992b).

People use language to communicate ideas or beliefs, and they do so as part of more complex social events such as when writing or reading a news report (van Dijk 1997). As Fairclough (1989:23) asserts, we speak, listen, write or read in ways, which are

determined socially and have social effects. Each particular form of linguistic expression in a news text has its reasons (Fowler 1991).

To this effect, the analysis of discourse examines what is being communicated, and in whose interest (Macdonald 2003). Ultimately, the task of discourse analysis is to track how various forms of discourse, and their associated values and assumptions, are incorporated into a particular text, why and with what effects (Jaworski and Coupland 1999). Discourse is an inherent part of society and participates in all society's injustices, as well as in the struggles against them (van Dijk 1997). Evidently, in interpreting a form of discourse, as Thompson (1984) outlines, we may seek to move beyond the study of discursive structure and to construct a meaning that shows how discourse serves to sustain relations of domination.

The motivation for doing discourse analysis is very often a concern about social inequality and the perpetuation of power relationships, either between individuals or between social groups (Jaworski and Coupland 1999:6). This is a common goal that discourse analysis shares with cultural studies. Discourse, and as such news, is implicated in expressing people's points of view and value systems, many of which are 'pre-structured' in terms of what is 'normal' or 'appropriate' in particular social and institutional settings. The study of discourse is an interdisciplinary project, which deals with the interrelations between discourse and the social structure and social relations.

The foregoing discussion of the theoretical framework, especially the concerns with meaning and power, seems to suggest that cultural studies is a suitable approach in the analysis of the representation of women politicians. Discourse analysis, on the other hand, also seems to be suitable for this study because it provides useful tools for interrogating how the Sunday Times provides 'frames' and 'meanings', through the discourses it makes available, for its readers' understanding of this group of women. There are certain themes or concepts that came up in my discussion, specifically gender, representation, ideology and the role of language. A brief explanation of these is helpful in understanding the basis of this study.

## 3.2. The Use of the Terms Gender and Representation in the Study

### 3.2.1. Conceptualising Gender

At the centre of this study is the subordination of women, both in society and in the Sunday Times, and key to this is the question of gender. Gender is an integral part of any social group's structure of domination and subordination, and several scholars have argued for the adoption of gender, as opposed to women, as an analytical category (De Lauretis 1987; Devor 1989). There are several conceptualisations of gender.

Gender, according to De Lauretis (1987: 4), is a representation both in the sense in which every word or sign refers to or represents its referent. It is a representation of a relation. Since gender constructs a (social) relation between one entity and other entities, it is relational. This relation is one of belonging to a class, a group, or a category (De Lauretis 1987; Devor 1989). Gender assigns to one entity a position both within a class and in relation to other pre-constituted classes.

As a category, gender is used to classify people as men and women, and most societies use gender as a major cognitive schema for understanding the world around them (Devor 1989:46). This cultural conception of men and women as two complementary yet mutually exclusive categories into which all human beings are placed constitute within each culture a gender system, a symbolic system or system of meanings that correlates sex to cultural contents according to social values and hierarchies (De Lauretis 1987:5). Gender is also a sociocultural construct and a semiotic apparatus. It is a system of representation, which assigns meaning (identity, value, and status in the social hierarchies) to individuals within society.

Therefore, gender, both as representation and as self-representation, is a product of various social technologies. It is a construction (De Lauretis 1987:2; Devor 1989:147). As a social construct, gender points to the fact that gender differences are the product of social relations. Gender is socially constructed through institutional discourses (such as family, school, and the media) and other social practices that have the power to control the field of social meaning and thus, promote and implant representations of gender (De Lauretis 1987). It is continually constructed in the media through artistic practices and news texts, among others. Since gender is a product of various discourses, it is also a

discursive construct. This study, in view of this, is also constructing gender in its deconstruction of gender.

Feminist theory also defines the female-gendered subject as one that is at once inside and outside the ideology of gender. As De Lauretis argues, if gender “is a set of social relations, obtaining throughout social existence, then gender is indeed a primary instance of ideology” (1987:9). Devor (1989:147) also outlines how gender, as an ideology, conditions members of society to see an unbroken causative link leading from physical sex to gender status to gender roles, and encourages people to see and govern all human situations through a binary of men and women.

The dominant gender schema, as Devor (1989) argues, teaches members of society that their genders are the natural results of their physical beings, and that their gender roles are likewise natural outgrowths of the demands of their bodily predispositions.

Within cultural studies, gender is held to be a social construction intrinsically implicated in matters of representation (Baker 2000:257). The characteristics used to define gender, our understanding or meaning of what constitutes ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’, are infinitely variable over time and place (Devor 1989; Eagleton 1996). They change constantly in time and between different cultures and social groups. In this sense, gender identities are situated in both time and place.

In this study, gender will be used in its conceptualisation as a social construction of our concepts of masculinities and femininity. Gender is not a property of bodies or something originally existent in human beings; it is the property of “the set of effects produced in bodies, behaviours, and social relations” (De Lauretis 1987:3). As a social construction, gender raises issues of hierarchy and power, which inevitably, influences the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

### **3.2.2. Theories of Representation**

Issues of representation figure much in cultural studies’ work. ‘Representation’ as opposed to ‘reflection’ implies the active work of making things mean (Hall 1995). It is bound up with the process of signification, giving us a selective view of their subject matter that fits the dominant social and cultural views of the subject (Burton 2002). This section, following Hall (1997), outlines some of the theories of representation. The

concept of representation connects meaning and language to culture. Hall (1997:15) identifies three theories or accounts about how language is used to represent the world: as the reflective, the intentional and the constructionist approaches.

According to the reflective approach to representation, meaning lies in the object, person, idea or event in the real world. In this sense, language functions as a mirror, to reflect the true meaning as it already exists in the world (Hall 1997:24). This approach is flawed however, because there are certain words or images that we fully understand but are used to refer to worlds that are imaginary and do not refer to objects, persons or events in the real world.

The intentional approach to representation, on the other hand, holds that it is the speaker or the author who imposes his or her unique meaning on the world through language (Hall 1997:25). This approach is also flawed because it does not take into account the social character of language. As Hall (1997) rightly points out, individuals cannot be the sole or unique source of meanings in language.

The third approach, which has already been alluded to, is the constructionist approach that recognises the social character of language and argues that neither things in themselves nor the individual users of language can fix meaning in language. Meaning is a social production; it is a practice (Hall 1995a). The world has to be made to mean, and as Hall (1997:25) points out:

[i]t is social actors who use the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning, to make the world meaningful and to communicate about the world meaningfully to others.

Meaning is constructed or produced in and through language (a constituent of signs), including the language in news reports. While structuralism sees language as a closed self-referential system, in which meaning depends on the 'principles of difference' (Inglis 1990:94), the constructionist approach proposes a complex and mediated relationship between the material world, our conceptual images and language which, governed by the cultural and linguistic codes, produce meaning (Hall 1997:35). What this insight put at issue, as Hall (1995:67) asserts, are questions of which meanings are systematically and regularly constructed around particular events, or indeed around particular groups of people such as women politicians. Essentially, as Hall asserts,

to construct this rather than that account require[s] the specific choice of certain means (selection) and their articulation together through the practice of meaning production (combination) (1995:68, his emphasis).

Meanings, as alluded to earlier, have social effects that include, in this case, sustaining or challenging the subordination of women.

It is this constructionist approach, also referred to as the ‘cultural turn’ in the human and social sciences, which has had the most significant impact on cultural studies (Hall 1997:15). I shall adopt this same approach in my analysis of the Sunday Times’ representation of women politicians. The Sunday Times does not just reflect, but actively constructs the social political positions of South African women politicians, and the particular meanings and frameworks provided have the social effect of either sustaining or challenging the subordination of women. Discourse, as MacDonald (2003) asserts, always carries latent ideological consequences, although the activation of these depends on specific contexts and conditions.

The preceding discussion of the theoretical perspectives of cultural studies and discourse theory has revealed key insights that endorse a reconsideration of what is meant by ‘news’. The forgoing insights, together with those from the sociology of news production help in demonstrating that news is a ‘socially constructed’ product, rather than a ‘reflection of reality’

### **3.3. The Media, News Construction and Representations of Women Politicians**

#### **3.3.1. The Media and Women: A Brief Introduction**

The media increasingly provide the ‘common ground’ of information, symbols and ideals for most social groups. Regrettably, women’s representation in the media, as Gallagher (2001) rightly observes, helps to keep them in a place of relative powerlessness. Barker (1999) outlines how feminist approaches in cultural studies have explored the representation of women in popular culture and within literature to argue that women across the globe are constituted as the second-sex, subordinate to men.

According to Barker “women have subject positions constructed for them which place them in the patriarchal work of domesticity and beautification” (1999:107). In some instances, women are rendered invisible through the non-representation of their points of

view or perspectives on the world (Gallagher 2001). When they are 'visible' in media content, the manner of their representation reflects the biases and assumptions of those who define social reality, mostly men. The under representation of women, including the stereotypes may, as Tuchman (1996) argues, symbolically capture the position of women in society. Gerbner (1972) also asserts that, just as representation in the media signifies social existence, so too do under-representation and (by extension) trivialisation and annihilation (cited in Tuchman 1996:12).

News, as Hartley (1994) contends, is not simply about men, but it is largely by men and seen through men. The 1995 cross-national quantitative study on the representation of women in the media in seventy-one countries revealed that fewer women, in proportion to their population in society, were represented in the news (Media Watch 1995, cited in Gallagher 2001:4). From a sample that encompassed newspapers, radio and television, the study found that only 17% of the world's news subjects were women. Women were also least likely to be subjects in the fields of politics and government representing only 7% of all news subjects in this field, and economy/business, 9%. Women were most likely to make the news in terms of health and social issues (33%) and were relatively well represented in arts and entertainment news (31%). In comparison to the proportion of the population they represent in most societies, these figures attest to the extent of the under representation of women in the media, and should force us to interrogate the effects of such representations.

The discourse of the news media treats men and women in terms of different sets of categories and stereotypes. To sustain and maintain the existing social relations in the news reports, feminine virtues of passive goodness, personal service to others and devotion to the domestic sphere in patriarchal thought are emphasised in the representation of women; a representation which by definition precludes women from productive activity in the public sphere (Ballaster et al. 1991:14). When women make breakthroughs in spheres dominated by men, the media, "rather than keeping pace with this achievement discredit, isolate, and undercut the women (Gerbner 1972; cited in Tuchman 1996:12). This differentiation, as Fowler (1991) asserts, reflects society's different ways of treating men and women, but also cautions us against being complacent in accepting that the relationship between language and society is merely reflective.

### **3.3.2. News Construction and its Effects on the Representation of Women Politicians**

The issue of media and the representation of women have generated a number of theoretical arguments, some of which are worth mentioning in order to understand the political stance of this study. News texts, due both to the political importance of their direct, informational role in producing a special type of popular social knowledge and to the complementary directness of their mode of address, have attracted special attention and documentation from media analysis (Corner 1983). News also presents a particularly important example of the power of all language in the social construction of reality and social relations (Fowler 1991:8). Thus, it is necessary and relevant to analyse the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times' sampled 2004 electoral news items.

Talking about visual culture, Sobopha (2005:118) argues “women have always been visible as objects ... and rarely have they been acknowledged as subjects of cultural production in their own right”. This can be extended to women's representation in the news. This section aims to illustrate that news is socially constructed and to further highlight some of the implications of this for the representation of women.

Journalism's self-understanding is guided by a positivist faith in empiricism, the belief that the external world can be successfully perceived and understood (Dahlgren 1992; Golding and Elliott 1979; Reese 1997; Schudson 2000). From the sociology of news production and the constructionist position however, this understanding is deceptive. In addition, Dahlgren (1992:10) notes how the canons of journalism present a picture of individuals armed with their professional knowledge, experience and ethical frameworks that work in the context of media organisations and report the events that happen out in the world.

#### **3.3.2.1. The Sociology of News Production**

To help understand what constitutes 'news', perspectives from the sociology of news production, particularly the social organisational and the 'cultural' approaches, have examined the practice of journalism and how events are selected for presentation as news (Schudson 2000). So for instance, insights from studies using the social organisational

approach attest to the fact that journalists' work practices are constrained by organisational and occupational demands, including work routines, the social organisation of journalists and the bureaucratisation of social perception. All these issues inevitably lead to the 'social construction' of reality (Dahlgren 1992; Schudson 2000), which echoes Bennett's (1995) argument that the media do not passively reflect a pre-existing reality. Also embedded in the canons of journalism are professional norms and values, which are profoundly ideological and gendered (Soloski 1997:138). This has implications for the representation of women in the news.

In an effort to maximise returns on economic investment and deal with the uncertainties of newsbreaks, news organisations routinise news coverage through the establishment of routines and news beats (see Ettema et al. 1997; Soloski 1997). Arguably, journalists' work at the Sunday Times is accomplished through routines, news beats and conventions. News beats, as Pingree and Hawkins (1978:122) assert, serve as an additional hurdle for women's representation in the news because "women and women's issues [are] generally not on a news beat [structure]". If this is the case for the Sunday Times, the representation of women politicians may arguably be affected.

The choice of which beats are covered results from the interplay of news professionalism and the resources of news organisation (Soloski 1997). The norm of professionalism is itself a discourse that determines the legitimacy and value of news beats. This affects the gathering and reporting of news by influencing the selection and presentation of news events and sources. This process is also influenced by the news organisation through its decisions and its budgetary controls. Ettema et al. (1997) note how organisations make prior decisions about where news is likely to occur and how when news breaks out in unexpected places (e.g. accidents or disasters), decisions about relocating staff resources become necessary. Journalists' reliance on routine news sources and the use of news beats shapes news in several ways. The use of news beats necessitates the omission of certain events from making it on the media agenda.

The 'cultural' approach to news production, according to Schudson (2000), also provides very useful insights into understanding what news is. A 'cultural' approach, as opposed to the social organisational approach, emphasises the constraining force of broad cultural traditions and symbolic systems. It reveals how the symbols used in relation to

'facts' determine what is news, and helps explain widespread representations in the news that transcend structures of ownership or patterns of work relation (Schudson 2000). The media operate within the culture and are obliged to use cultural symbols of their society. As Hall (1995a:98) points out, "[a]ny society/culture tends, with varying degrees of closure, to impose its classifications of the social and cultural and political world".

A cultural account of news is also relevant to understanding journalists' vague rendering of how they know 'news' when they see it. Real events do occur. However, because events are not intrinsically newsworthy, they only become 'news' when selected for inclusion in news reports (Fiske 1994; Fowler 1991; Hartley 1994). As Golding and Elliott (1979) have outlined, news production is a sequence of gathering raw material, processing it into the required product, and distributing the product to an intended market. It begins with a systematic sorting and selecting of events and topics according to a socially constructed set of categories. As such, "news is the end product of patterned routines whose management is the process of news production" (Golding and Elliott 1979:18), and like any product, is therefore subject to pressures of supply and demand. It is also the product of bureaucratically structured organisations.

Because of the vast range of events that happen daily, journalists employ a complex set of criteria called 'news values' to aid them in detecting which events qualify as 'news' or are 'newsworthy' (Fowler 1991; Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1982; Hall 1981). News values, as Hartley (1994: 80) asserts, are neither natural nor neutral; they are an ideological code, which sees the world in a very particular way. Furthermore, news values are gendered. They are man-made, in both the generic and the gender sense of 'man' (Hartley 1994:81). This has implications for the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times in terms of both frequency and manner, in comparison with the frequency and manner of presentation of men politicians. Despite their ideological and gendered nature, news values are the working rules, comprising a corpus of occupational lore that implicitly and often expressly explains and guides newsroom practice (Golding and Elliott 1979). However, 'news values', as Hall (1981:234) asserts, are one of the most opaque structures of meaning in modern society [yet] all 'true journalists' are supposed to possess it [even if] few can or are willing to identify and define it.

News values derive, as Golding and Elliott (1979) assert, from un-stated or implicit assumptions or judgements about two immediate determinants of news making - perceptions of the audience and the availability of material. Several scholars (Fowler 1991; Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1991) outline how news values serve as qualities of events or their journalistic construction, whose relative absence or presence recommends them for inclusion in the news.

A number of 'news values' are used to determine the newsworthiness of events, including, among others, the size of the event, its importance, its meaningfulness (cultural proximity and relevance), its negativity, unexpectedness, reference to elites and personalisation (Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1994). The most frequently cited reason for including a particular item in the news is its importance, which is taken to mean that the reported event has considerable significance for large numbers of people in the audience, and is often applied to political news. Since "most women are denied the decision-making power that would make their actions news", women as potential newsmakers are placed in a very difficult position by the definition of news as its importance (Pingree and Hawkins 1978:122). For women, without power and the consequent prominence, only their most obstructive actions are newsworthy.

Hall (1995a) outlines that there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding, i.e. the former cannot determine or guarantee the latter, though there has to be some degree of reciprocity for the communicative exchange to be effective. Thus, while these news values are deployed to encode events as newsworthy, they cannot prescribe how those events will be decoded.

The news value of personalisation also has implications on the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times, since it emphasises the need to make stories comprehensible by reducing complex historical processes and institutions to the actions of individuals. Events are seen as the actions of people or individuals (Hartley 1994). Inevitably, most news is about people, and mostly about individuals (Gans 1979; Golding and Elliott 1979). The focus on individuals promotes feelings of identification, empathy or disapproval (Fowler 1991:15; Hartley 1994:78). Individual reference is heightened by referring to one's age or personal appearance, and more marked in the representation of women. Fowler (1991) also notes that while media representations of men were

characterised by mentions of occupational and political success, women's marital and family relations were unnecessarily foregrounded. Private individuals in the news, if they happen to be women, are often wholly characterised in terms of family relationships. Media representations of men, Fowler maintains, are not usually presented in insistently domestic terms, but emphasise an identity outside the home and family.

Audience considerations, as alluded to above, also effects the content of news by influencing the selection of items which become news and by suggesting ways in which those items may be presented (Gans 1979; Golding and Elliott 1979). This also has implications for the representation of women, both in terms of incidence and manner. As Golding and Elliott argue,

[t]he commitment of news to convey objective, factual accounts of events, and at the same time to make them meaningful and comprehensive to audiences [is incompatible because] even the simplest of contexts or explanatory additions will compromise complete objectivity (1979:17, emphasis in original).

Undoubtedly, this list of news values gives us an idea about the kind of events that are likely to be selected and presented to the audience. For certain events that fail to live up to its news potential, the news angle, a journalistic device for converting raw material into a story, is used to inject newsworthiness into an event (Golding and Elliott 1979). Though news values are institutionalised as the right way of doing journalism, we have seen that news values are ideological and gendered (Hartley 1994), and this has an impact on the representation of women politicians in the news media. It is evident thus, that

news provides only a partial account of the world, an account whose deficiencies are consistently rooted in the working routines and beliefs which sustain the daily practices of news production (Golding and Elliott 1979:17).

Even if news attempts to be a comprehensive account of significant events in the world, yet also, being finite, it has to be selective. Thus, our knowledge of the world beyond our everyday experiences is structured by the symbols, values and selective criteria of others.

From the foregoing we cannot but argue that news is socially constructed. Both the selection and transformation of events into news stories are guided by reference, generally unconscious, to ideas and beliefs. This entails that news does not simply reflect events or society, but is actively involved in the construction of that same reality it claims

to be reflecting. The social constructionist approach to representation is very clear in its elaboration of this argument. It is the argument of this study therefore that, news is socially constructed in a patriarchal society where women and men are not equal.

### **3.3.2.2. News as Discourse**

News is a very specific example of ‘language-in-use’ of socially structured meaning. It is, as Hartley (1994:7) asserts, a discourse generated by a language in relation to a social structure. It is a practice, which, far from reflecting social reality and empirical facts intervenes in ‘the social construction of reality’ (Fowler 1991:2). According to Hartley (1994), one reason for studying news is that it comes to us as a pre-existing discourse of an impersonal social institution that is also an industry. To understand news therefore, we need to examine the language in which it is encoded, as well as the social forces that determine how its messages are both produced and ‘read’. This echoes Hall’s (1995a) outline of the processes of encoding and decoding of messages.

Furthermore, as Hartley (1994) outlines, news cannot be understood as a self-contained sign-system independent of the conventions and characteristics of language. What makes news meaningful, Hartley emphasises, is the language in which it is encoded. By articulating certain codes or elements in a different manner, different meanings may be evoked. As Lewis (2005:13) asserts, “[r]eading coding processes can ... locate moments when the signifiers are dislodged from the established routes to represent what is unexpected, compound and new”. Thus, critical attention to coding can yield important insights into language or news, by revealing whether the codes are subversive, oppositional and innovative, or not. Hall (1995a), for instance, articulates three reading patterns, where the decoder may take a dominant-hegemonic, a negotiated or an oppositional position to the codes in which a message is encoded.

In her analysis of photographs taken by black South African women to show how codes may be encoded differently to achieve different meanings, Lewis (2005) notes how two photographers, Muholi and Masondo, uncover ways of viewing black women’s bodies and sexuality in relation to their agency, choice and independence. She observes how, for instance, the two photographers use coding elements of photographic compositions that transcend standard images of African women (2005:15). Similarly, news may be coded in ways that provide progressive perceptions of women.

News, as mentioned above, consists of signs that are combined by means of codes (Hartley 1994). It is also important to understand that news is not a separate force, outside the social relations it seeks to report, but very much a part of them. Indeed part of what determines the discourse of the news is the way the news-makers themselves act within the constraints, pressures, structures and norms that bring the larger world of social relations to bear on their work (Hartley 1994:47).

The study of news as discourse analyses the way meanings are constructed and / or the ways that public discourse is influenced by activating salient and pre-existing narratives that explain underlying cognitions of knowledge, attitudes, norms, values and ideologies (Manning-Miller 1986). Consequently, from a broader perspective, news reflects and in return shapes the prevailing values of a society in a particular historical context.

What has convincingly emerged from the foregoing discussion is the argument that ‘news is socially constructed’, in terms of both the manner in which events are selected for presentation as news and how the selected events are signified. Perspectives from both the sociology of news production and the constructionist theory of language endorse this argument. Both the selection and the signification of events are related to the social context with its inequalities. The arguments above imply that

the media are not apart from social reality, passively reflecting and giving back to the world its self-image; they are a part of social reality, contributing to its contours and to the logic and direction of its development via the socially articulated way in which they shape our perceptions (Bennett 1995:288).

This argument also applies to the Sunday Times. It is for this reason that this study aims to analyse critically how the Sunday Times is actively involved in the construction of the subordinate social political positions that South African women politicians occupy. It is necessary, therefore, to critically read and analyze the Sunday Time’s representation of women politicians, by looking at the kinds of meanings and frameworks that were provided for the readers in their understanding of women politicians, using Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis. My immediate assumption is that most of the issues raised in my discussion of media and the representation of women can be discerned from the Sunday Times’ representation of women politicians. Therefore, this study can also serve

as an extension of prior studies in this subject, except this time using a different theoretical and methodological framework, situated within the South African context.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the theoretical perspectives that inform the constructionist approach of this study. It outlined how the cultural studies' perspectives of culture, meaning and power provide a useful way for analysing the Sunday Times' representation of women politicians. The chapter also highlighted the constitutive nature of language, and therefore of the Sunday Times' news reports, and specifically outlined the role of discourse in the reproduction of the social structure. My understanding and use of the terms 'gender' and 'representation' in this study were also explained. The chapter also drew upon perspectives from the constructionist theory of language and the sociology of news production to critique the 'reflective' view of news to substantiate the argument that news is a social construction. Theoretical arguments concerning media and the representation of women were also outlined. The next chapter presents the methods and procedures that will be used in the collection and analysis of data on the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

In the study, I took a constructionist approach to representation to analyse the ‘frames’ and ‘meanings’ that the Sunday Times provided for its readers’ understanding of women politicians. While the previous chapter outlined the theoretical perspectives that inform this study, this chapter outlines the research methods and procedures that I used. The methodology employed in this study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods, specifically quantitative content analysis and Fairclough’s method for critical discourse analysis. The chapter describes and explains the research process, the sampling procedures, and the modes of data collection and analysis employed.

#### **4.1. Research Methods**

Research methods, as Deacon et al. (1999) outline, are ways of gathering the evidence required by competing definitions of what counts as a legitimate and worthwhile approach to the investigation of social and cultural life. Two major paradigms of research methods are quantitative and qualitative (Bryman 1988; 2001), which are also referred to as the ‘positivist’, and the ‘critical’ and ‘interpretive’ approaches respectively (Bryman 1984; Deacon et al. 1999; Gunter 2002). The two methods can be viewed as exhibiting a set of distinctive but contrasting preoccupations that reflect, as Bryman (2001:276) asserts, epistemologically grounded beliefs about what constitutes knowledge.

##### **4.1.1. The Nature of Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research draws the bulk of its intellectual inspiration from the methodologies and procedures of nineteenth century natural sciences, and from certain tenets of positivism in particular (Bryman 1988; 2001). Epistemologically, positivism posits a ‘real’, independently existing reality that can be comprehended by the objective, detached, and value-free inquirer, who stands independently of the context (Neuman 1997:14; see also Bryman 1984). The quantitative approach is characterised as exhibiting a preoccupation with operational definitions, objectivity, replicability,

causality and generalisations, among other concerns. The question of objectivity is interrogated later in my discussion of content analysis as a research technique.

This approach, in addition, is conceptualised by its practitioners as having a logical structure in which theories determine the problems that researchers address in the form of hypotheses about causal connections between the concepts, which are the constituent of the hypotheses derived from general theories (Bryman 1988). Quantitative research, as Neuman (1997) asserts, examines variables using statistical relationships between them to discuss causal relationships. The data so collected are then analysed so that the causal connection specified by the hypotheses can be verified or rejected.

The main techniques used for data collection include social surveys, experimental designs, and secondary analysis of previously collected data, structured observations and content analysis of communication content, such as the newspaper.

#### **4.1.2. The Nature of Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research, unlike quantitative research, derives its intellectual inspiration from traditions that are distinctively different from the positivist orientation. The most fundamental characteristic of this tradition, as Bryman (1984, 1988) asserts, is its express commitment to seeing the social world, i.e., events, actions, norms, and values, among other things, from the point of view of the actor. More specifically, the interpretive tradition is centrally concerned, not with establishing relations of cause and effect, but with exploring the ways that people make sense of the world, and how they express these understandings through language, sound and social rituals, among other things (Deacon et al. 1999; also see Berg 1998).

Qualitative researchers, accordingly, are concerned with exploring how meaning is constructed and circulated through cultural practices within specific socio-historical contexts (Bryman 1988, 2001; Denzin and Lincoln 2000; Jensen 2002). The textual contents of media, including their materiality, scheduling and social uses therefore, are studied in order to explore how the media generate meaning. The qualitative method's preference for contextualisation entails that meaningful actions, events or behaviour should be understood in the context of meaning systems. This engenders a style of research in which the meaning that people ascribe to their own behaviour and that of

others have to be set in the context of the values, practices, and underlying structures of that particular entity, such as media. The basic message being conveyed is that we can understand events only when they are situated in the wider social and historical contexts. However, the reality one observes depends on how one looks at it, and the meanings it conveys depend on one's allegiances and commitments (Hartley 1994; Inglis 1993).

Some of the techniques for data collection associated with this method include unstructured interviews, participant observation, ethnography and textual analysis. For this study, I employed both quantitative and qualitative methods.

#### **4.1.3. The Combination of Methods**

Quantitative and qualitative research methods have been at the centre of debates about their use within the social sciences in relation to their nature, their different capabilities and the philosophical issues that underpin them (Bryman 1988, 2001; Flick 1998). Though some of the earlier social scientists (Filstead 1979 and Guba 1985, cited in Bryman 1988) regarded these two methods as mutually incompatible, Deacon et al. (1999) contend that most of the questions facing communications research are best tackled by combining different research methods, that is, by way of triangulation (Bryman 2001:274; Denzin 1989:230; Flick 1998:230). Denzin (1989) identifies the four types of triangulation as data triangulation (the use of different sources of data), investigator triangulation (the use of different observers or interviews to detect or minimise researchers' bias), theory triangulation (approaching data with different theoretical perspectives and hypotheses), and methodological triangulation (the use of within-method or between-methods).

In this study, I used the between-methods type of triangulation. This type of triangulation is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods that attempts to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:5). This study benefited from this combination of methods since, as Bryman (1988:173) has pointed out, quantitative and qualitative methods have different strengths and weaknesses, and one method strengthens the weakness of the other. In addition, if each method reveals different aspects or slightly different facets of the same reality (Berg 1998:4), then every method is a different line of sight directed towards the

same point. By employing both quantitative and qualitative methods, I was attempting to obtain a better and more substantial picture of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

#### **4.2. Research Design and Methods**

There are different approaches one can use in the analysis of the Sunday Times. One may decide, for instance, to establish the frequency with which certain kinds of stories occur in the newspaper or the degree to which stories slant towards a particular perspective. Alternatively, one may look closely at the structure of a particular newspaper story, to examine how the words, sentences and paragraphs it is composed of combine and interact to privilege a particular meaning for the event the story revolves around, or to reproduce a contradiction in the way the event and its associations are conventionally viewed (Deacon et al. 1999:114). Accordingly, this study counted the number of electoral news items and news actors/sources carried in the Sunday Times, and examined certain words and sentences for their meanings. The choice of techniques for use in the analysis of such characteristics, as Bryman (1988) and Deacon et al. (1999) assert, are guided by the aim of the study and the research questions being asked or concerns being addressed.

As mentioned earlier, this study employed techniques of both quantitative and qualitative nature, specifically content analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) respectively, in a two-stage research process to gather and analyse the Sunday Times' political news content. Different methods, as I shall soon explain, may be appropriate to the different stages and foci of the research. For this study, the quantitative analysis was useful in establishing the number of electoral news items carried in the sampled period, including the number and gender of news actors/sources used. The study also examined the ways in which certain meanings that contribute towards sustaining the status quo, i.e. the subordination of women politicians to men politicians, were constructed in the Sunday Times by employing a qualitative type of analysis. In the section below, I begin by explaining the use of content analysis as a research technique and then outline the specific procedure for content data collection and analysis that I employed in this study.

This is followed by a brief explanation of discourse analysis and an outline of Fairclough's method for CDA as it was employed in this study.

#### **4.2.1. Content Analysis as a Research Technique**

Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context (Krippendorff 1980:21). Berelson (1952:147) defines it as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication”. Both definitions contain the notion of ‘objectivity’, which critics of positivist science have criticised, as Deacon et al. (1999) note, that objectivity in content analysis as in any other kind of scientific research is an impossible ideal. Content analysis cannot provide an objective description of the content of communication that it promises because, as Winston (1990:62) emphasises, arbitrary decisions intrude at all stages of the research process. Consequently,

what you count, how much you sample, how you categorise ... and all [other] decisions are ... produced by the researcher's subjective judgement of what is significant (Deacon et al. 1999:131).

Content analysis does not analyse everything there is to analyse in a text, instead, the content analyst delineates certain dimensions or aspects of the text for analysis, and in doing so, makes a subjective choice, though generally informed by the theoretical framework and ideas, which circumscribe the research (Hansen et al. 1998). What this means, as Deacon et al. (1999:131) assert, is that content analysis does not deliver a truly ‘objective’, value free perspective. Content analysts, as noted above, make subjective judgements of what is significant and as such, they cannot reify the findings as though they offer incontrovertible facts about the material analysed. Despite this, communication researchers should aim for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of communications, bearing in mind, as Winston (1990:50-51) asserts, that

it is one thing to perceive misrepresentation, bias, cultural skewedness, distortion (in the media) and quite another to document that perception. The technique available for such work is content analysis.

The purpose of content analysis, according to Deacon et al. (1999), is to quantify manifest features of a large number of texts, and the resultant data used to make broader

inferences about the processes and politics of representation. Hansen et al. (1998) outline how, using content analysis, a researcher can identify and count the occurrences of specifically selected characteristics or dimensions of texts and thus, be able to say something about the messages, images, representations of such texts and their wider social significance. Furthermore, content analysis provides a systematic means for quantifying textual and thematic features across a large number of texts (Deacon et al. 1999; Hansen et al. 1998), and can help provide some indication of relative prominences and absences of key characteristics in the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times' news texts.

In media research, content analysis has been used more often to examine how news, drama, advertising and entertainment output reflect social and cultural issues, values, and phenomena (Hansen et al. 1998). Among other things, the symbolic under-representation or non-representation of different groups and types of people in society, including women, has been a central concern of content analysis for a long time now. Overall, content analysis remains the only available tool for establishing maps, without which no case can be sustained, regarding bias in the representation of, for instance women politicians in the news, except based on one-off examples (Winston 1990).

Accordingly, the Media Watch's 1995 cross-national quantitative study of women's portrayal in the media (newspapers, radio and television) in seventy-one countries found that only 17% of the world's news subjects were women (see Gallagher 2001; MISA/GL 2003). Similarly, a one-day study of 'Who makes the news' in 70 countries by the Global Media Monitoring Projects (GMMP) in 2000, and a one-month study by the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) for Southern Africa conducted in 2002 revealed that women were underrepresented in the news (MISA/GL 2003). Both studies show that women constituted only 18% and 17% of all news sources respectively.

There are certain aspects, however, that a content analyst should consider. According to Winston, all relevant contexts must be studied in terms of all the relevant categories, and for that reason,

findings must be based on a sufficiently large body of output [such as] a period of months for news ... so that the true regularities of ideological production can be described without the distortion of particular news incidents or [events] skewing the results (1990:61).

The researcher, Winston (1990) asserts, must also ensure that inferences as to the intention of the text are kept minimal. This is because news, for instance, is a manufactured artefact and its process of production relate to the patterns and practices that exist within the news industry. He also insists that

inferences as to effects should be predicated on the existence of other ‘maps’ or accounts of the phenomena in hand, or on linguistic or other semiological techniques that minimise the excesses of positivism (1990:61).

Accordingly, newspaper content analysis should make its inferences based on comparison between the newspaper’s structuring of the same reality, and therefore reduce the researcher’s own ideological position.

Babbie (1989) and Bryman (2001) outline several advantages of content analysis in media research. Firstly, content analysis is an unobtrusive method. The content analyst, as Babbie (1989:309) observes, seldom has any effect on the subject, that is, the content being studied, because the method uses texts that are already made. As such, it is non-reactive (Bryman 2001). Furthermore, content analysis is a highly flexible method and can be applied to a wide variety of different kinds of texts. It is also a very transparent method, which clearly specifies the coding scheme and sampling procedures that enable replications and follow-up studies feasible (Bryman 2001:189). It also allows a certain amount of longitudinal analysis without difficulty, and thus can for instance, be used to trace the changes in the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times over time, by tracking back in time to earlier news publications. It is also a safe and economic (in terms of finance and time) method in comparison to other methods, such as field research, surveys or experiments. Whereas the event under study may no longer exist in a field research, or indeed costly to redo a survey or an experiment, the content analyst can always go back to the texts and re-code the material. Furthermore, while it may not be feasible for an individual to undertake a survey, a single person can undertake a content analysis.

From the foregoing discussion, content analysis seems to be a useful method for the analysis of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times. However, like other research techniques, content analysis also has its own limitations (Babbie 1989;

Bryman 2001). Firstly, there is potential for making invalid inferences, especially when coding latent rather than manifest content. It is also almost impossible to devise coding manuals that do not entail some interpretation on the part of coders. When coders interpret the coding manuals differently, there is a danger that they may be inconsistencies between the coder's interpretations (Deacon et al 1999:128). This is why it is always important to pilot the coding schedules. Another disadvantage of content analysis is that questions about the authenticity, credibility and representativeness of the study material might arise. A major limitation perhaps is that it is difficult to ascertain the answers to 'why' questions (Bryman 2001:191). As a result, Deacon et al. (1999) indicate how it is not well suited to studying 'deep' questions about textual and discursive forms. Such questions are best handled with qualitative methods. Some of these weaknesses will be overcome by employing a qualitative method.

Several stages are involved in any content analysis, and these will become clear as I outline how I collected and analysed the data on the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times using this method.

#### **4.2.1.1. Population, Sample and Analytical Categories**

For this study, a four-month period, January 1, 2004 to April 30, 2004, of the Sunday Times' election news coverage was sampled to constitute the population for analysis. This period arguably represents a period when electoral news coverage was highest, since it comprises the last four-months leading to the elections on April 27, 2004. The period also coincides with South Africa's celebration of ten years of democracy, and ten years since the democratic government put in place measures to advance the position of women, including their increased participation in the political process and decision-making positions. At this time, 30% of all parliamentarians were women (Goetz and Hassim 2003). I was also assuming that the main frames governing the coverage of the elections were put in place and reinforced during this same period, thus providing a good opportunity for analysing how the Sunday Times represents women politicians.

The Sunday Times, an English-language newspaper owned by the Black consortium in control of Johnnic (Emdon 1998), is the largest national weekly and had the largest readership levels of 3,239,000 in 2004 (SAARF 2004). As explained in Chapter 2, this

paper also has the largest circulation, and further had the highest representation of women sources in 2002, though most of these were represented in non-news items (MISA/GL 2003). This paper, as such, is of great importance to the South African press landscape. I decided to focus on the print, and not the electronic, media because it was quite easy for me to access archived newspapers. Furthermore, due to practical constraints of cost and time, I decided to focus specifically on one newspaper title, the Sunday Times.

The basic 'unit of analysis' used in the study was the individual news item. A news item is defined here as any Sunday Times 'news story', 'editorial', 'feature article' or 'letter to the editor' of a political nature. For inclusion in the sample, only news items that met the following selection criteria and rules were sampled:

1. The news item made specific reference to the 2004 South African elections;
2. The news item had the 2004 elections as its main focus; and
3. The news item was locally originating, and not foreign.

Based on these qualifying criteria, the sampled material was then thematically analysed, to reveal patterns of gender of news actors or sources, amount of coverage, and reference to selected subject matters, among others. Theme analysis does not rely on the use of specific words as basic content elements, but relies upon the coder to recognise certain 'themes', ideas or subject matters in the text, and then to allocate these to predetermined categories (see Deacon et al. 1999:118). No standard list of things to be analysed in a content analysis exists. However, through preliminary readings of the Sunday Times, my specific interest in both the frequency and the manner of representation of women politicians, and drawing on insights from cultural studies and discourse theory, several analytical categories were identified as useful. These were drawn from the following hypotheses or assumptions.

Firstly, women politicians were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times during the sampled period. Secondly, the representation of women politicians tended to highlight the women's capability to hold public office, their family relations, and their physical and personal attributes. Finally, the Sunday Times overall represented women politicians in a manner that perpetuated their subordinate status. In view of these hypotheses, I coded the sampled news items for the following variables.

All news items were coded for the date of publication mainly to identify when a particular news item was carried, and an identification number, which helped to establish the total number of election news items carried by the Sunday Times during the four-month period, was assigned to each news item. Looking at the total number of news items, it was possible for me to calculate how many of them carried news about women politicians, and helped me estimate the occurrence of women politicians in the news. The location or placement of each news item in the publication was also coded. The location and placement of a news item says a lot about the meaning of the event and the news actors/sources accompanying the event. A news item that appears on the front page, as opposed to one that appears on subsequent pages, carries with it a certain level of prominence, which also assigns a certain level of credibility and importance to the news actor/source. In addition, news items that appear on odd-numbered pages are considered more important than those on even-numbered pages are, so are the news actors/sources.

The genre or type of news item was also coded. Although the differentiation of news genres into a 'news story', 'editorial', 'feature article', or 'letter to the editor' were used mainly as basic identifier categories for general classification and comparison of media output in this study, Hansen et al. (1998:107) outline how different media genres set different limits for what can be articulated by whom through what format and context.

The size of each news item in terms of column inches and word count was also coded. Quantity is an important aspect of representation, as this determines how much media space is allocated for an actor/source to provide his or her own definition of reality. During the analysis, I counted and recorded the number of news sources/actors presented in each news item. Key to this study is the issue of gender, an important aspect of media representations (Hansen et al. 1998). Consequently, I also noted the gender of the news actors/sources, which was useful for establishing the number of women and men the Sunday Times used as news actors/sources. For news items with more than one news actor, coding was done for the three most prominent actors in decreasing order of prominence starting with the most prominent actor. An actor was considered prominent if he or she featured prominently in terms of: 1) the size of the news item about him or her, and; (2) the position or placement of the news source in the story. This was done only for politicians, who are the focus of the study.

I then coded the politician's gender, the number of words used to represent them, and the subject matters (explained below) mentioned in their representation. Word count was used to roughly estimate the space allocated to the politician, bearing in mind however that, space may be affected by the typography of the headline and the size of the photograph accompanying the news item. Given the onerous task of estimating, say, the column centimetres the words in the body text occupy, and then adding that to the column centimetres of the headline and the photography, the latter two were used mainly to aid in determining whether the news actor or source was prominently figured or not. Since headlines and photographs play an important role in aiding the reading of a news item, a news actor or source that was figured in either of the two or both was considered to have been more prominently figured than one who was figured only in the body text.

The gender, word count and subject matter variables were useful for showing the differential presence of women and men politicians in the Sunday Times. Social constructionists are particularly interested in coding actors to see who successfully makes claims about and thus helps to construct social reality. The gender variable was valuable in examining the source-reporter relationships, the source-power and power in the public realm (Hansen et al. 1998). We know from the sociology of news for instance that, news values are used in the selection of news events and the actors/sources, using such variable as prominence and relevance of the source. By considering which news actors/sources were used frequently, I was able to speculate whether women or men politicians were given more importance.

The amount of space or coverage allocated to a news actor/source is also important in matters of representation. Coverage was determined by estimating the size of the news item by counting the number of words given to each source/actor. For news items that mentioned more than one source, the size of that particular news item counted for each politician. In my analysis, I also looked at the subject matters that were highlighted in the Sunday Times' representation of political figures. Consequently, news items were coded for referring to the politician's capability to hold a public office, family relations, physical attributes and personality characteristics. By referring to certain subject areas, the Sunday Times brought certain ideological orientations to bear, as I shall explain later

during the qualitative analysis. The actual process of coding all these variables involved the use of coding schedules.

#### **4.2.1.2. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

For data collection, content analysis is methodical and involves developing clear coding protocols, which are strictly observed throughout the research process. Thus, all sampled news items were submitted to the same set of explicitly identified categories. To aid with the coding process, I developed a coding frame, which comprised of two research instruments: a 'coding schedule' and a 'coding manual' (Deacon et al. 1999; Hansen et al. 1998). While a coding schedule (Appendix 1) contains a list of variables, such as those listed above, a coding manual (Appendix 2) contains the values or coding possibilities associated with each variable. The actual coding process consisted of applying and completing one coding schedule for each sampled 'unit of analysis' or news item.

Before embarking on this process, I piloted the coding schedule to check for any inadequacies and inconsistencies that may arise, and assessed the reliability of the coding process (Deacon et al. 1999; Hansen et al. 1998). I then used the feedback from the pilot to fine-tune the coding schedule, and only after satisfactorily designing the coding schedule did I commence the coding process.

The issue of inter-coder reliability did not arise in this study, because I singly undertook the task of coding all the data. To ensure intra-coder reliability however, only a specific number of news items were coded over a specific period so that as much consistency as possible in the interpretation of the categories was maintained. To explore and summarise the numerical information that I generated from the content analysis, I used a computerised statistical package, STATISTICA. Deacon et al. (1999) and Hansen et al. (1998) have outlined several advantages of using a computer to analyse data.

Firstly, there is a gain in efficiency - the speed and reliability of analysis - with which data can be analysed. Most of all, it allows much greater flexibility than that afforded by 'manual' analysis (Hansen et al. 1998:121). Using the computer, as Hansen et al. (1998) assert, a researcher can work 'inductively' with the material to discover unexpected trends, and to return repeatedly to the data to explore new ideas, co-occurrences, and

patterns which may not at first have been obvious concerns for analysis. The findings from this content analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

Because content analysis is methodical, it ensures a reasonable degree of reliability in the establishment of a pattern of the Sunday Times' representation of women politicians. Furthermore, combined with other qualitative approaches, such as discourse analysis, this method, as Hansen et al. (1998) outline, brings a methodological rigor that is rarely found in many qualitative approaches, and ensures a degree of precision and trustworthiness regarding the resulting data.

This process of content analysis constituted the first-phase of the two-phase research process. Using content analysis, I was able to identify specific news items in which women politicians were represented. These news items provided the data for analysis at the second-phase of the research, during which a qualitative analysis, using techniques of discourse analysis, was employed to critically analyse selected news items that exhibited typical-cases of the representation of women politicians (Deacon et al. 1999; Jensen 2002). With typical-case sampling, the researcher seeks to identify a case that exemplifies the key features of a phenomenon being investigated. The next section, accordingly, outlines the use of discourse analysis as a research technique.

#### **4.2.2. Discourse Analysis as a Research Technique**

To recapitulate, this study was particularly interested in the frameworks and meanings that the Sunday Times made available for its readers to draw upon in their understanding of South African women politicians. Such an exercise requires an intensive analysis of the structure of a particular news item in order to examine the language (both verbal and visual representations), how the words and images, sentences and paragraphs it is composed of combine and interact to privilege a particular meaning (Deacon et al. 1999).

There are various ways of embarking on a qualitative linguistic analysis of media texts and different scholars, Fowler et al. (1979), Bell (1991), van Dijk (1991) and Fairclough (1989; 1992a; 1995) among others, have developed their own approaches. Discourse analysis is one such approach. Foucault's insights about the constitutive nature of discourse (Fairclough 1992b), and about how discourse is both an instrument and an effect of power (Young 1981) are important for this study.

The second stage of this study involved a qualitative analysis of selected news items from the sample. Several scholars, Bryman (1988), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Jensen (2002) and van Dijk (1991) outline how qualitative researchers, and similarly discourse analysts, are primarily interested in meaning. Their approaches, accordingly, depend upon very detailed data analysis, and to make such an analysis effective, it is imperative that the data being analysed is limited by either taking only a few texts or parts of texts such as headlines.

In the qualitative analysis of the typical-case samples, I used the approach to discourse developed by Fairclough (1989; 1992b; 1995), that is, critical discourse analysis (CDA). In general, CDA is a shared perspective encompassing a range of approaches (Garrett and Bell 2001). It represents an outgrowth of the work of critical linguistics, discourse analysts, and text linguists. Producing the majority of research into media discourse, CDA has an explicit socio-political agenda, and is mainly concerned to discover and bear witness to the unequal relations of power which underlie ways of talking or newspaper writing in a society, and in particular to reveal the role of discourse in reproducing or challenging socio-political dominance (Garrett and Bell 2001:6). Working from the general premise that views language as a socially constructed practice, CDA endeavours to explain the relationship between language, ideology and power by analysing discourse in its material form (Janks 1997).

The media are a particular subject of CDA analysis because of their manifestly pivotal role as discourse-bearing institutions. Garrett and Bell (2000) and van Dijk (1991) have outlined how the 'factual' genres, news in particular, have been one of the major tasks of the discourse analysis approach. News, as pointed out in the previous chapter, is the most prestigious of daily genres, and does play a role in the exercise of power in modern society. Most of our social political knowledge and beliefs about the world derive from the dozens of news reports we read or see everyday (van Dijk 1991). What makes news meaningful is not the world or event that is reported. Rather, as Hartley (1994:33) outlines, it is the 'report' or 'account' of the event, the language in which it is encoded. What the Sunday Times reports is subjected to a set of criteria (news values) which are neither natural nor neutral, and are both gendered and ideological. This, as mentioned in the previous chapter, has implications for the representation of women politicians. The

process of signification, as Bennett (1995) asserts, is an active process of constructing, rather than passively reflecting, reality. Consequently, its concern with oppressed social groups, their emancipation and the need for social change (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002: 60), seems to suggest that CDA was well suited for the analysis of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times.

#### **4.2.2.1. Critical Discourse Analysis: Fairclough's Framework**

Although there is no set procedure for doing discourse analysis, or indeed, for qualitative research in general, Fairclough (1989; 1992b; 1995) has developed a three dimensional framework for CDA and identified some of the main elements and considerations that apply to discourse analysis. This framework articulates three levels of analysis: the analysis of texts; the analysis of discourse practices of text production, distribution and consumption; and the analysis of social and cultural practices, which frame discourse practices and texts, and is represented diagrammatically as three boxes embedded one within the other to emphasise the interdependence of these dimensions. This closely relates to Hall's (1995a:91) articulation of connected but distinctive moments of production, circulation, distribution/consumption and reproduction, within the circulation circuit, whereby the production moment yields a message, which when decoded at another determinant moment enters into the structure of the social practice.

Each of the three levels of analysis, which correspond respectively to description, interpretation and explanation, Fairclough (1992b) argues, is indispensable for discourse analysis. Although the 'description' and the 'interpretation' levels of analysis are represented as two distinctive levels of analysis, this analytical division, according to Fairclough (1992b), cannot be viewed as a sharp one because interpretation is needed in the reading of the meaning constructed by signs (words or images). In the process of interpreting, meanings enter into the wider realms of the culture and society, thus evoking certain ideological meanings. Therefore, since the description of texts presupposes interpretation, description and interpretation can be conducted simultaneously. As Fairclough (1989:24) asserts, "[t]he formal properties of a text can be regarded [both] as traces of the productive process, and ... as cues in the process of interpretation".

Within Fairclough's framework, there are certain analytical foci, outlined below, that seem to be especially fruitful in a discourse analysis of the Sunday Times' representation of women politicians.

#### **4.2.2.2. Analytical Procedure for the Description, Interpretation and Explanation of The Sunday Times' Representation of Women Politicians**

For a critical discourse analysis of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times, I identified a number of analytical categories at the levels of textual analysis, discourse analysis and analysis of the social practice.

There are several ways of conducting a textual analysis, but for the objectives of this study, only the grammar, the vocabulary and the text structure were used. Grammar, as opposed to vocabulary, deals with words combined into clauses and sentences. Of the three different dimensions of the grammar, only the transitivity system, which corresponds to the 'ideational' function of language, was examined.

Transitivity deals with the types of process coded in clauses and the types of participants involved in them (Fairclough 1992b), and is an essential tool in the analysis of representation (Fowler 1991). Transitivity involves two transformative processes of nominalisation and passivisation (Fairclough 1992b), which enable meaning to be mobilised in certain ways (Fowler et al. 1979; Thompson 1988). Nominalisation occurs when sentences or parts of sentences, descriptions of actions and the participants involved in them are turned into nouns. Passivisation occurs when verbs are rendered in the passive. By employing such transformations, the Sunday Times directed the attention of the reader to certain themes at the expense of others. Such processes also delete actors and agency, and tend to represent processes as things or objects. By looking at these two processes, I was able to determine whether particular process types (action, event, relational, mental) and participants (men or women politicians) were favoured in the Sunday Times, including the type of voices (active or passive) used.

I have already indicated that each particular form of linguistic expression in a news text carries with it different ideological orientations (Fowler 1991). The ideological effects of certain linguistic expressions in the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times may contribute towards sustaining the subordinate positions of women in

society. For instance, consistent construction and representation of men politicians as active agents in material processes, which affect women politicians, obscures the women's agency and serves to sustain the ideological perception of women as powerless and subordinate.

Unlike grammar, vocabulary deals mainly with individual words (Fairclough 1992b), and words manifest the underlying semantic concepts used in the definition of the situation (see Hansen et al. 1998). By looking at what terms consistently occur in a text, what segments of the world enjoy constant discursive attention, we can mark out distinct kinds of preoccupations and topics (Fowler 1991). Categorisation by vocabulary is an integral part of the reproduction of ideology in the newspapers, and is the basis of discriminatory practice when dealing with such groups as women. The vocabulary of a discourse can be investigated in several ways. In my analysis, I focused on the key words and metaphors.

There are certain key words or lexical items whose meanings are variable and changing, and that are of a general or local cultural significance. Analysis of such words looks at their meaning potential or the particular structuring of their meanings as a mode of hegemony and a focus of struggle (Fairclough 1992b). News texts always consist of clusters of words and meanings. Words typically have various meanings, and meanings are typically 'worded' in various ways. What this implies is that news producers are always faced with choices about how to use a word and how to word a meaning. Newsreaders, on the other hand, are also faced with decisions about how to interpret the choices news producers have made, i.e. what values to place upon them. Hall (1995) for instance, identifies the three positions from which readers may decode signs in the news as the dominant (or preferred), the negotiated and the oppositional. In the dominant position, the reader takes the proffered connoted meaning and decodes the message in terms of reference code in which it has been encoded. In the negotiated position, the reader's decoding of the message contains a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements. In the oppositional reading, the reader - while understanding both the literal and the connotative inflection of the message - decodes it in a contrary way. The choices and decisions about what words to use and what meanings to evoke, as Fairclough asserts, are not of a purely individual nature. The meanings of words and the wording of

meanings are matters that are socially variable and socially contested, and are facets of wider social and cultural processes.

Metaphors are pervasive in all sorts of language and discourse, including the news discourse, and structure our systems of knowledge and belief in a fundamental way. By signifying something through one metaphor rather than another, the Sunday Times constructs reality in a particular way. How a particular domain of experience is metaphorised is one of the stakes in the struggle within and over discourse practice. By looking at the choice of metaphors used in the Sunday Times, I was able to consider what cultural and ideological factors determined the choice of those particular metaphors.

The structuring design of texts also gives a lot of insight into the systems of knowledge, beliefs and assumptions about social relationships and social identities. Analysis of the text structure is mainly concerned specifically with higher-level design features of different types of text (Fairclough 1992b). By looking at the structure of a text, we can identify what elements are combined in what ways and what order to constitute a particular news story. A news story, for example, always consists of a headline, the main text and a conclusion, and usually answers to the questions of who did what to whom when, where and with what effects. Within this structure, the ordering is based upon importance or newsworthiness, with the headline and the first paragraph in particular giving what are regarded as the most important parts, and the gist of the story. Thus, a news actor/source that is figured in the headline or lead is given more prominence than one who is figured in the middle of the text.

To aid with the interpretation of the texts, I analysed the interdiscursivity dimension of the discourse practice and considered the social practice of news production and consumption associated with the Sunday Times news texts (Fairclough 1992b). Analysis of interdiscursivity mainly involved looking at the discourse types and genres the Sunday Times drew upon in the production of election news and how. A high level of interdiscursivity, according to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), is associated with change, while a low level of interdiscursivity signals the reproduction of the established order.

The conditions of discourse practice, that is, the social and institutional aspects that influence and affect the production of news texts were also considered (Fairclough 1992a). The production of a news text, using Hall's (1995a) arguments about the

production of a television programme, has its own discursive aspects. The production process relies, for instance, on routines, professional ideologies, definitions and assumptions about the audience. The use of news values to determine what is newsworthy is one such example. Furthermore, Hall (1995a:92) outlines how the production process is framed by meanings and ideas, and draws on topics, events and definitions of situations from other sources and other discursive formations within the wider socio-cultural and political structure of which the news institution is a differentiated part.

There are several explanations for why the Sunday Times news texts are as they are with regard to the representation of women politicians. At this level of analysis of the social practice, I considered the economic conditions that influence the production of the Sunday Times. This is because news production is an industry with financial or business interests, and takes into consideration assumptions about audience expectations. This provided the basis for explaining why the discourse practice was as it was; and the effects of the discourse practice upon the social practice (Fairclough 1992b:237). During the analysis, social relations and structures that constitute the social and discursive practice were also specified. A consideration of the ideological and political effects of the discourse, in terms of the systems of knowledge and beliefs, social relations and social identities was also a focal point of this analysis. The media, as Bennett (1995), Hall (1995b) and Hartley (1994) have argued, play a major role in constructing reality, and they do not function as a passive mirror that reflects reality to the audience or readers.

### **4.3. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have outlined the methodology and explained the procedures that I employed in the collection and analysis of data on the representation of South African women politicians in the Sunday Times during the 2004 elections. I have discussed the two-phase research process that was designed and illustrated how the methods of content analysis and critical discourse analysis were used, in order to assess whether or not the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times contributed to the continuation or transformation of the social order, characterised by the subordination of women. The next chapter presents findings from the content analysis.

**CHAPTER 5**  
**CONTENT ANALYSIS: PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND**  
**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS ON THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN**  
**POLITICIANS IN THE SUNDAY TIMES**

**5.0. Introduction**

This study, as explained in Chapter 4, uses a two-phase research process that combines both quantitative and qualitative techniques to analyse the representation of South African women politicians in the Sunday Times between January 1, 2004 and April 30, 2004. While this chapter constitutes the first-phase of the research process and mainly involves the quantitative analysis of all news items that meet the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, the next chapter constitutes the second-phase of the research and mainly involves a qualitative analysis of only two feature articles from the sampled news items. Both chapters are dedicated towards achieving the goals of the study (see Chapter 1).

In this chapter, I present, discuss and interpret the main findings from the quantitative analysis of the Sunday Times' election news. This content analysis also forms the basis for the discourse analysis in the next chapter by aiding in the identification of news items that represent typical-case representations of women politicians, and particular subject matters that the Sunday Times tended to emphasise in the representation of political news actors/sources.

Using content analysis, the chapter aims to test the three hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter. The study hypothesised firstly that, women politicians were numerically under represented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period, and secondly that, in the representation of women politicians during this period, the Sunday Times tended to highlight the women's capability to hold public office, their family relations, and their physical and personal attributes. It was then presupposed that overall, the Sunday Times represented women politicians in ways that perpetuate their subordinate social and political status.

This chapter is divided into three main sections, each of which addresses a particular dimension or component of this quantitative study. In the first section, I present and discuss the main findings of the study, systematically addressing only those aspects that

both provide answers to the hypotheses and aid in the examination of the representation of women politicians. In the second section, I provide a general assessment of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times. This is done in consideration of the objectives of the study to further our understanding of how the Sunday Times frames its readers' understanding of women politicians, the theoretical insights of the constructionist approach to representation and the socio-historical background of South African women. The final section consists of a conclusion to this chapter.

### **5.1. Presentation and Discussion of the Main Findings from the Content Analysis**

This study is mainly concerned with gender and the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times. As such, my attention mainly focuses on the gender of news sources/actors, the amount of coverage allocated to them, and the subject matters that the news addresses, which are important for an understanding of how the Sunday Times constructs reality, both socially and politically.

#### **5.1.1. Findings for the Assumption that Women Politicians Were Underrepresented in the Sunday Times during the Sampled Period**

As mentioned above, the study hypothesised that women politicians, in comparison with men politicians, were infrequently used as news sources in the election news in the Sunday Times during the sampled period, and that when represented, the amount of coverage allocated to them was lower than that allocated to men politicians.

To test this hypothesis, all the news items that met the criteria mentioned in Chapter 4 were counted. Thereafter, the gender of all news actors/sources that the Sunday Times used in the news was coded and the frequency with which they were used recorded. In my analysis of the news actors/sources used in the news, I have not distinguished between an actor and a source (the voice used in the paper). Instead, I have conflated the participant's role to that of actor/source because there are times when a news participant may appear both as a news actor and as a news source within the same story. My concern here is not necessarily with this distinction, but with the way in which the actor/source is represented. This analysis found that the Sunday Times carried 106 news items between 1 January 2004 and 30 April 2004. Below (table 1) is a representation of

the distribution of these news items throughout the period and across the different genres used.

**Table 1: Number of News Items per Genre during the Four-Month Period**

<b>N=106</b>	<b>News Genre</b>				
<b>Month (2004)</b>	<b>News stories</b>	<b>Editorials</b>	<b>Feature articles</b>	<b>Letters to the Editor</b>	<b>Total number of news items</b>
January	14	3	4	2	<b>23</b>
February	10	1	6	5	<b>22</b>
March	9	0	4	0	<b>13</b>
April	14	3	27	4	<b>48</b>
<b>Total count</b>	<b>47 (44.34%)</b>	<b>7 (6.60%)</b>	<b>41 (38.68%)</b>	<b>11 (10.38%)</b>	<b>106 (100.00%)</b>

As the table above shows, of all the 106 news items analysed, 23 were counted for January 2004, 22 for February 2004, 13 for March 2004 and 48 for April 2004. These news items were distributed across the four genres as follows: 47 were news stories, seven editorials, 41 were feature articles, and 11 were letters to the editor. A note should be made here that four publications (two from February, one from March and one from April) were missing and therefore did not form part of the sample. Also not included in the sample were news items from supplements (such as provincial news) and the fashion and entertainment pages.

Based on the above news items however, the total number of news actors/sources that the Sunday Times used during the four-month period was also counted. A total number of 680 news actors/sources were counted but, out of these, the gender of 92 news actors/sources was not clear and thus did not form part of the analysis. The remaining news actors/sources (588) were coded by gender as either women or men, and then categorised as either politicians or non-politician. Table 2 below gives a breakdown of the distribution and figuration of these news actors/sources during the four-month period.

**Table 2: Gender and Total Number of News Actors/Sources Used During the Four-Month Period**

Month (2004)	Gender and Category of news actor/source				Total No. of actors
	Women		Men		
	Politicians	Non politicians	Politicians	Non politicians	
January	3	9	55	18	85
February	2	2	82	6	92
March	8	6	49	11	74
April	13	92	127	105	337
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>588</b>

From the table above, it is possible to see that of 588 news actors/sources that the Sunday Times used, only 135 (22.96%) were women, while 453 (77.04%) were men. In addition, when we analyse these results according to the categorisations of politician or non-politician, we find that there were 339 politicians and 249 non-politicians. Of all the politicians (339) counted, only 26 (or 7.67%) of them were women politicians as compared to 313 (or 92.33%) men politicians, and while there were 109 (43.78%) non-politician women, there were 140 (56.22) non-politician men. These statistics reveal a very familiar pattern regarding the representation of women, and clearly confirm the hypothesis that women politicians (and women in general) were numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period.

There are several possible explanations for this kind of presentation. Firstly, we know from the discussion on the sociology of news in Chapter 3 that sources or events are not in themselves newsworthy but become newsworthy when they are selected according to the journalistic criteria of news values. Sources, for instance, become newsworthy in relation to the impact of their policy decisions and actions on the masses, among others things. The most likely explanation why women politicians are infrequently used as news actor/sources, when we consider the news value of the impact of actions, is that very few women politicians are in positions where they are able to make decisions or take actions that have major impact on the population. If this is the case, then one can

speculate that this is why very few women politicians were used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times election news.

As explained in Chapter 2 about the current political situation in South Africa, only 30% of all parliamentarians are women. Obviously, women are numerically underrepresented in politics at this level, just as much as they are numerically underrepresented in the news. Gans (1979) observes that while in theory sources come from anywhere, in practice, their recruitment and access to journalists reflect the hierarchy of nation and society. Furthermore, Hartley (1994) argues that news is not only about and by men; it is overwhelmingly seen through men. Considering Gans' (1979) observation, one explanation why women politicians were infrequently used as news sources while men politician were frequently used, implies that men are socially ranked higher than women are in South Africa. Consequently, what men do or say is considered more important than what women do or say, and because the Sunday Times relies mostly on men sources, only the men's versions or perspective of reality are provided.

The finding that South African women are infrequently used as news actors/sources, other than being specific to a particular context (South Africa) and a particular sample text (the Sunday Times) however, do not necessarily present new findings. Prior studies, such as those conducted by Media Watch (1995) and by MISA and Gender Links (2003), found a similar trend in which women were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the news. This study is indebted to these studies in as much as they provide a broad overview of the representation of women in the media, while this study provides an analysis of the representation of a specific group of women, i.e., politicians in a particular news medium. According to the findings from the study conducted by MISA and Gender Links in September 2002, only 19% of all the people who spoke in the South African news were women and 81% were men. Prior to that, in 1995 Media Watch conducted a study in 71 countries and found alarmingly similar results in which women constituted only 18% of all the news sources, while men constituted 82%. Indeed, several other scholars have recurrently shown that news organisations tend to rely overwhelmingly on men as news actors/sources, partly because men are viewed as 'authoritative' (and speak from respected institutions, as the next chapter will show). In this context, women politician seem to be viewed as less credible or reliable.

A further analysis of the distribution of women politicians and men politicians used as news actors/sources during the four-month period also yields a very interesting pattern. The analysis showed for instance that women politicians were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the months of January and February, with a very slight increase in their numbers in the latter months of March and April. In all the 106 news items counted, only three women politicians were covered in the 23 news items carried in January as compared to 55 men politicians. Similarly, out of the 22 news items carried in February, only two women who were politicians were represented as compared to 82 men who were politicians. While there was a very small increase in the number of women politicians represented during the last two months, only eight women politicians were figured in the 13 news items carried in March as compared to 49 men politicians, and only 13 women politicians were figured in the 48 news items carried in April as compared to 127 men politicians. These figures are presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Distribution of news actors/sources during the four-month period**

<b>Month (2004)</b>	<b>Total number of 'news items' carried</b>	<b>Number of women politicians figured</b>	<b>Number of men politicians figured</b>
January	23	3	55
February	22	2	82
March	13	8	49
April	48	13	127
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>26</b> <b>(7.67%)</b>	<b>313</b> <b>(92.33%)</b>

What these figures translate into is that only 7.67% of all the politicians used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times during the four month were women and 92.33% were men. This kind of presentation should raise concerns about how society views the position of women in society, especially during this particular period when the advancement of the position of women in society and their increased participation in politics and decision-making positions is still high on the agenda.

Given the above distribution of news actors/sources, we can see that women politicians are seriously underrepresented in the Sunday Times constituting only 7.67% of all the news actors/sources when women constitute 30% representation of all parliamentarians (Hassim 2003). This tells us a lot about how the Sunday Times defines which actors/sources are considered more newsworthy and deserving of space in the news for their articulation of social reality. In terms of their 52.2% representation in the population (SSA 2003), women politicians (and women in general) are clearly numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times news. Undoubtedly, men who constitute less than half of the population in this case are privileged above women. An analysis of several South African newspapers would undoubtedly confirm these findings.

One other notable point that should be made at this time is the fact that most of the political parties that participated in the 2004 general and presidential elections showed an increased representation of women on their national party lists, most of them showing increases above the 30% mark (see Chapter 1). As news actors/sources in the Sunday Times however, women politicians remain below the two-digit percentage of 7.67%. Because South African women have historically been marginalised from taking up decision-making positions and playing active roles in political party and government politics, the new democratic government, using the new constitution, has undertaken to promote gender equality and improve the status of women (<http://www.info.gov.za/speeches>).

By looking critically at the results above, a question one might ask is why there was a very insignificant representation of women politicians during the first two months (January and February), and why there was a slight increase in the representation of women politicians during the last two months of March and April. One explanation for this is that, since this was an election period, the closer the election date approached, the more the Sunday Times saw the need to inform their readers about the potential candidates. This was probably the only time that women politicians, and especially political candidates, become 'newsworthy' (or engaged in what the Sunday Times deemed as news worthy activities), and therefore deserving of some space in the news. There are other issues of course, such as economic reasons, which reporters take into account when deciding on the events and sources to include in the news.

Important here is the reporter's assumption about which representations of a source will be of great interest to the newsreaders, and will effectively increase sales and profits for the paper. Using the ideological criteria of news values, the reporter chooses sources, including women politicians, on considerations of their newsworthiness based on their news worthy attributes of controversy, prominence and elite persons, for instance, with the ultimate goal of maximising sales. It is also possible to see a systematic increase in the number of political news items carried in the Sunday Times during the sampled period. The only remarkable observation however is that, in March, (a month before the elections) the Sunday Times carried relatively few news items for the total number of news items carried in the other three months.

One possible explanation for this is because the missing March 28 publication was not part of the sample. But again, two publications from the month of February (i.e. February 8 and 29) were missing, and so was the April 25 publication. From 49 news items in March, we see an enormous increase of election news items (127) carried in April. One explanation for this increase could be because of the special elections page that was carried in April after the elections. However, the page only carried 10 news items of a political nature, which still leaves about 117 news items.

On the face of it, one might want to assume that the more news items the paper carries the higher the chances that more women politicians would be represented. From the results presented above however, this was not the case. We can see for instance that when 23 news items were carried in January, only three women politicians were figured, and yet, when only 13 news items were carried in March, eight women politicians were figured. Another explanation for the increased presentation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during the last two months can be attributed to the fact that it was during these two months that political parties released their national party lists. Since most of the parties had increased the representation of women on their party lists of candidates, the Sunday Times actively identified and decided to present those individuals whose appearance on the lists met the ideological and gendered journalist criteria of news values or 'newsworthy'. An in-depth analysis of the aspect of the 'newsworthiness' of sources is dealt with in the next chapter during the critical discourse analysis phase when I

examine how the Sunday Times textually managed to enact, legitimate and reproduce relations of domination between the politician news sources (i.e. women and men) used.

As the statistics above demonstrate, the Sunday Times tended to overwhelmingly use more men politicians than women politicians as news actors/sources in its political news. Politics has historically been defined as the preserve of men, a construction which undeniably legitimates the views of men to the exclusion of women perspectives on reality. In the next section, I proceed to test the second hypothesis.

### **5.1.2. Findings for the Assumption that the Sunday Times Tended to Represent**

#### **Women Politicians in Ways that Serve to Reproduce their Subordinate Status**

Apart from assuming that women politicians were numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period, the study also hypothesised that in its presentation of women politicians, the Sunday Times tended to refer to certain subject matters. Specifically, the study hypothesised that the Sunday Times tended to accentuate the women's capacity to hold public office and refer to their family relations, physical appearance and personal attributes in ways that served to reproduce their subordinate status. For instance, as the qualitative analysis in the next chapter demonstrates, the Sunday Times tended to emphasise the incompetence and failures of women politicians and assign to women politicians personal attributes that may generally be viewed as negative, while at the same time focusing on the men politicians' achievement. To test this hypothesis, several variables were coded.

Firstly, the gender of up to three of the most prominent news actors/sources (women politicians or men politicians only) figured in a particular news item was coded in decreasing order of prominence. An actor, as discussed in Chapter 4, was considered prominent if he or she featured prominently in terms of: (1) the total amount of words attributed (directly or indirectly) and / or referring to him or her; and (2) his or her placement in a news item. Thereafter, the amount of coverage (in terms of the words attributed directly/ indirectly or referring to the news actor/source) was estimated. Thirdly, texts were read to find out which subject matters (potential for office, personality traits, family relations and appearance) were addressed in relation to the representation of that particular prominently figured politician and coded accordingly.

**Table 4: Gender and Frequency of the Prominent News actors/sources Used**

	Gender of news actor/source		Total
	Women politicians	Men politicians	
News actor 1	7	83	90
News actor 2	5	62	67
News actor 3	6	46	52
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b> <b>(8.53%)</b>	<b>191</b> <b>(91.47%)</b>	<b>209</b> <b>(100.00%)</b>

From the findings presented earlier (Table 3), we know that the Sunday Times cited 313 politicians as news actors/sources during the months of January 2004 to April 2004. From Table 4 above, it is clear that of all the politicians (313) figured in the Sunday Times; only 209 were prominently figured - going by the definition used in this study. Of these, only 8.53% (i.e. 18) were women politicians and 91.47% (i.e. 191) were men politicians. An analysis of the total number of words (directly or indirectly) attributed to, or used to refer to the prominently figured news actor/source provides interesting insights for the average comparative coverage between men and women politicians.

**Table 5: Figuration of women politicians and men politicians as prominent actors/sources in the election news**

	Women politician news actors			Men politician news actors		
	Number of women figured	Total words used	Average words per woman	Number of men figured	Total words used	Average words per man
Actor 1	7	2552	365	83	19710	237
Actor 2	5	711	142	62	7349	119
Actor 3	6	560	93	46	3899	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3823</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>30958</b>	<b>162</b>

From the above table, it is evident that the average amount of coverage (average number of words) allocated to a woman politician figured in the news in the Sunday

Times ranges between 93 and 365, while for men politicians, the amount of coverage (average words) allocated ranges from 85 and 237. This is a remarkable finding, given the fact that in general, women politicians were numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period. As the figures above indicate, the average amount of words used in the representation of a prominently figured woman who was a politician was about 212, while the average amount of words used in the representation of a prominently figured man who was also a politician was about 162.

As mentioned in the foregoing section, women politicians were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times. What the study did not hypothesise was that though women politicians are underrepresented, on an individual level, women politicians who were figured in the Sunday Times election news actually enjoyed more coverage than their men politician counterparts do. This brings to the fore issues of quantity and quality or substance of what is presented. The discourse analysis in the next chapter, given its commitment to in-depth analysis, is well suited to delineating the substance and significance of how much presence women politicians are given in the news, and what that presence translates into in terms of the kinds of representations they are given. In relation to quantity and the substance of what is presented, Deacon et al. (1999) argue that, media presence is not the same as media access. This is because, for instance, though coverage is allocated to one social grouping (e.g. women) and less to the other (men), women may not be the active participants in that coverage in terms of either being quoted or figured independently of the other actors.

One possible explanation for this would be that because women politicians are generally underrepresented in the news and are very infrequently figured, the onetime appearances in the news provide the papers with the only opportunity to give as much information on the women news actors as possible. A very quick overview of the names that were frequently figured in the Sunday Time reveals that there were certain individuals (men mostly) who appeared in almost all the 13 editions analysed. For some, their presence in the news was such that they appeared in more than one news item in each publication.

Journalists actively select which news actors/sources or events to include in the news, as well as how much space to use in the presentation of those particular news

actors/sources or events. From the analysis above, it could seem that the Sunday Times actively decided when to figure women politicians and how much space of coverage to use. A further analysis of the presentation of the three most prominent news actors/sources, in terms of subjects matters addressed, also reveals a remarkable pattern. The numbers of times that certain subject matters were included in the representation of women and men politicians are represented below in Table 6 and 7 respectively.

**Table 6: Frequency of reference to selected subject matters in the presentation of the prominently figured women politicians**

<b>Subjects Addressed</b>	<b>Prominent women politicians</b>			
	<b>News actor 1</b>	<b>News actor 2</b>	<b>News actor 3</b>	<b>Total Counts</b>
Potential for office	7	3	2	<b>12</b>
Family relation	4	0	0	<b>4</b>
Physical attributes	5	1	0	<b>6</b>
Personality traits	6	6	5	<b>17</b>

**Table 7: Frequency of reference to selected subject matters in the presentation of the prominently figured men politicians**

<b>Subjects Addressed</b>	<b>Prominent men politicians</b>			
	<b>News actor 1</b>	<b>News actor 2</b>	<b>News actor 3</b>	<b>Total Counts</b>
Potential for office	16	8	4	<b>28</b>
Family relation	6	1	0	<b>7</b>
Physical attributes	14	3	1	<b>18</b>
Personality traits	20	12	10	<b>42</b>

From the earlier analysis, we know that only 18 women politicians compared to 191 men politicians were used as news actors/sources in the news. From the table above it is evident that in the representation of the 18 women politicians, references to their potential for office was made in the coverage of 12 women politicians, and reference to their family relations made in the coverage of four women politicians. Additionally, reference

to physical attributes was made in the representation of six, and to personality traits in the representation of 17 women politicians. On the other hand, in the representation of the 191 prominent men politicians, reference to their potential for office was made to 28, reference to family relations for seven, reference to physical attributes for 18, and reference to their personality traits for 41. As the above tables show, in the representation of both women politicians and men politicians, more references were made to their personality traits, followed by references to their potential for office, then their physical attributes and lastly to their family relations.

I have summarised these figures in Table 8 below to illustrate the patterns with which the Sunday Times made referred to these subject matters, and be able to compare the frequency of their use in the representation of women politicians and men politicians.

**Table 8: Reference to selected subject matters according to the gender of the news actor/source**

Gender	Total number of actors/sources	Number of times subject matter is mentioned			
		Potential for office	Family relations	Physical attributes	Personality traits
Women	18	12 (66.67%)	4 (22.22%)	6 (33.33%)	17 (94.44%)
Men	191	28 (14.66%)	7 (3.66%)	18 (9.42%)	42 (21.99%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>59</b>

It is evident from the findings above that the Sunday Times tended to emphasise the personality traits of the politicians above all the other subject matters. The least emphasised subject matter was family relations. The second most emphasised matter was the potential for office of a politician, followed by their physical attributes.

A politician's personality, given the emphasis the Sunday Times accords it, seems to be one of the main subject matters the paper focused on. While it would be interesting to know whether this is a normal trend in the general coverage of politicians, the emphasis

accorded to the personality trait here arguably has to do with the fact that 2004 was an election year, which may imply that one's persona plays a big role in one's political career.

From the tables above, we can see that in the presentation of the 18 prominently figured women politicians, personality traits were mentioned for 94.44% of them, while reference to their potential for office was made to 66.67% of them. In the representation of men politicians on the other hand, personality traits were mentioned for only 21.99%, while reference to their potential for office was made to only 14.66% of them. About the remaining variables, the table shows that references to family relations were made to 22.22% of the women politicians as compared to 3.66% of the men politicians. In addition, physical attributes were mentioned in the coverage of 33.33% of the women politicians as compared to 9.42% of the men politicians. What the Sunday Times seems to be implying here is that society still defines women more in terms of their bodily appearances, an ideological view which borders on the objectification of women.

A detailed and critical analysis of how these subject matters were textually realised, and the ideological meanings constructed in the Sunday Times election news is provided in the next chapter. For now, it should be pointed out that woman politicians are overwhelmingly ascribed negative personalities while men politicians are ascribed positive personalities (see Section 3 in the next chapter). It is also evident from the table above that the Sunday Times accentuated the personalities of almost every woman politician who was prominently figured, since reference to personality traits was made to 17 of the 18 prominently figured women politicians.

What these findings suggest is that more references to these subject matters were made in the representation of women politicians and less in the representation of men politicians. Historically, we know that South African women were seriously underrepresented in national politics or decision-making positions, and were not regarded as an electoral constituency until in the early 1990s (Hassim 2003). Consequently, women's engagement with the political realm, after several years of being defined primarily in relation to the private domain, is quite a new phenomenon. This may be one of the possible explanations why reference to their potential for office was made to more than half (66.67%) of all the women politicians figured in the news. These findings confirm the second assumption that the Sunday Times tended to represent

women politicians in ways that reproduce their subordinate positions. This is clearly indicated in the next chapter.

### **5.1.3. Findings for the Assumption That Overall, the Sunday Times Represented Women Politicians in Ways That Perpetuate Their Subordinate Status**

From the findings presented above, I indicated that women politicians were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times, constituting only 7.67% (or 26) of all the 339 politicians figured. By under representing the women politicians in the election news, only the views or perspectives of the men politicians were represented, thus presenting a skewed representation of reality.

It was also revealed that of all the politicians who were prominently figured, only 18 were women politicians. However, considering the average amount of space accorded, women politicians were each allocated more space (in terms of words) than the men politicians. Despite this notable finding, there were more references to the four subject matters of personality, potential for office, physical attributes and family relations mentioned in the representation of women politicians than in the representation of men politicians. This was also done in ways, which, as I illustrate in the next chapter, contributes towards the reproduction of the status quo.

Representations of women and men are related to the fundamental structures of society. By infrequently using women politicians as news actors/sources, the Sunday Times seems to be suggesting that women's perspectives on reality are not as important as men's perspectives, which evokes the notion of hierarchy and authority. Furthermore, by consistently emphasising their incompetence to hold public positions, by assigning them negative personal attributes, and by accentuating their marital relationships, which evokes patriarchal structures of society and women's dependency on men, the Sunday Times contributes towards the reproduction of the status quo, which is characterised by the subordination of women.

## **5.2. Discussion of the Content Analysis Findings**

As the study has revealed, there were more men politicians than women politicians that were used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times during the four-month period.

The selection of which news actor/source to use in the presentation of a particular news story is done in tandem with the nature of events that reporters have selected for inclusion in the newspaper. In as much as the selection for inclusion of newsworthy events is determined by, among other things, the journalistic criteria of news values (Hartley 1994) as explained in Chapter 3, selection of sources for inclusion to accompany such news events is also determined by criteria which include, among others, the actors'/sources' newsworthy attributes or qualities.

Hartley (1994) identifies proximity, controversial, elite persons, personalisation and prominence as some of the news values, which may guide the selection of events and sources. These values, as the analysis above has demonstrated, seem to function as a discourse that legitimates what events and sources qualify to be included or excluded from the news. There are several possible explanations for why women politicians are numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times.

Firstly, as discussed in chapter three, events and persons engaged in any events are not in themselves 'newsworthy', but become 'newsworthy' when they are selected according to the ideological and gendered journalistic criteria of 'news values'. These values, as explained earlier have to do with the importance of the event or the impact on the masses of the action taken by someone. Since there are more men than women who are in most of the decision-making positions, it is evident therefore that more men than women are likely to be used as news sources in the Sunday Times. Furthermore, not only are more men educated than women are, but their involvement in politics goes as far back as during the apartheid era. For instance, the colonial state almost exclusively consisted of men (Mama 1997), and the men received education that prepared them for public life while women received education that restricted them to the domestic domain (Assie-Lumumba 1997).

In addition, because of the assumed prominence and the fact that men are already culturally privileged, it is evident why the Sunday Times selects and uses more men as news actors/sources than women. Women, as explained in chapter two are still underrepresented in higher political and decision-making positions. The Sunday Times, as well as reflecting this cultural fact, helps to construct the status quo by consistently drawing upon men as news actors/sources and by presenting men as the dominant

actors/sources in the election news. Fairclough (2003) asserts that, it is by occupying a particular position that subject relations or identities are represented. The fact that men dominant the newspaper, therefore, helps construct their dominant status and position in society, while at the same time, helping to construct the subordinate position of women in society by virtue of under representing them and subordinating their perspective on reality in the news. In her analysis of the representation of American women in the media in which she examined the relationship between media images of women and women's role in American society, Tuchman (1996) also found that women are underrepresented, trivialised and condemned in the media, and argues that this 'symbolic annihilation' by the media is because of their lack of power. As she further argues in accordance with the constructionist approach to representation, one cannot assume that the media passively reflects 'reality' as it is, but actively, through the complex process involved in representation, constructs the 'reality' it presents to its audience.

In consistence with literature on the sociology of new production, one explanation for the under representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times news has to do with the routinisation of the news production process in its relation to the economic interests of the newspaper industry. What this implies for the news product is that, there is a systematic over accessing of men sources while excluding others. Institutional voices that are easy to access are used more frequently as sources also, because they present the most likely indisputable perspectives. Moreover, since there are more men than women in most political structures, it occurs that more men voices than women voices are used.

Gender, as a social construction that raises issues of power and hierarchy, creates frameworks that sustain representations of gender (De Lauretis 1987). Assumptions about gender are inscribed, represented and reproduced in the media, and in the case of the Sunday Times, this serves not to transform but to sustain the subordinate position of South African women in the South African society.

### **5.3. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, I have presented and discussed the findings from the quantitative analysis of the 106 'news items' taken from the sample of publications produced by the Sunday Times between January 2004 and April 2004. Drawing on these findings, I have

indicated that women politicians were numerically underrepresented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period - a finding that confirms the first hypothesis of the study. I have also reported that overall, the presentation of women politicians in the Sunday Times tended to focus more on their personality traits, followed by their potential for office, their physical attributes and lastly, their family relations. These findings, confirm the study's assumption that overall, the Sunday Times represented women politicians in ways that serve to reproduce and therefore sustain women's subordinate status.

In the next chapter, I engage in a detailed critical analysis of the representation of women politicians in selected 'news items'. Paying particular attention to the meanings and frameworks that the Sunday Times provides for its readers' understanding and interpretation of women politicians, the analysis relies mainly on the analytical categories of Fairclough's analytical framework.

## CHAPTER 6

### CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN POLITICIANS IN THE SUNDAY TIMES DURING THE 2004 ELECTIONS

#### 6.0. Introduction

This chapter builds on the quantitative findings of the previous chapter, with an in-depth examination of the Sunday Times election news discourse on the representation of women politicians to reveal the ideological construction of gender relations between the dominant men and the subordinate women. Using analytical categories from Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis (1992b; 1995) explained in the methodology chapter, selected texts from the content analysis sample are analysed to reveal the frameworks the Sunday Times creates for the readers' understanding and interpretation of South African women politicians. This kind of analysis is particularly useful in demonstrating how properties of socio cultural practices shape news texts.

Discourse, as explained in the theoretical chapter, is both an instrument and an effect of power; it both reflects and helps shape the social structure. Because discourses define a legitimate way of representing and making sense of certain aspects of reality, the Sunday Times' election news texts alike, define and provide legitimate ways of representing and understanding women politicians. Thus, it is critical to analyse the way in which the Sunday Times draws up boundaries of how its newsreaders understand women politicians, and interrogate the social ideological effects of such representations.

The media, as Bennett (1995) asserts, does not exist separate from the reality it claims to represent, so that it can stand apart from that pre-existing reality and passively reflect it - like a mirror - to the readers. Rather, the media always actively and effectively construct reality. Society, as the cultural studies approach informs us in Chapter 3, is divided unequally along such lines as gender, and characterised by the oppression of the subordinate other (Fiske 1987; Kellner 1995). The contestation between dominant and subordinate groups takes the form of the struggle over meanings that shape and define the terrain of culture, and cultural practices such as news texts, can play a role in sustaining systems of domination, since they are an important site where cultural meanings are produced and circulated through society.

To begin my analysis, I provide a general characterisation of the news texts I work with in the first section. A textual analysis that reveals some of the main discursive patterns that the Sunday Times used in the representation of women politicians during the 2004 elections then follows in the second section. In the third section, I provide an analysis of the discourse practice to explain why the news texts are what they are, before I consider some of the broader social issues that influence the production of and help shape the textual features of the news in the fourth section. The chapter then ends with a discussion of the main issues raised and a conclusion to this qualitative analysis.

### **6.1. A General Characterisation of the Texts under Analysis**

For the critical discourse analysis (CDA) of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during the four-month period, I used the typical-case sampling technique to select only two news items out of the corpus of data used in the content analysis in the previous chapter. Typical-case sampling, as Deacon et al. (1999:171) assert, is the kind of sampling in which the researcher seeks to identify a case that exemplifies the key features of a phenomenon being investigated.

The two selected news items that I analyse are headlined “The good, the bad and the redeployed” (March 21, 2004 page 4) and “Future looks unhealthy for Manto” (April 11, 2004 page 4). Appendix 5 and 6 contain reproductions of these news items’ text (excluding photographs). There are several reasons why I have selected these two news items. Firstly, both were published in the months of March and April in which - compared to January and February - more women politicians, a total of eight and 13 respectively, were figured as news actors/sources (see Table 2 in Chapter 5). In January and February, women politicians were very insignificantly used as news actors/sources constituting only three and two of all the actors/sources used in the two month respectively. In contrast, 55 and 82 men politicians were used as news actors/sources in January and February respectively, with a further 49 and 127 men politicians being figured in March and April respectively. Secondly, both news items are some of the very few news items in which more women politicians, in addition to men politicians, were figured and given a relatively high degree of presence in terms of the amount of coverage (see appendix 3). In particular, the two items provide very useful resources for a

comparative analysis of the representation of women politicians and men politicians, because each one of them consists of both women politicians and men politicians as news actors/sources. In addition, the fact that each of these news items revolves around one subject matter eliminates the problem of comparatively analysing completely different news items that focus on different subjects, since different subjects would entail bringing in different issues to resonate with the subject matter at hand.

In terms of genre, the two news items analysed are both feature articles, and both appear on the inside pages of the Sunday Times. As feature articles, the two items bear soft news with an in-depth account and analysis of events (McNair 1998) that may extend back to a few days, weeks, months and even years. Below are brief summaries of the contents of these texts.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Headline and summary of the feature article's contents</b>
21-03-04 page 4	<p><u>The good, the bad and the redeployed</u></p> <p>Following the finalisation of party lists of electoral candidates, the <u>Sunday Times</u> profiles three women politicians (Sibongile Manana, Lumka Yengeni and Raenette Taljaard) and two men politicians (Mhlabunzima Hlengwa and Stanley Mogoba), outlining their political backgrounds, past performances and achievements as public office holders.</p>
18-04-04 page 4	<p><u>Future looks unhealthy for Manto</u></p> <p>In anticipation of a reshuffle at the Ministry of Health, the <u>Sunday Times</u> assesses and compares Manto Tshabalala-Msimang's performance (as head of the ministry at that time) with the credentials of one woman (Thoko Didiza) and two men (Dr. Zweli Mkhize and James Ngculu) whom the <u>Sunday Times</u> identifies as Tshabalala-Msimang's possible successors.</p>

When we examine the compositional structure of the texts, and the selection and placement of the main participants in the two features, we can view each feature as one story that is composed of several sub stories, with each sub story focusing on one of the

main participants<sup>3</sup>. In my analysis, I refer to a particular feature article by citing the headline, and refer to a particular sub story by citing the main participant of the story, in this case the politician's surname. Both feature articles are composed of both text and photographs, but given limitations of space, I pay particular attention to the linguistic aspects of both texts and only consider the photograph in "Future looks unhealthy for Manto". A critical textual analysis of the two texts reveals a number of underlying ideological patterns that the Sunday Times uses in the representation of women politicians that perpetuate the subordinate status of women in society.

## **6.2. Prevalent Patterns in the Representation of Women Politicians That Frame the Readers' Understanding and Interpretation of Women**

Several patterns of representation emerged in the previous chapter, including the fact that women politicians were seriously infrequently used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times election news, though women politicians were on average given more presence in the news than men politicians. An examination of one of the feature articles clearly exemplifies the last point.

For instance, "Future looks unhealthy for Manto", the article about the anticipated removal of Tshabalala-Msimang from her ministerial position, is given more prominence than all the other news items appearing on the same page in several ways. Composed of both text and photograph, the article's prominence is realised in its position, composition and intertextual relations. It is the only news item with a full-length photograph covering almost the same space as that of the accompanying text and occupies about two thirds of the upper half part of the page. The typographical style of its headline has been enlarged relative to the headlines of the other news items, and it is the only item with a sub-headline. When we look at the average number of words allocated to the four main participants, i.e. Tshabalala-Msimang with about 306 words and a picture, Dr. Zweli Mkhize with about 294 words, Thoko Didiza with about 276 words and Vumile Ngculu with about 282 words, women politicians are allocated more word-space. A similar pattern emerges in "The good, the bad and the redeployed", where a count of the overall

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<sup>3</sup> See appendices 6 and 7 for reproductions of the textual elements of the two feature articles. I have numbered the sentences in the two texts from one to 67 and from one to 34 respectively, for easy referencing in my analysis.

number of words allocated to the sub stories on the main participants shows the following: Manana (271 words), Yengeni (372 words), Taljaard (352 words), Hlengwa (202 words) and Mogoba (261 words). The main question that arises from the issue of quantity, as alluded to in the previous chapter, is the substance of what the Sunday Times represents. There is no direct correlation, however, between more coverage and better representation. For instance, just because a particular source is frequently mentioned does not mean that he or she is represented better than others because, he or she may not be an active participant at all but merely a subject of the other people's representations.

News, as already explained in Chapter 3, is not just reported but also interpreted. The interpretation of any news event involves the beliefs, attitudes, values, opinions and goals of the interpreter. We know that values cannot be separated from human activity (Inglist 1993), and events, as Fowler (1991) outlines, are always written from a particular ideological position. Ideology plays an important role in determining what and who is reported and how.

A critical analysis of the substance of what is presented in the two articles reveals a number of ideological patterns of representation that are worth attending to. I use the word critical here in the sense that Fairclough uses it to refer to issues of power relations. Of significance also, is the mobilisation of meaning in the interest of the powerful group (Thompson 1988), that is the men politicians, and the use of ideological patterns that sustain the status quo by representing women politicians as being different from and subordinate to men politicians.

A critical textual analysis shows for example, how the Sunday Times consistently assigns to women politicians negative personal attributes while at the same time assigning to men politicians positive personal attributes. Another pattern that emerges is a systematic construction of women politicians as incompetent politicians, who are also dependent on and benefactors of the actions of men. Of particular interest is the pattern in which the Sunday Times represents women politicians as passive and men politicians as active participants in the textual interactions. These are some of the patterns, I would argue, that served to frame the newsreaders' understanding of women politicians.

In determining the significance of events, newspapers and their readers, as Fowler (1991) asserts, make reference, explicit or more usually implicit, to 'frames', 'schemata'

or 'general propositions' which help people work out the mental categories for sorting out experiences. The patterns of representations used in the Sunday Times serve, not to transform but, to sustain women's subordinate social and political status in society and reproduce the hegemonic relations of power between men and women. I shall briefly illustrate how some of these patterns are linguistically encoded in the two articles below, and demonstrate how the news discourse works as an instrument to reproduce the dominant and subordinate positions of men and women respectively.

### **6.2.1. Personalisation and the Construction of Negative Traits for Women**

#### **Politicians**

As the quantitative analysis indicated in the previous chapter, the Sunday Times referred to several subject matters in the representation of politicians. One of the subject matters that was predominantly emphasised was the personality of the politicians, which saw the Sunday Times mention the personalities of 94.44% of the women politicians and of 21.99% of the men politicians that were prominently used as news actors/sources (See Table 8 in the previous chapter). Several factors aid in the selection and presentation of sources in a news story. As explained in Chapter 3, the journalistic news value of personalities, the potential to personalise or refer to elite persons (who include politicians) (Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1994), plays an important role in the selection and presentation of events and news actors/sources.

Using this news value, journalists are able to make news stories comprehensible by reducing complex historical and institutional processes to the actions of individuals, and promoting feelings of identification, empathy or disapproval (Fowler 1991; Gans 1979). It is because of this that news is about people and mostly about individuals. When we review the personalities of the women politicians mentioned above, it is clear that their representations could evoke disapproval from the readers.

In the two feature articles, the preoccupation with the individual person is marked in the frequent use of the third person words like she, her, he, his and him in both feature articles. A comparative look at the personal attributes that are assigned to both women politicians and men politicians shows that the Sunday Times consistently assigns to women politicians personalities that are predominantly negative while at the same time

assigning to men politicians personalities that are positive. A review of some of the lexical terms (including their synonyms) used helps to illustrate this.

Lexical choices are crucial in the construction of meaning, and since they “mark off socially and ideologically distinct areas of experience” (Fowler 1991:84) they have a categorisation function. In the two articles, several lexical terms are used explicitly to distinguish between women politicians and men politicians.

In “The good, the bad and the redeployed” for instance, the Sunday Times represents Manana as confrontational (s2) and controversial (S11), while Taljaard is represented as a combative or argumentative person (s59) who can sometimes be brash or arrogant (s60). Also, in “Future looks unhealthy for Manto”, the Sunday Times represents Tshabalala-Msimang as an autocratic or tyrannical person (s9). The personalities of the men politicians, as stated above, are positive ones. For instance, in “Future looks unhealthy for Manto”, Mkhize is represented as an astute person or someone of good judgement who is competent and attentive to community needs (s16), while Ngculu is represented as a decisive person who is also a good listener (s33). The only woman politician who is constructed positively is Didiza, who the Sunday Times describes as “being bright, willing to listen and determined, with a sound grasp of issues” (s25). Even then, Didiza is represented not as being reasonable but merely as “[appearing] more reasonable than Tshabalala-Msimang” (s26), evoking, as I shall soon show, her political incapability.

Sources are selected in the news for their personal attributes, and the media takes advantage of those attributes that resonate with the audience expectations, or with the assumption that the readers want to know about them. We know that the more the paper resonates with the audience, the more the circulation (and sales) and readership levels of the paper increase, which makes great business sense. The personality of a source may encompass such attributes as their prominence or leadership qualities, including the negative attribute of being controversial, which constitute newsworthiness. This is one possible explanation why the controversial or confrontational traits associated with Manana in “The good, the bad and the redeployed” were specifically highlighted.

Negative evaluative statements are also used in the texts that evoke negative representations of women politicians in several ways. Most of these statements work in binary oppositions, which evoke the assumed values of desirability and undesirability,

eligibility and ineligibility. In addition, most of the words used are based on the parameters of the values of success, peace and delivery of services. The following words on the left have been picked out from the texts and their antonyms listed on the right, which represent the undesirable and desirable politicians respectively.

<b>Undesirable politicians are/have</b>	<b>Desirable politicians are /have</b>
Controversial	Non-controversial
Autocratic	Democratic
Combative	Peaceful
Disastrous careers	Successful careers
Mismanage resources	Have good management skills
Not hands-on in their jobs	Are hands-on in their jobs
Non performers	Performers
Failures	Successful

Unsurprisingly, all the undesirable or negative values/traits listed on the left are attributed or used with reference to women politicians and appear in sub stories on women politicians only. The Sunday Times highlighted negative values in the representation of women politicians, which evoke the undesirability of women as leaders, through such lexical terms as controversial and autocratic. When one considers some of the synonyms of such words as ‘autocratic’, a whole range of negative words like dictatorial, domineering and repressive follow, words that would connote the dangers of politically empowering women. Clearly, this manner of representation harms the reputation of and confidence in women politicians. The fact that the lexical terms selected to represent women and men politicians are binary oppositions drawn from the good-bad evaluative continuum could be seen as a powerful ideological tool that the Sunday Times uses to frame the understanding of women politicians.

As the lexical terms above indicate, women politicians are categorised and positioned negatively, and if they are not personally assigned negative traits, their appearance in the news is constantly framed within contexts that associate them with controversies. This is particularly evident in “The good, the bad and the redeployed”. For instance, while

Manana is reported to have had a “controversial record as MEC” in Mpumalanga (s11), Yengeni is presented as having become politically known after her husband’s Yengeni 4 x 4 scandal came to public attention (s13) and how she “was one of the trialists in the ... Yengeni trial of 1987” (s23). On the other hand, Taljaard’s name has been surrounded by furore and controversy, since her omission from the regional list caused an uproar among some party members. Taljaard’s personality, as some of the metaphors used to describe her character indicate, is also framed negatively. The Sunday Times, for example, reports how “the combative Taljaard will continue to rock the ANC’s boat” (s39) and how “[t]rue to form, [she] is expected to be a thorn in the ruling party’s side on her return to parliament” (s47).

These metaphors can be regarded as metaphors of natural disasters. Only violent waves can rock a boat, and we know that thorns cause pain when they prick you. Here, our experiences of these natural events are evoked to frame negatively how the readers understand Taljaard. In the text, the Sunday Times specifically highlights how this is almost a natural character for Taljaard that is to be expected as signified by the words “will continue” and “true to form” in the quotes above.

### **6.2.2. Women Politicians as Incompetent Political Leaders**

In the previous chapter, the analysis revealed that apart from accentuating the personalities of the politicians, the Sunday Times also highlighted their potential for public office. Unsurprisingly, there were more references to capabilities in the representation of women politicians than in the representation of men politicians, with the Sunday Times referring to the potential for office to 66.67% women politicians and to only 14.66% men politicians.

In the two texts, the Sunday Times highlighted this subject matter by outlining the politicians’ achievements and then evaluating them as either negative or positive, and in some instances, evidence given to back up such assertions. While women politicians are presented as low achievers or as incompetent, men politicians are dominantly presented as high achievers and successful. For instance, in “Future looks unhealthy for Manto” the Sunday Times reports how “Mkhize has achieved recognition for getting programmes off the ground” (s14) citing “The [KwaZulu-Natal’s] programme to prevent mother-to-child

HIV transmission [as] an example of his proactive approach” (s15). On the other hand, the Sunday Times reports how there is “dissatisfaction with [Tshabalala-Msimang’s] performance” (s1). To support this supposition, the paper draws upon and cites “health experts and sources within the ANC and Parliament [who have] identified [other] candidates as capable contenders [for Tshabalala-Msimang’s position]” (s3). The word ‘dissatisfaction’ here denotes discontent or disappointment in Tshabalala-Msimang’s performance. On a wider level, the same word might connote that women politicians are unlikely to perform any political work satisfactorily.

In “The good, the bad and the redeployed”, Manana is reported as having had “a disastrous career ... that saw her department placed under curatorship following incidents of “mismanagement” (s5), and how on the other hand, Hlengwa “staunchly defended traditional leaders against [the] encroachment on their powers by the new municipal laws six years ago” (s16). What this means is that someone else was appointed to take over Manana’s department because of the implied causes that the Sunday Times highlights. Within the same article, we see the Sunday Times refer to Taljaard as “the Democratic Alliance’s shadow finance minister” (s33), who was “reportedly accused of failing to do enough constituency work” which made members of the DA “omit her name from the initial provincial list” (s34).

The ‘shadow’ metaphor is ideologically used here to frame the reader’s interpretation of Taljaard. A shadow, for example, cannot make active choices regarding either the course of direction or action to take nor when. Taking its cues from the object, a shadow may be dormant or appear active depending on what, say, the object (person) does, and depending on the amount of light falling on the object, a shadow may or may not be visible. If the person raises his/her hand, the shadow - since it has no conscience - follows suit and does the same regardless of the reasons for the act. When we consider the implication of the statement that Manana’s department was placed under curatorship and how Taljaard is presented above, it is evident that the Sunday Times reports from a gendered paradigm that see women as incompetent politicians.

The other way through which the Sunday Times attempts to represent men politicians as being more competent than women politicians, I would argue, is by emphasising the recent engagement of women politicians with the political realm. In “The good, the bad

and the redeployed” for instance, the Sunday Times reports how Lumka Yengeni was virtually unknown before her husband’s scandal, how she was at the bottom of the ANC national list in 1994 and how her name was not high enough to get her into the Western Cape legislature in 1999 (s19 - s20). In the representation of Taljaard also, the Sunday Times indicates how she became the youngest Member of Parliament when elected to parliament five years ago (s41). Furthermore, the fact that women politicians have only recently begun engaging with the political realm can be deduced from the use of the metaphor “rising star” in both texts, specifically in the representation of Lumka Yengeni and Didiza as rising stars in the ANC. What this metaphor signifies is the fact that women are still at the bottom of the political ladder and are only just beginning to make progress. The fact that women’s involvement in politics is very recent plays on the fact that they are therefore politically not very experienced.

None of the feature articles analysed above refers to any historical factors that have contributed to the contemporary position of black South African women. They do not illustrate for instance, how South African women were historically marginalised from the political realm and denied even any political rights to vote (Walker 1979). As the literature in Chapter 2 indicates, the colonial government excluded women from any parliamentary or provincial franchise, and where only considered as an electoral constituency in the early 1990s during the transition from apartheid to democratic state (Hassim 2003; Poinsette 1985). The literature also indicated how the colonial administrators formalised and privileged men’s political institutions, and replaced some of the indigenous political systems that afforded women substantial participation in politics, which led to the women’s loss of institutional authority (Mama 1997; O’Barr and Firmin-Sellers 1995). Furthermore, only men, rather than women, were historically privileged in both formal education and employment

### **6.2.3. Women Politicians as Dependents on Men politicians**

One other pattern that emerges from the two feature articles, as alluded to above, is the pattern in which the Sunday Times represents women as dependent on men, on both husbands and fellow men politicians. When we consider the way in which spouses are presented, it is possible to see the subjective manner with regard to the representation of

women politicians. In both articles, for instance, the word ‘wife’ (and not ‘his wife’) is used only once and in direct reference to a woman politician, while the word ‘husband’ (and especially ‘her husband’) appears several times and is also used in direct reference to women politicians. The ‘wife’ imagery, as Holmes (1994) asserts, has been used to negate a black woman’s political activism.

In “Future looks unhealthy for Manto”, the manner in which Tshabalala-Msimang’s husband is incorporated in the text is interesting, particularly since the Sunday Times appears to be suggesting that one’s marital status may influence one’s performance. The paper reports for instance that, despite Tshabalala-Msimang’s connections to Mbeki and her husband, she has not done a better job (s8). When we consider the other feature article, we can see how the Sunday Times, in the representation of Yengeni, is particularly preoccupied with and constantly associating Yengeni with her husband. Here, Yengeni’s husband is mentioned in both the first three opening statements and the last four closing statements. The preoccupation with Yengeni’s husband is so much that reference to her husband is made several times, both directly to his name (which is mentioned 5 times) and using the words “her husband” (mentioned four times). The paper, in fact, appears to associate Yengeni’s involvement with politics with her husband.

Representations that emphasise family relationships are often those of women. As Fowler (1991) asserts, if individuals in the news happen to be women, media representations often gratuitously foreground their marital and family relationships. In “Future looks unhealthy for Manto”, we can see for instance how Tshabalala-Msimang’s husband is brought into the discourse mainly to establish her familial or marital status. According to Fowler’s observation, it appears that this is not a case specific to the Sunday Times but a general preoccupation of the media, and one, which activates the patriarchal nature of society.

Representations of the wife also serve to position women politicians as performing the supportive roles that society has constructed for them. In “The good, the bad and the redeployed”, we see the Sunday Times report how Yengeni “appeared alongside her disgraced husband during his countless court appearances on fraud charges” (s17). This is repeated later when the paper reports, “[a]s the scandal unfolded, she appeared alongside Tony wearing designer outfits that almost invariably got the pair onto the front

pages of newspapers” (s22). Notice also, how the Sunday Times uses this opportunity to evoke concerns with the aesthetic traits of women. While only her outfit is mentioned, the picture accompanying Tshabalala-Msimang’s article is particularly interesting considering that Tshabalala-Msimang is positioned very well dressed with both her hair and nails nicely done.

Apart from highlighting women politicians’ links with their husbands, the Sunday Times also tended to represent women politicians as dependent on other men, men politicians specifically. In this kind of presentations, men politicians are generally represented as engaging in processes that benefit the women politicians. To illustrate this, I shall briefly examine the ideational patterns in transitivity.

#### **6.2.4. Women Politicians as Passive Patients and Benefactors of Men’s Actions**

During the construction of texts, choices in the representation of processes, participants (social actors or physical objects) and circumstances (time, place, or cause) (Fairclough 2003; Halliday 1994 [1985]) have to be made. Several processes can be associated with a particular clause, and include the processes: of doing (material) e.g. Manana suspended Dr. von Mollendorff; of sensing (mental) e.g. senior officials feel that other candidates would do a better job; and of being (relational) e.g. Didiza has extensive experience or Ngculu is decisive. Others are processes of behaving (behavioural) e.g. the driver smiled, of saying (verbal) e.g. Yengeni says she is looking forward to serving the public, and of existing (existential) e.g. there was a reporter at the conference. Thus, while material processes have an actor (or agent) and a goal (or patient), mental processes have a sensor and a phenomenon, and verbal processes have a speaker and a listener. An analysis of choices made from the system of transitivity (a part of the ideational function of language) in the representation of participants and their associated processes reveals a systematic passivisation of women politicians.

When we examine who is constructed as doing what to whom and with what effect in the two articles, it is evident that men politicians appear to be doing or taking actions that benefit women politicians, while the women politicians are presented as passive. This is evident in “The good, the bad and the redeployed”. For instance, the Sunday Times indicates how Suzman - represented in a verbal process - entered the dispute surrounding

Taljaard's omission from the provincial list without any tangible results, until Tony Leon - represented in a material process - eventually stepped in and reinstated Taljaard's name to the list (s35-36). Similarly, it is a man, Mahlangu who is constructed as having the power to move Manana from her position as health MEC to the helm of the KwaZulu-Natal's sports department. Here, the Sunday Times represents Mahlangu as the agent who is actively responsible for the action. In "Future looks unhealthy for Manto", we also see how men politicians have more actional or doing power, and are therefore constructed in more material processes. Here, notice how President Mbeki is the only one with the prerogative to choose his cabinet, and how he wanted to remove Tshabalala-Msimang from her portfolio as early as last year (s4-s5).

The participants suffering the material processes identified above, unsurprisingly, are women. In the last two processes, the causes for the processes are represented as being a result of the women's doing. For instance, Manana was moved from her position as Mpumalanga MEC for health because of her "wrongdoing" in her department, while Tshabalala-Msimang was to be removed from her position as Health Minister because she had failed to perform. Similarly, the paper reports that Taljaard was omitted from the initial Gauteng list because she had failed to do enough constituency work (s34). Notice how these statements also raise questions regarding their abilities as political leaders.

Of particular interest also in the two articles is the construction of women politicians as engaging in material processes that may generally be viewed as negative and men politicians in material processes that may generally be viewed as positive. In "The good, the bad and the redeployed" for instance, both Manana and Hlengwa are presented as doing something, but while Manana's actions are those that may generally be viewed as negative, Hlengwa's actions may generally be viewed as positive. In this article for instance, the Sunday Times presents Manana as having "grabbed headlines", "[barred] an HIV/Aids organisation from counselling people" and "suspended" one of the doctors (s2 and s3). We know from the sociology of news that active decisions are made in the selection of events and sources as news (Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1982), and from discourse theory that each particular form of linguistic expression in a news text has its own reasons (Fowler 1991). The word 'grabbing' evokes the negative meaning of taking something by force, while the word 'banned' implies to prohibit or forbid. To

claim that Manana ‘grabbed’ headlines is an unfavourable way of describing how Manana first got the attention of the Sunday Times, or rather how the Sunday Times first identified Manana as a newsworthy personality who takes newsworthy actions. The manner in which the word ‘banned’ is used here frames a negative understanding of Manana considering that she banned an HIV/Aids counselling organisation. Both words work to characterise Manana’s actions negatively, with the connotation that once women wield power, they may abuse it. In the same article, we see how the Sunday Times represents Hlengwa as having “defended traditional leaders against [the] encroachment of their powers by the new municipal laws six years ago” (s46). In addition, while Mogoba is reported to have taken over the reins of the Pan Africanist Congress in order to revive it, De Lille’s exit is said to have caused the opposite effect on the party.

One other pattern that emerges from the two texts is the manner in which participants and voices are incorporated in the texts. In most of the sub stories where women politicians are the main news actors/sources at least one man is figured as a news actor/source and either quoted or referred to, whereas in the sub stories where men politicians are the main participants, not one woman, except in Mogoba’s sub story, is used as a news actor/source. Thus, not only are more men than women engaged in verbal process, there are also more men than women that are used as news actors/sources in the two texts. Of the total number of 25 names mentioned in the two texts, 18 are men and only seven are women. Of these, 12 are men politicians and only six are women politicians, while six are non-politician men and only one is a non-politician woman. Even at this micro-level, these figures reflect findings of the previous chapter that the Sunday Times uses more men (and men politicians) than women (and women politicians) as news actors/sources. The only difference is that there is a relatively large number of women politicians in the two texts, representing 25% of all politician news actors/sources used, as compared to the 7.67% found from all the news texts.

When we consider the relational processes where the Sunday Times ascribes a certain quality (attributive) or identity (identifying) to the politicians, it is evident that women politicians are predominantly assigned negative qualities and identities compared to the qualities and identities assigned to men, which concurs with my observation above that women were negatively personalised.

Another pattern that emerges from the way participants are constructed in verbal processes is one where more men than women speak and women politicians are passive while men politicians are active. In both articles for instance, the lead participants, Manana and Tshabalala-Msimang, are denied any verbal roles. While men speakers are assigned predominately agency roles (i.e. sayer in verbal process terms) in most of the verbal processes, women politicians are constructed mostly as benefiting from the verbal processes. For instance, while Manana is completely silenced with no single verbal process constructed for her, Mthembu defends Manana's position on the national list, with the word 'said' being used in relation to him three times in the three sentences attributed to him. Similarly, Tshabalala-Msimang is not represented as saying anything regarding the anticipated reshuffles at her ministry. Yet, Netshitenzhe and Mchunu speak out on the same matter (s4). In addition, when men politicians speak, they speak from a particular institutional power, which grants them credibility to speak and makes their claims to news values legitimate.

In "The good, the bad and the redeployed" for instance, Mthembu speaks about Manana's position on the national list from the ANC in Mpumalanga, while Yengeni speaks mainly about herself from a non-institutional position. In "Future looks unhealthy for Manto", Netshitenzhe and Mchunu speak from their positions as government and healthy spokespersons respectively, and what they say is not put in direct quotes. Direct quotes serve several functions such as to indicate that the quoted statement is an incontrovertible fact since it is the newsmaker's own words, and to distance and disown the endorsement of what the source said (Bell 1991).

In the text, quotes serve both functions when men newsmakers are quoted, unlike when women newsmakers are quoted. When women are represented in verbal processes, what they said is put in direct quotes, which I would argue serves to distance the journalist from the validity of what is said. In "Future looks unhealthy for Manto", all the statements made by news actors/sources are not in direct quotes except one which is represented as such to preserve the speaker's own words. This is an assertive statement made about the qualities of a man politician. In "The good, the bad and the redeployed", quotation marks are only used in sub stories about women politicians, and their use and 'tone' arguably serves to distance the journalist from what the sources said. For instance,

the journalist distances himself from what Mthembu says about Manana, from Yengeni's assertions that her position on the national list is something she earned on her own, and from Taljaard's opinion about how corruption issues are handled.

### **6.3. Interpretation and Explanation for the Gendered and Ideological Patterns of Representation in the Sunday Times**

There are several explanations why the feature articles analysed above are as they are. First is the nature of genres that the Sunday Times used and the discourses it drew upon in the construction of the texts, in addition to the social and institutional conditions of the discourse practice. Second are the broader social issues of the social practice in which the Sunday Times is produced that encompass both financial and audience considerations, which determine what and how events and sources are represented in the news. Below, I start by briefly analysing the discourse practice before I examine the social practice.

#### **6.3.1. Analysis of the Discourse Practice: The Influence of Genres and Discourses Drawn upon in the Representation of Women Politicians**

The feature articles analysed above are interdiscursively complex, articulating together a variety of genres and discourses. The two main genres that are used, the biography and the curriculum vitae, are common in the representation of political electoral candidates, but work to disadvantage the women politicians when comparisons about political experience, achievements and personalities are delineated and evaluated as the analysis above has shown. A biography is characteristically a non-fictional written account of an individual person, which may develop complex insights and highlight different textures of personality. A curriculum vitae, on the other hand, records an individual's educational background, outlines his or her necessary job experience and achievements, and in most cases indicate what the individual can accomplish for the prospective employer.

Regarding the manner in which the Sunday Times draws on these two genres in the representation of political candidates, it is possible to see the subjective nature in which their associated discourses are ideologically chosen and selectively framed for the readers' understanding of women politicians. As the analysis above has shown, the

Sunday Times tended to construct the personalities of women politicians as negative and those of men politicians as positive. Furthermore, while the Sunday Times tended to outline the abilities and successes of men politicians, it tended to outline the inabilities and failures of women politicians. Delineating the qualities of the politicians, we see that the Sunday Times constructs women politicians as dependent and passive, and men politicians as independent and active. In addition, using the curriculum vitae genre we see how the Sunday Times traces the historical involvement of politicians in politics, which works to emphasise the men's extended involvement with the political realm as opposed to highlighting the fact that women are more or less novice to this realm.

Within the news texts, it is also possible to identify a number of discourses or paradigms that the Sunday Times appropriates and reproduces to frame the readers' understanding of women politicians. From the above textual analysis, it is evident that the Sunday Times drew upon patriarchal and gender discourses, and on the idea of a public-private distinction of work and home, in ways that subordinates women politicians.

As explained in Chapter 2, the public-private paradigm tends to define women primary in relation to the private realm of domestic life, and to define men in relation to the public realm of, for instance, politics and the media. Furthermore, the public, unlike the private realm, is associated with power and rationality, qualities that are assumed the preserve of men. The ideological effect of this is that it attempts to define politics in a highly masculine manner, which precludes easy incorporation of women. I have also explained how gender is a social construction that raises issues of hierarchy. Within this gender paradigm, women and men are assigned identity, value and status in social hierarchies, and men ranked superior than women. By infrequently using women politicians as news actors/sources, the Sunday Times reproduces the socially constructed hierarchy between men and women. These discourses work in consonance with the patriarchal ideology that emphasises the authority of men and the dependence of women. The wife imagery that emerged from the texts evokes patriarchal discourses associated with the family, in which the husband is the provider and protector of the woman.

### **6.3.2. Social Economic Factors of News Production and Their Effects on the Representation of Women Politicians in the Sunday Times**

When we consider the broader social issues of the social practice within which the Sunday Times is produced, it is possible to see that the textual features used are in accordance with the competitive nature of the South African media landscape and in line with the dominant (global and local) practices of news production. The operation of the Sunday Times and the nature of its news products are both partly determined by economic or business and audience considerations. With over 3.5 million readers and a circulation of 506 147 average sales, it is clear that the Sunday Times must always resonate with its readers expectations. Attraction of mass readerships shows the successfulness of a newspaper, which is in itself, also a good factor for attracting advertisers who bear the largest portion of the newspaper's income. Newspaper publication, as Fowler (1991:20) observes, is an industry and a business, with a definitive place in the nation's and the world's economic affairs. News, as Schudson (2003:3) asserts is "a manufactured good, the product of a set of social, economic, and political institutions and practices".

Since newspapers are in the business of making profits, they have to resonate with their audience expectations in order to sell their news to audiences and their space to advertisers. In the context of a competitive media market with more than 94 community radio stations, 33 commercial radio stations, 4 television channels and about 18 daily and 28 weekly newspapers (<http://www.saarf.co.za>), the Sunday Times would undeniably want to sustain and increase its readership and circulations levels. All these news institutions are obviously under pressure to achieve and maintain higher readership or listener ship levels and ultimately increase their circulations levels. These economic considerations entail that the Sunday Times makes profits, in order to survive within the current economic milieu. Naturally, the Sunday Times operates under intensive competitive conditions, and the maximisation of circulation and profits becomes a constant preoccupation, while at the same time working within the wider cultural context of the transformation of gender relations and equalisation of access to political and decision-making positions for both men and women, including their access to media. Furthermore, the paper has to take into considerations its external relations with other

industries. These factors, together with the prevailing conventional journalistic practices as well as factors of production schedules, all play a role in determining what the Sunday Times publishes as news and how it is presented.

As South Africa's biggest-selling national newspaper, with sub-sections such as the Sunday Times Magazine, Lifestyle, Business Times and Metro sections, the Sunday Times has to fulfil shareholder interest and make a profit by appealing to both readers and advertisers (<http://www.johncom.co.za/busnewspapers.asp>). Also, as part of Johnnic Communications, a limited company listed on the JSE Securities Exchange, the Sunday Times must be seen to be as competitive an organisation as several other organisations that form part of Johnnic. Otherwise, the value of the paper to the mother body ceases to make any business sense. This therefore reflects the nature of the competitive environment the Sunday Times operates within, and helps explain why the two feature articles analysed above are as they are.

The manner of representation of women politicians in the news is linked to many different issues, which include, among others, the ideological and gendered judgments of news, the news production practices such as routines and news beats, and the economies of news construction. The reliance on organisational routines, such as beats or news nets of higher status institutions where women are under represented may be one possible explanation why women politicians are infrequently used as news sources/actors. Since news organisations have to be productively efficient in order to be economically viable, the continued reliance on such routines entails continued under representation of women politicians, until there is a change in the social structure that accommodates more women politicians in institutions of higher status.

As explained in Chapter 3, newspapers have an assumed audience in their selection of stories and sources, which plays a role in the production of news, and newspapers strive to give the readers what resonates with them. The most likely reason why women politicians were not frequently used as news actors/sources as compared to the frequency with which men politicians were used, is the newspaper's assumed non-newsworthiness of women. Sources have to be relevant to the news story and have news worthy attributes, for them to be considered newsworthy enough to be figured in the news. These social economic factors have arguably shaped the news product.

#### **6.4. Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have conducted a critical discourse analysis of two feature articles as a way of qualitatively analysing the representation of women politicians, to enrich the quantitative findings of the previous chapter. Using analytical tools from Fairclough's three-dimensional framework of analysis, I have illustrated how the Sunday Times represented women politicians in ways that serve not to transform, but to sustain women's subordinate status in society. I have also examined the nature of the discourse and the social practice to help explain why the news texts are the way they are.

The textual analysis for instance, has shown how lexical signs and metaphors played an important role in the Sunday Times' construction of different personalities for women politicians (which tended to be negative) and men politicians (which were predominantly positive). Furthermore, analysis of the transitivity system revealed the active role that the Sunday Times plays in constructing and positioning women politicians and men politicians as patients and agents in material process respectively. By infrequently using women politicians as news sources/actors and by representing them as incompetent political leaders who are sometimes dependent on men, the power relations between the dominant men and the subordinate women in the social structure are undoubtedly reproduced and sustained, as much as they are reproduced and sustained in the news discourse. In summary, the textual analysis reveals many features that help to reproduce the hegemonic power relations.

In the next chapter, I recap some of the main findings from both the content and the discourse analysis as a way of concluding this study, and integrate them together in a discussion that gives the general impression of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during 2004.

## CHAPTER 7

### DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY'S MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

#### 7.0. Introduction

In this chapter, I bring out the key findings from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Sunday Times election news texts produced between 1 January 2004 and 30 April 2004, and discuss them in relation to the objectives of the study. To recap, the aim of this study was to further our understanding about how the Sunday Times creates frameworks for the readers' understanding of women politicians, and to investigate the relationship between the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times as news actors/sources and their material existence in society in proportion to the population. The overall objective was to be able to state whether the Sunday Times' representation of women politicians serves to sustain or transform the subordinate status of South African women politicians.

This chapter also recapitulates some of the reasons why women politicians were infrequently used as news actors/sources in the Sunday Times election news and provides recommendations to the Sunday Times on how it may improve on the representation of women politicians and suggests some areas for further research.

#### 7.1. Material Existence of Women in Society and their Numerical Representation in the Sunday Times Election News

The relationship that exists between the material existence of South African women politicians in society and their representations in the Sunday Times is an imbalanced one. As the study has shown, South African women constituted about 52.2% of the 2001 national population (SSA 2003). Yet, in the Sunday Times election news, women constituted only 22.96% of all the 588 news actors/sources used between 1 January 2004 and 30 April 2004. Furthermore, women constituted about 30% of all Members of Parliament in 2004 (Goetz and Hassim 2003); yet again, women politicians accounted for only 7.67% of all the politician news actors/sources used in the Sunday Times during the same period. Clearly, the number of women (and women politicians) represented in the Sunday Times election news does not match the number of women in the population and

in politics. We can therefore conclude that women politicians were numerically under represented in the Sunday Times during the sampled period.

## **7.2. Explanations For The Infrequent Use Of Women Politicians As News Actors / Sources in the Sunday Times Election News**

Historically, politics has been socially constructed as a men's realm and the domestic as a women's domain. Men, consequently, are viewed as the legitimate and credible news actors/sources who may speak authoritatively on matters of a political nature, elections included. Both politics and the media are deemed as public realms, and not only do men dominate the political structures of society but also the media, both as personnel in news organisations and as news actors/sources in the news.

Several scholars (Gallagher 1995; van Zoonen 1998) have addressed the question of whether an increase in women media personnel would result in an increase in the number of women voices accessed in the media, with the sad realisation that increasing the number of women journalists would not significantly alter the selection of voices that are presented in the news. Several factors can help explain why very few women politicians were used as news actors/sources in the news, most of which were pointed out in Chapter 5 and 6.

One of the reasons why this is the case is that journalists, whether men or women, are significantly guided by the gendered and ideological news values that aid them in the identification, selection and presentation of events and sources as newsworthy (Golding and Elliott 1979; Hartley 1994). It was also pointed out earlier that news values derive from unclear assumptions or judgements about what makes events become newsworthy and what audiences expect. Since they form cultural 'maps' of the social world, news values clearly have implications for the representation of women politicians in the news. Hartley (1994) has pointed out that news is part of the social relations it seeks to report, fragmenting society into distinct spheres that are also hierarchically arranged. The finalisation of national electoral lists, for instance, is an important event during an election year, which meets the news value of threshold, and the fact that some 'unexpected' women politicians (according to the Sunday Times' view) appear on these

lists meets the news value of unexpectedness. These values form a code, which sees the world in a very particular way.

From the content analysis, the study revealed that the reality or the world of politics is predominately seen from the perspective of men politicians, while the perspectives of the women politicians are insignificantly presented. One might assume that, since women are numerically under represented in politics, it follows therefore that they will be numerically underrepresented as news actors/sources in political news. However, this does not necessarily follow when it comes to media and the representation of reality. We know for instance that women constitute 52.2% of the entire South African population, and yet, as the content analysis has indicated (see Table 2 in Chapter 5), women constitute only about 22.96% of all the voices that were represented in the Sunday Times election news. Men, who constitute less than 50% of the population, incredibly constitute about 77.04% of all the news actors/sources used within the same period.

News is predominantly masculine, and its masculinity is expressed through the definitions of newsworthiness, particular angles and styles of writing, and in professional norms and values (van Zoonen 1998). It is not simply about men, but largely by men, and overwhelmingly seen through men (Hartley 1982). Worth noting here too, as Hartley (1982:39) outlines, is the fact that there is an overwhelming 'bias' towards 'public' as opposed to 'private' life, and towards men rather than women. It is within the context of these issues that the Sunday Times news must therefore be understood. Moreover, the fact that news is part of the social relations that it seeks to report means that we take into consideration the gendered and patriarchal character of society.

News in the Sunday Times may reflect and reinforce the gendered and patriarchal nature of the South African society. One explanation for the under representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during the 2004 general and presidential elections is that reporters preserve and reproduce the currently circulating cultural norms which privilege men at the expense of women. In addition, if news preserves the hierarchical nature of gender with men politicians as dominant and women politicians as subordinate, readers may naturally associate men with high status or power and women with low status and power. News cannot be separated from issues of gender and power. The appearance of someone in the news is noteworthy, as the presence in the news often

relays and reinforces one's status. Consequently, those with a higher social status appear more often in the news, for instance men politicians, than those with a lower social status, such as women politicians. Of importance too, are the subject positions created in the news discourse for women politicians and men politicians.

### **7.3. The Role of the Sunday Times in the Reproduction of the Status Quo**

Several scholars (Bennett 1995; Fairclough 1989; Hall 1995; Hartley 1994) have emphasised the active role that the media plays in the reproduction of reality or society. Given the manner in which the Sunday Times represents women politicians, I would argue that the Sunday Times tends to promote or reinforce gender-related stereotypes. By providing representations and meanings that express disapproval of women politicians' political capabilities and consistently highlight their negative personal traits or attributes, the Sunday Times contributes towards the subordination of women politicians.

Socially, men occupy a higher status than women do. During a particular point in time, the prevailing social values of the society are appropriated and become embedded in media products, such as news. As this study has shown, the Sunday Times tends to use more men politicians as news sources than women politicians. This reflects the social structures and cultural norms that are prevalent in the society. In a patriarchal society, men are culturally ranked as superior to women, and as more oriented towards the public realm (of media and politics) rather than the private realm (of the home). In both society and the Sunday Times, this study has shown that men occupy a dominant position while women occupy a subordinate position. What the Sunday Times election news is doing is not transforming, but actually reproducing the status quo.

Both under representation and marginalisation of women in the news serve to reproduce the social structure. Since women are numerically underrepresented and made to occupy subordinate subject (and negative) positions in the news, the Sunday Times draws upon and reproduces the social subordination of women. It is after all, as Fairclough (1995) asserts, by occupying particular subject positions in discourse that these positions are socially reproduced, and the power relations, e.g. between men and women, maintained. Appearing in the news, as well as occupying either a dominant or a

subordinate subject position in discourse functions to reproduce those particular positions in the social structure. Thus, by making women politicians occupy subordinate positions in the news items (in which they are either silenced or dominantly affected by the actions of men) and men politicians occupy dominant positions (as the dominant speakers or doers/movers of things), the Sunday Times helps contribute towards the reproduction of those positions in society. Since most of the attributions are made to men other than women, the effect is that men are dominantly presented as doers of things or as people who make things happen. It is only through being occupied, as Fairclough (2003) asserts, that these positions continue to become a part of social structure. Discourse in turn determines and reproduces the social structure.

South Africa is in the process of transformation, and one of the key objectives is the transformation of gender relations. Women's access to political power and decision-making has improved since the 1994 general elections. In 2002, women constituted eight of 27 ministries and eight out of 13 Deputy Ministers in the national government, 30% of the members of parliament and 24% of members of provincial legislature. Women are less well represented at the local government level, where 19.4% of councillors and 14.4% of executive committee positions are women. The ways in which the Sunday Times represents women politicians, as shown in my analysis, implies that the paper has to do more and better than this if it has to contribute effectively towards the transformation of gender relations.

#### **7.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The content analysis of the Sunday Times was conducted over a period of 12 days, the first three days of which were used to briefly read all the 13 publications forming part of the study's population in order to identify the 'news items' that met the criteria for inclusion in the sample as outlined in Chapter 4. Over the next 9 days, an average of 12 'news items' per day were then critically read and each 'news item' coded for the variables identified and listed in the coding manual. One coding schedule was filled for each of the 'news items'. A separate list was also prepared to capture the names of the politicians as they were figured in each subsequent story. This helped in the identification of which particular politicians enjoyed enormous coverage and to access

the diversity of the sources used. Here, only the sources that matched the definition given above, that is, only politicians, were listed.

One of the problems encountered during the study was the unavailability of archived material in the University's Library. This meant purchasing back copies of the Sunday Times from the newspapers' main office in Johannesburg. Undoubtedly, this limits the number of newspaper titles one may consider to use. Furthermore, three publications were not available at the time of the research, which reduced the number of publications to work with. Though the missing editions could have been supplemented with their online versions, the exercise of effectively retrieving all articles turned out to be very difficult. Working with hardcopies was also analytically useful because issues such as the layout of the newspaper, the specific location of 'news items' in the newspaper, among others, were analytically enriching.

#### **7.5. Recommendations for the Sunday Times**

The Sunday Times has the highest levels of readership and enjoys a national-wide circulation. Given the status that the Sunday Times enjoys on the South African press landscape, the researcher recommends that the Sunday Times should consider putting in place a policy, such as a media gender policy, that would guide the papers' reporters and editors in the coverage and representation of both women politicians and men politicians. Though this would not result in an immediate improvement in the representation of women politicians, it would be a step towards achieving an equitable representation, in both frequency of appearance and manner.

As the study has indicated, there are imbalances both in the selection and the presentation of news actors/sources (women and men in general, and women and men politicians specifically) in election news. South African women politicians are gravely under-represented and the manner in which they are represented serves, not to change the status quo, but to reinforce what is currently prevailing, their subordinate social status. There are several implications of the Sunday Times' current manner of representation. The fact that only a few women politicians are figured in the news means that only the views of the men politicians are propagated. What this points to is that the Sunday Times gives a skewed picture of society.

One other way in which the Sunday Times could try to ensure a more equitable representation of all social groups is to reconsider carefully some of the criteria it uses in the selection and presentation of events and news actors/sources. This would help to widen the selection of sources and have a diversified range of voices on various social and political issues.

### **7.6. Areas for Further Research**

This particular study was restricted only to the analysis of the representation of politicians in the Sunday Times election news, with a specific interest on women politicians, using techniques of content analysis and critical discourse analysis. A further study could be done that incorporates such a textual analysis with interviews with the Sunday Times journalists and editors, with the readers of the Sunday Times, and with the news actors/sources (politicians) themselves. So for instance, the researcher can question journalists about the criteria in the selection and presentation of election events and sources as newsworthy. Potential news actors or sources can also be asked to give their views on the manner in which they are presented in the news, and readers can be asked about how they make sense of the media representations of politicians. An analysis that takes into account some of these aspects of the whole circuit culture, for instance, would produce far much interesting results, that would greatly increase our knowledge of media representations.

Other studies, for instance would embark on a longitudinal type of research that goes back ten years to analyse and determine whether there have been major changes in the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during the last three election periods. A consideration of what social changes have taken place during this period could then be drawn upon to explain the changes in the representation of women politicians. We know for instance that the democratic government, after the first elections, aimed to transform the South African society by restructuring, among other things, the gender relations and access to political and decision-making positions. We also know that during the first five years of democracy, measures (such as the 30% quota) were put in place to promote and advance gender equality. In addition, during the last two elections, not only were calls to raise the quota from 30% to 50% heightened, but the

country was also celebrating 10 years of democracy. Undoubtedly, given what we know from the constructionist approach to representation, traces of these political and social changes may be implanted in the Sunday Times news texts.

### **7.7. Conclusion**

Working from the cultural studies approach to media and society, and the constructionist theory of representation, the study aimed to analyse critically the role of the Sunday Times in the transformation of gender relations, with an emphasis on the active, rather than passive, role that the media plays in constructing reality. To underscore the active role that the Sunday Times plays in selecting and presenting both events and news actors/sources in the news, with the implied influence on the representation of women politicians, the study also relied on the influence of the criterion of news values on determining the inclusion and exclusion of sources.

This study's analysis of the representation of women politicians in the Sunday Times during the 2004 general and presidential elections has demonstrated that South African women politicians are seriously under-represented and that the manner of presentation marginalises, trivialises or subordinates women politicians. Men politicians, on the other hand, enjoy frequent coverage, and in a manner quite different from that of their fellow women politicians.

## APPENDICES

**Appendix 1: Content Analysis Coding Manual**  
**The Representation of South African Women Politicians**  
**in the Sunday Times During the 2004 Elections**

<b>List of variables (and identifiers)</b>	<b>Values / Coding possibilities</b>
1. Date of Publication:	Day and Month
2. Position of 'news item':	Page number where 'news item' appears
3. Story type / Genre:	1 = News story 2 = Editorial 3 = Feature article 4 = Letter to the editor
4. Size of the 'news item':	Total space (column area in centimetre squares and total words) allocated
5. Number of news makers:	Count total number of persons in the news item (women and men, politician and non-politician).
For the three most prominent news sources, code the following:	
6. Gender:	1 = Woman    2 = Man    3 = Not clear
7. Amount of coverage:	Total words attributed to the actor/source
9. Subject matters addressed	
Potential for office	1 = Yes,    0 = No
Family relations	1 = Yes,    0 = No
Physical attributes	1 = Yes,    0 = No
Personality traits	1 = Yes,    0 = No

**Appendix 2: Content Analysis Coding Schedule**  
**The Representation of South African Women Politicians**  
**in the Sunday Times During the 2004 Elections**

Headline (verbatim): .....

.....

'News item' number			Publication date				Position (Page no.)		News genre
			day	month					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			8

Size of 'news item'				Number of news actors (persons only)									
Column area (cm square)		Total words (main text only)		Women		Men		Unclear gender					
				Politician	Other	Politician	Other						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24

News actor 1								
Gender	Amount of words			Potential for office	Family relations	Physical attributes	Personality	
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33

News actor 2							
Gender	Amount of words			Potential for office	Family relations	Physical attributes	Personality
34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41

News actor 3							
Gender	Amount of words			Potential for office	Family relations	Physical attributes	Personality
42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49

**Appendix 3: STATISTICA - Spreadsheet for Content Analysis**

**Figuration of News Actors/Sources in the Sunday Times  
During the 2004 Elections**

News Item Number	Day	Month	Page	News Genre	Column Area (cm sq)	Total Words	Women Politicians	Other Women	Men Politicians	Other Men	Unknown Gender
1	4	Jan	14	Editorial	166	448			1	2	4
2	11	Jan	4	News story	124	462	1		4	2	2
3	11	Jan	1	News story	410	847			5		
4	11	Jan	4	News story	224	540		2	6	2	2
5	11	Jan	4	News story	32	132		1			
6	11	Jan	4	News story	25	102					
7	11	Jan	4	News story	154	534			5	1	
8	11	Jan	16	Editorial	74	213			1		
9	11	Jan	17	Feature article	858	1778			3		
10	18	Jan	4	News story	488	856			5	1	
11	18	Jan	4	News story	188	546		1	2	2	
12	18	Jan	4	News story	44	174					
13	18	Jan	4	News story	34	126				1	
14	18	Jan	4	News story	47	186			1		
15	18	Jan	4	News story	140	504			5	2	
16	18	Jan	17	Letter to the Editor	57	161	1	1	1		
17	18	Jan	17	Letter to the Editor	65	204			1	1	1
18	18	Jan	18	Editorial	166	448			2	1	
19	18	Jan	18	Feature article	352	876			4		
20	18	Jan	18	Feature article	302	987	1	3	4		
21	25	Jan	4	News story	69	255			2		
22	25	Jan	4	News story	73	282			2	1	
23	25	Jan	4	News story	160	564		1	1	2	1
24	1	Feb	4	News story	104	546			1		
25	1	Feb	4	News story	548	1022	1		8	1	
26	1	Feb	4	News story	109	305			3		
27	1	Feb	4	News story	314	672			7		
28	1	Feb	22	Letter to the Editor	55	136			1	1	
29	1	Feb	22	Letter to the Editor	66	200			1	1	
30	1	Feb	20	Feature article	300	1039		1	12		1
31	1	Feb	20	Editorial	166	448			6		
32	15	Feb	9	News story	505	576			3		
33	15	Feb	9	News story	113	372	1		4		
34	15	Feb	9	News story	35	126			1		
35	15	Feb	9	News story	102	288			1		
36	15	Feb	18	Letter to the Editor	96	300			1	1	
37	15	Feb	18	Letter to the Editor	43	132			2		
38	15	Feb	18	Letter to the Editor	55	180			2	1	
39	22	Feb	4	News story	124	362			2		
40	22	Feb	4	News story	22	90			2		
41	22	Feb	4	News story	18	66					
42	22	Feb	4	News story	13	48			1		
43	22	Feb	4	News story	182	1092			5		
44	22	Feb	4	News story	826	1134			7		
45	22	Feb	19	Feature article	1081	1708		1	12	1	
46	7	Mar	10	News story	311	728		3	4		
47	7	Mar	10	News story	29	100			1		
48	7	Mar	10	News story	15	44	1				
49	7	Mar	10	News story	32	76				1	
50	7	Mar	10	News story	32	108	1		4		
51	7	Mar	10	News story	7	16					

52	7	Mar	11	News story	300	762		3	4	2	
53	7	Mar	11	News story	588	1008			4	5	
54	14	Mar	4	News story	286	588			3		
55	14	Mar	4	News story	168	534			3		
56	14	Mar	4	News story	230	768	1		14	1	
57	21	Mar	4	News story	867	1530	5		9	1	
58	21	Mar	20	Feature article	358	994			3	1	
59	4	Apr	1	News story	393	854		3	6		2
60	4	Apr	2	News story	96	322		2	2	3	
61	4	Apr	2	News story	99	322		2		1	
62	4	Apr	2	News story	154	595	1		5		
63	4	Apr	2	News story	308	798			2		
64	4	Apr	4	News story	93	331		1			
65	4	Apr	4	News story	127	392	1	2	3	1	1
66	4	Apr	4	News story	250	648		2	3		
67	4	Apr	4	News story	947	1092	1	4	2	4	
68	11	Apr	1	News story	200	700	1		7		
69	11	Apr	2	News story	57	200			4		
70	11	Apr	2	News story	83	468			3	2	
71	11	Apr	2	News story	83	222	2		4		
72	11	Apr	2	News story	122	390			1		
73	11	Apr	4	News story	180	588			5		
74	11	Apr	4	News story	112	366		1	2		
75	11	Apr	4	News story	235	804			3	3	1
76	11	Apr	4	News story	724	882	2	1	5	5	
77	11	Apr	16	Letter to the Editor	116	400		1		2	
78	11	Apr	16	Letter to the Editor	33	112		1			
79	11	Apr	18	Editorial	249	672		1		1	
80	11	Apr	19	Feature article	1520	3108	2	13	4	6	11
81	18	Apr	1	News story	1029	1397		1	9	1	
82	18	Apr	2	News story	288	720	1		5	1	
83	18	Apr	2	News story	168	472	1				
84	18	Apr	2	News story	513	328		2	3	2	
85	18	Apr	3	News story	751	1002			4		
86	18	Apr	3	News story	154	528			8	1	
87	18	Apr	3	News story	151	534			4		1
88	18	Apr	3	News story	132	462			5		
89	18	Apr	3	News story	133	400			4		8
90	18	Apr	18	Letter to the Editor	139	155			2	2	
91	18	Apr	18	Letter to the Editor	45	110	1		1	1	
92	18	Apr	20	Editorial	81	216			2		
93	18	Apr	20	Editorial	163	448		1	1		
94	18	Apr	20	Feature article	352	1022			1		
95	18	Apr	21	Feature article	853	1290			5		1
96	18	Apr	22	News story	166	552		29		1	
97	18	Apr	22	News story	135	492		6	1	5	
98	18	Apr	22	News story	340	768		1	3	42	6
99	18	Apr	22	News story	683	492		3	1	2	
100	18	Apr	23	News story	1223	1206		4	4	14	4
101	18	Apr	24	News story	165	576		2			5
102	18	Apr	24	News story	164	234		1	1	1	
103	18	Apr	24	News story	337	732		3	1	3	
104	18	Apr	24	News story	209	456		2			28
105	18	Apr	24	News story	101	252		1		1	
106	18	Apr	24	News story	170	552		2	1		13
				<b>Total</b>	<b>27178</b>	<b>58985</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>92</b>

**Appendix 4: Figuration of Prominent News Actors/Sources and Reference to Selected Subject Matters**

News item no.	Month	News actor 1 : Gender	News actor 1 : Words	News actor 1 : Potential	News actor 1 : Family	News actor 1 : Physical	News actor 1 : Persona	News actor 2 : Gender	News actor 2 : Words	News actor 2 : Potential	News actor 2 : Family	News actor 2 : Physical	News actor 2 : Persona	News actor 3 : Gender	News actor 3 : Words	News actor 3 : Potential	News actor 3 : Family	News actor 3 : Physical	News actor 3 : Persona
1	Jan	Man	24																
2	Jan	Man	60					Man	48					Woman	48				
3	Jan	Man	154					Man	119					Man	49				
4	Jan	Man	198					Man	132					Man	54				
5	Jan																		
6	Jan																		
7	Jan	Man	156					Man	84					Man	48				
8	Jan	Man	24																
9	Jan	Man	294					Man	140					Man	42				
10	Jan	Man	270	Yes				Man	264					Man	126				
11	Jan	Man	96					Man	48										
12	Jan																		
13	Jan																		
14	Jan	Man	72																
15	Jan	Man	135					Man	36					Man	50				
16	Jan	Man	70	Yes				Woman	35	Yes									
17	Jan	Man	36																
18	Jan	Man	112					Man	32										
19	Jan	Man	108					Man	138	Yes				Man	307				
20	Jan	Man	98				Yes	Man	98				Yes	Woman	56				Yes
21	Jan	Man	150					Man	45										
22	Jan	Man	252					Man	30	Yes									
23	Jan	Man	354																
24	Feb	Man	476			Yes													
25	Feb	Man	630					Man	126				Yes	Man	294				
26	Feb	Man	150			Yes	Yes	Man	156			Yes	Yes	Man	102			Yes	Yes
27	Feb	Man	228	Yes		Yes	Yes	Man	184		Yes	Yes		Man	140				Yes
28	Feb	Man	124																
29	Feb	Man	192																
30	Feb	Man	427					Man	140					Man	98				
31	Feb	Man	128					Man	48				Yes	Man	32				

32	Feb	Man	456					Man	402					Man	84				
33	Feb	Man	156					Man	48				Yes	Woman	42				Yes
34	Feb	Man	66																
35	Feb	Man	90																
36	Feb	Man	300																
37	Feb	Man	132					Man	36										
38	Feb	Man	24					Man	24										
39	Feb	Man	162					Man	84										
40	Feb	Man	39					Man	30										
41	Feb																		
42	Feb	Man	48																
43	Feb	Man	156					Man	534					Man	36				
44	Feb	Man	162			Yes		Man	102					Man	66				
45	Feb	Man	557	Yes		Yes	Yes	Man	224				Yes	Man	161				Yes
46	Mar	Man	539				Yes	Man	28					Man	28				
47	Mar	Man	96																
48	Mar	Woman	24																
49	Mar																		
50	Mar	Man	24					Man	24					Man	20				
51	Mar																		
52	Mar	Man	144				Yes	Man	73				Yes	Man	54	Yes			
53	Mar	Man	48					Man	48					Man	30				Yes
54	Mar	Man	378					Man	222	Yes				Man	66				
55	Mar	Man	534					Man	42					Man	42				
56	Mar	Man	186					Man	150					Man	108				
57	Mar	Woman	450	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Woman	444	Yes		Yes	Yes	Woman	348	Yes			Yes
58	Mar	Man	101					Man	21					Man	21				
59	Apr	Man	448				Yes	Man	406					Man	56				
60	Apr	Man	259					Man	35										
61	Apr																		
62	Apr	Man	140				Yes	Woman	42					Man	42				
63	Apr	Man	749					Man	49										
64	Apr																		
65	Apr	Woman	301	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Man	117					Man	103				
66	Apr	Man	615					Man	98					Man	28				
67	Apr	Woman	960				Yes	Man	144					Man	36				
68	Apr	Man	238					Woman	154					Man	140				
69	Apr	Man	140	Yes				Man	160	Yes				Man	30				
70	Apr	Man	192					Man	180					Man	24				

71	Apr	Man	66				Yes	Woman	36				Yes	Woman	24				Yes
72	Apr	Man	108	Yes			Yes												
73	Apr	Man	204	Yes				Man	150					Man	138				
74	Apr	Man	159					Man	48										
75	Apr	Man	594				Yes	Man	60				Yes	Man	30				
76	Apr	Woman	306	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Man	294	Yes			Yes	Man	282	Yes			Yes
77	Apr																		
78	Apr																		
79	Apr																		
80	Apr	Man	2082	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Man	54					Woman	42				
81	Apr	Man	546					Man	364					Man	301	Yes			Yes
82	Apr	Man	200					Man	96					Man	64				
83	Apr	Woman	416	Yes			Yes												
84	Apr	Man	200		Yes	Yes		Man	48					Man	32				
85	Apr	Man	1002	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Man	246					Man	36				
86	Apr	Man	276	Yes				Man	252	Yes			Yes	Man	132				
87	Apr	Man	54					Man	54					Man	54				
88	Apr	Man	102					Man	72					Man	114				
89	Apr	Man	72					Man	32					Man	24				
90	Apr	Man	60					Man	25										
91	Apr	Woman	95	Yes		Yes	Yes	Man	30										
92	Apr	Man	32	Yes				Man	32										
93	Apr	Man	72																
94	Apr	Man	84																
95	Apr	Man	940	Yes		Yes	Yes	Man	235					Man	85				
96	Apr																		
97	Apr	Man	18																
98	Apr	Man	72					Man	66					Man	60				
99	Apr	Man	42																
100	Apr	Man	78					Man	42					Man	30				
101	Apr																		
102	Apr	Man	234			Yes													
103	Apr	Man	72																
104	Apr																		
105	Apr																		
106	Apr	Man	144				Yes												
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>22262</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>8060</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4459</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>

**Appendix 5: Sunday Times: March 21, 2004, p4.**

**Headline: The good, the bad and the redeployed**

Now that party lists have been finalised, Sabelo Ndlangisa profiles those whose fortunes have changed for better or worse

**NATIONALISED: Sibongile Manana (ANC)**

(1)THE former MEC for health in Mpumalanga is arguably one of the less eligible candidates to have made the ANC's national list.

(2)She first grabbed headlines in a showdown with the province's hospital authorities over her barring of an HIV/Aids organisation from counselling people in a hospital under her authority.

(3)When the Rob Ferreira Hospital's superintendent Dr Thys von Mollendorff, defied her, she suspended him - and would not submit to public pressure to have him reinstated.

(4)He later resigned.

(5)After a disastrous career in Mpumalanga that saw her department placed under curatorship following incidents of "mismanagement", the ANC provincial structures rewarded Manana with third position on their regional list. (6)This assures her a position in the National Assembly, where the ANC-dominated Mpumalanga has 14 regional seats.

(7)Manana was moved from her position as health MEC after a damning forensic report found her guilty of "wrongdoing" in her department. (8)Premier Ndaweni Mahlangu moved her to the helm of the provincial sports department in September last year.

(9)Shortly after that, the ANC Women's League appointed her to its national executive.

(10)This week, the ANC in Mpumalanga came out strongly in Manana's defence, saying anyone who had a gripe with her could have filed a complaint with the Independent Electoral Commission.

(11)Spokesman Jackson Mthembu said that despite Manana's controversial record as MEC, there were no indications she had acted corruptly.

(12)"The fact that she was not hands-on in her job doesn't mean she is guilty of any wrongdoing. (13)Nor does it mean she can't stand for public office," he said.

(14)Mthembu said Manana's position on the list reflected her "popularity" within party structures.

**RISING STAR: Lumka Yengeni (ANC)**

(15)LUMKA Yengeni, wife of the ANC's former chief whip, is one of the rising stars within the ANC.

(16)Her nomination as an MP surprised many observers as it came not long after the resignation of her husband Tony from Parliament.

(17)If elected, Lumka, who appeared alongside her disgraced husband during his countless court appearances on fraud charges, will go to Parliament for the first time.

(18)This week the ANC in the Western Cape said her nomination should not have surprised anyone.

(19)The party pointed out that Lumka had made it onto the party's provincial list in 1999 - having been at the bottom of the national list in 1994. (20)However in 1999 her name was not high enough to get her into the Western Cape legislature.

(21)Before the Yengeni 4x4 scandal came to public attention, Lumka was virtually unknown. (22)As the scandal unfolded, she appeared alongside Tony wearing designer outfits that almost invariably got the pair onto the front pages of newspapers.

(23)But her association with politics has not been solely through her husband. (24)A former Umkhonto weSizwe member, Lumka was one of the trialists in the so-called Yengeni trial of 1987.

(25)She now works as an executive responsible for social responsibility at Denel but her involvement with the ruling party dates back to the 1970s. (26)Before joining the state arms manufacturer, she reportedly worked as a lieutenant for the South African National Defence Force.

(27)Ranking number 62 on the ANC list, Lumka is almost guaranteed a seat in the National Assembly where the party controls 275 of the 400 seats.

(28)She says she is looking forward to serving the public and says the challenge that will face MPs will be to implement the policies and laws formulated in the past 10 years.

(29)Lumka is hurt by media reports that have associated her nomination to her links with her husband.

(30)"I take exception to people thinking I'm on that list because of Tony," she says.

(31)"I have been a member of the ANC for decades and have worked for the ANC during difficult times, as myself. I left home alone and didn't leave with Tony.

(32)"So this notion that I'm on that list because of Tony is an insult to the ANC."

#### **REVIVED: Raenette Taljaard (DA)**

(33)THE omission of the Democratic Alliance's shadow finance minister from the Gauteng regional list drawn up by provincial party structures caused an uproar among some party members.

(34)Members of the DA reportedly accused her of failing to do enough constituency work and decided to omit her name from the initial provincial list. (35)But party stalwart Helen Suzman soon entered the fray, describing Taljaard as "one of our most valuable members".

(36)And DA leader Tony Leon eventually stepped in and reinstated Taljaard's name to the list. (37)At number seven in the pecking order, she is only six places behind Leon on the party's Gauteng regional list.

(38)Asked recently to comment about the furore surrounding her name, she chose to keep a low-profile and refused to comment.

(39)But with controversy having subsided, the combative Taljaard will continue to rock the ANC's boat by putting the government's decisions under scrutiny.

(40)She can sometimes be brash - last year she was forced to apologise after commenting that President Thabo Mbeki's ceremonial entourage at the opening of Parliament "resembled an identification parade at a criminal investigation".

(41)When elected to Parliament five years ago, the then 30-year-old became one of the youngest MPs in Parliament.

(42)She has served on several parliamentary committees, including the Standing Committee on Public Accounts - the watchdog committee that has criticised the government's handling of the multibillion-rand arms procurement deal.

(43)Apart from being vocal on issues of finance, she's also been forthright about the allegations of corruption that have plagued the government in recent months.

(44)In reply to Mbeki's State of the Nation address last month, Taljaard called on the President to take firm action against politicians who were facing allegations of corruption.

(45)"It is clear that when the corruption circus rolls into town, everyone wants to get in on the act.

(46)"Instead of an iron-fisted approach to cracking down on corruption or dubious practice, most of these cases were dispensed by a limp-wristed rap on the knuckles," she said.

(47)True to form, Taljaard is expected to be a thorn in the ruling party's side on her return to parliament when it reopens.

#### **REDEPLOYED: Mhlabunzima Hlengwa (IFP)**

(48)THE former chairman of Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Public Works will not return to his seat in Parliament after the election.

(49)Hlengwa has been moved to KwaZulu-Natal's provincial legislature and his name features high on the Inkatha Freedom Party's KwaZulu-Natal provincial list.

(50)The traditional leader has served two terms in the National Assembly and staunchly defended traditional leaders against what his party saw as encroachment on their powers by the new municipal laws six years ago.

(51)The chief argued that traditional rulers should serve alongside elected representatives in rural areas and be given additional financial resources.

(52)Before chairing the public works committee, Hlengwa was also a member of the sports and recreation, constitutional affairs and land affairs committees.

(53)He said that one of the achievements of Parliament in the past 10 years was the ability of various political parties to work together despite their differences.

(54)There was still a lot of work to be done, but the institution had achieved much progress.

(55)He said that under his leadership the portfolio committee had been able to oversee the passing of eight laws. (56)However, he lamented the fact that the Public Works Department had lacked proper co-ordination with other government departments when it implemented projects.

#### **SHAFTED: Stanley Mogoba (PAC)**

(57)THE Pan Africanist Congress has not fared well in the past two general elections and many expect it to do no better this time around.

(58)At number 83, Stanley Mogoba, the party's former president and former representative in Parliament, has all the odds stacked against him. (59)His party won only three seats in 1999 and lost one when Patricia de Lille crossed the floor to form her own party last year.

(60)Initially there were hopes that the PAC would revive when Mogoba took over the reins in 1996. (61)Those hopes were soon dashed.

(62) Under the former Methodist cleric and struggle stalwart's leadership, squabbles continued to rock the party and crushed any chances of it getting stronger.

(63) The party's performance in the polls plunged from 1.24% to just under 1%, and the exit of the vocal De Lille has dealt it a serious blow.

(64) It remains to be seen if the PAC, under new leader Motsoko Pheko, will garner enough support to retain the three seats it won in the previous election.

(65) Themba Godi, the PAC's deputy-president who replaced Mogoba in Parliament at the beginning of the year, said that the order of candidates on the party's list did not mean they would be first or last to be given a seat in Parliament.

(66) He said that if the party got 10 seats, it could still choose to put number 100 instead of number 10 in Parliament.

(67) Except for the party's president, whether or not candidates got seats would depend on the number of votes they were able to generate in their constituencies.

**APPENDIX 6: Sunday Times: April 11, 2004, p4.**

**Headline: Future looks unhealthy for Manto**

**Sub headline:** Speculation mounts as to whether a change of leadership is on the cards at the health ministry

**By Line:** Claire Keeton

(1)The KwaZulu-Natal MEC for health, a Cabinet minister and the chairman of the parliamentary portfolio committee for health are potential heirs to Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang's throne - should dissatisfaction with her performance unseat her.

(2)The frontrunners are Health MEC, Dr Zweli Mkhize, the Minister for Agriculture and Land Affairs, Thoko Didiza, and committee chairman Vumile James Ngculu.

(3)Speaking off the record, health experts and sources within the ANC and Parliament identified these candidates as capable contenders.

(4)But, as government spokesman Joel Netshitenzhe and health spokesman Harry Mchunu emphasised on Friday, it is President Thabo Mbeki's prerogative to choose his Cabinet.

(5)Senior government officials this week told the Sunday Times that Mbeki wanted to remove Tshabalala-Msimang from her portfolio as early as last year.

(6)The President, however, did not want to be seen to be playing into the hands of the opposition parties which were calling for her dismissal.

(7)Former exiles, Mbeki and Tshabalala-Msimang go back a long way and her husband, Mendi Msimang, is the treasurer-general of the ANC.

(8)Despite these connections, some senior officials within the ruling party feel that other candidates would do a better job than Tshabalala-Msimang.

(9)Her autocratic management style and failed leadership on HIV/Aids has eroded her support base. (10)And scores of political cartoons bear testimony to her public blundering.

(11)Whether this sentiment will gain enough momentum to oust her is unclear.

(12)But should there be a reshuffle, the credentials of her possible successors stack up as follows:

(13)Zweli Mkhize has been KwaZulu-Natal's Health MEC since 1994. Mkhize has experience in the delivery of health services, and his name has come up most often as a favourite for the minister's post.

(14)Mkhize has achieved recognition for getting programmes off the ground. (15)The province's programme to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission is an example of his proactive approach.

(16)The MEC has been described as an astute politician who is competent, clever, independent and attentive to community needs.

(17)Mkhize graduated as a doctor from the University of Natal in 1982 and was in exile from 1986 to 1991.

(18)In 1994 he was elected to the provincial legislature and appointed as health MEC.

(19)In 1997 he was elected to the ANC's National Executive Committee (NEC).

(20)Mkhize's spokesman Dumisani Shange said the decision rested with Mbeki.

(21)Thoko Didiza, Agriculture and Land Affairs Minister, is regarded by many as a rising star in Mbeki's government. (22)She serves on the ANC NEC and its National Working Committee.

(23)Didiza has business qualifications but no training in health. (24)However, she has extensive experience in development programmes for women and youth, and is one of the drivers of the ANC's transformation agenda.

(25)Didiza is viewed as being bright, willing to listen and determined, with a sound grasp of issues.

(26)In a recent public debate with the Treatment Action Campaign - one of Tshabalala-Msimang's sharpest critics - observers said Didiza sounded more reasonable than the health minister.

(27)Didiza's assistant Nana Zenani declined to comment on the minister's potential.

(28)Vumile James Lincoln Ngculu, chairman of the parliamentary portfolio committee for health, was active in the ANC's armed wing Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in the 1970s, and held senior positions in MK while in exile.

(29)Ngculu was ANC general-secretary in the Western Cape from 1994 to 1998, when he was elected a Member of Parliament.

(30)His position on the parliamentary portfolio committee for health was previously occupied by Tshabalala-Msimang. (31)Asked about his availability for the ministerial post, Ngculu said he had not considered it.

(32)Health Systems Trust director Peter Barron expressed confidence in Ngculu, as well as candidates who are not serving MPs such as Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba.

(33)Barron said: "James is quick to grasp the essentials, listens to your side of the story and then he is decisive."

(34)Former directors-general of health, Ntsaluba and Dr Olive Shisana, had support but they are not MPs or Members of Provincial Legislatures.

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