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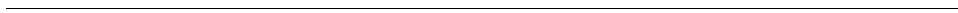
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Review article

Battling old ghosts in gender and African media research

By Audrey Gadzekpo

Abstract

There has been more attention paid to the nexus between gender and media in Africa since re-democratization spurred the growth of pluralistic media on the Continent. Increasingly also gender and media research in Africa is being enriched by synergies between those in academia and civil society, resulting in better knowledge on media representation, participation, audience reception as well as uncovering hidden histories of women's contributions to the media, and on occasion, the political economy of media industries. This review article provides a discussion on some of the recent trends in scholarship in the field of gender and media in Africa, and argues that despite the growing body of research on the subject there remain gaps in scholarship that need to be addressed. The article advocates a research agenda that is creative, dynamic and responsive to the developmental needs of Africa, and especially attentive to the links between media and gendered social justice. It also demands more research which is demographically differentiated to enable better insights on, for example, the influence of media on rural versus urban, or young versus old gendered audiences. The review article argues that since gender studies go beyond just women studies, gender and media researchers must expand their research focus to embrace masculinities and develop empirical and theoretical understandings of the gendering of men in African media also.

Key words: gender and media, gender and representation, gender research, feminist, research in Africa, audience research

Introduction:

Interest in how gender is constructed in African media has been renewed since the democratic transitions in the 1990s across the continent brought liberalization of the media. Re-democratization in Africa set in motion an unprecedented expansion in mass media – print, radio, broadcast, film, internet, and mobile telephony. The explosion in media and the increasing access to the information superhighway has rejuvenated scholarship in media and

Author biographical note

Audrey Gadzekpo(agadzekpo@ug.edu.gh) is an Associate Professor at the School of Communication Studies, University of Ghana. She has authored various publications on gender and

communications generally. This has raised questions about the gendered practices implicated in media production. What has been the response by gender and/or media scholars? What are the intellectual developments that have resulted from the fertile ground for scholarship created by this dynamic media environment? How have gender and media scholars located their insights in the relevant socio-cultural contexts of the diversity of African experience?

This review article seeks to explore these questions by examining how gender and media research in Africa has developed as an area of intellectual inquiry in the last few decades. I begin with a brief overview on how gender and media research has been shaped by Western feminist scholarship. I then go on to interrogate research on gender and media in the context of Africa. A starting point is where, in fact, scholarship is being generated, before analyzing the dominant trends in research. The discussion on research trends identifies some of the areas that have attracted research attention such as representation of women in news and film; audience reception studies; information and communication technologies (ICTs); media production practices, and hidden histories. The article concludes by analyzing some of the gaps in research and suggesting where future research could be directed.

Perspectives on gender and media research

As a field of research, gender and media studies has had a short trajectory in Africa, and knowledge on the subject is generally still dominated by Western feminist scholarship. McLaughlin and Carter (2001, p. 7) capture this status quo situation when they note that,

The imbalance in access to representative space has tended to be perpetuated in the scholarly world with most publicly perceptible scholarship issuing from the more privileged institutions of First World countries and English prevailing as the language of most journals, conferences, listservs, and so on.

Western feminist insights have indeed accounted for the substantial body of scholarship accumulated over the past few decades on gender and media and have been responsible for making it an important issue for public debate. We can credit the force of feminist scholarship

combined with activism for framing the media as a site of struggle over women's marginalization and liberation. Especially important was the initiative to bring the issue to international attention during the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing China in 1995. The Beijing conference, unlike other women's conferences, identified the media as one of 12 critical areas of concern. Section J of the Beijing Platform for Action noted a "lack of gender sensitivity in the media [as] evidenced by the failure to eliminate the gender-based stereotyping that can be found in the public and private, local, national and international media organizations". They called for "increased participation, and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication; and promotion of a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media" (Beijing Platform for Action, Section J, Women and Media, 1995).

As McLaughlin and Carter (2001, p. 5) have noted, academic interest in gender and media "as an area of intellectual inquiry has been achieved through the efforts of a large number of scholars who have dedicated themselves to the affirmation of the importance of gender, along with race, nation, ethnicity, age and sexual preference, as key considerations in the analysis of mediated representational forms." The gender and media nexus has resulted in multifarious and multi-layered perspectives on how the content of mass media, the context of production and reception, and the surrounding practices attached have been complicit in the unequal power relations between men and women.

It is impossible to list all the important contributions to the field and beyond the scope of this essay to do so. However, it is important to touch on a few significant texts on the subject, such as Gaye Tuchman's *Making News: A study in the construction of reality* (1978a), which continues to inform debate and scholarly work on newsroom practices. Though not specifically about women and the news, this comprehensive study on how news organizations and reporters construct reality through the news helps our understandings of the gendered dimensions of news. Tuchman's other significant contribution is her article on *The Symbolic Annihilation of Women by the Mass Media* (1978b) in which she uses George Gerbner's (1972, p. 44) concept of symbolic annihilation to make the argument that by largely ignoring women and relegating them to stereotypical roles the media "symbolically annihilate" them. Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and*

Narrative Cinema (1975) is another academic essay worth flagging. Mulvey subjects Hollywood cinema to feminist analysis and controversially uses male-gaze theory to argue that there is an asymmetric power relationship between viewer (male) and viewed (female). Her theory is often used to explain how film sexually objectifies and exploits women.

Also influential in informing a better understanding of the multiple roles the media play in the construction of gender is Lisbert van Zoonen (1994, 2001). Especially important is her book *Feminist Media Studies* (1994), in which she explores the ways in which feminist theory and feminist research in areas such as media production, media texts and media reception have informed knowledge on the relationship between gender and media in contemporary societies. Many of the theories van Zoonen discusses in her books have become staple feminist media frameworks through which gendered content and practices in the media can be explicated.

Finally, worth mentioning are texts which synthesize knowledge on gender and media in the form of readers, essay compilations and thematic compilations. Deborah Cameron's reader, *The Feminist Critique of Language* is one such example. It was first published in 1990 but has since undergone a number of revisions to accommodate new debates and perspectives on feminist thought about language, including issues of sexist language and gendered internet language (Cameron, 2002). Her work is widely cited in debates on the implications of gendered language in the media. Another milestone is *Women Making Meaning: New Feminist Directions in Communication* (1992) by Lana Rakow. This brings together various articles on feminist scholarship in the field of communication since the mid-1980s and showcases the diversity of feminist frameworks that can be used in making meaning of the interplay between gender and media and communication. Such texts and many other feminist academic contributions, have led to the conclusion that through representational practices, production and access, media are gendered and have contributed to women's marginalization in the public sphere, as well as reinforced sex roles and attitudes in society through the stereotypes of women they purvey.

Gender and Media Research in Africa

Most gender scholars in Africa avoid the term feminism in their work even though many of them are working towards goals similar to

that of Western feminists, such as changes in consciousness, the empowerment of women, and the achievement of gender equality. Thus, unlike in the West, reference is seldom made to feminist media studies. The preferred term is gender and media studies. In this review, however, the terms feminist media studies and gender and media studies are used inter-changeably. Despite an aversion to the feminist descriptor, scholarly production on the media and gender in Africa has tended to cover much of the old ground traversed by Western feminist scholars. This research has also drawn generously from their theoretical perspectives as well as explored similar themes. Thus, the corpus of research on gender and media in Africa has been predominantly on representation, participation, audience reception, uncovering hidden histories of women's contributions to the field, and, on occasion, has dwelt on the political economy of media industries.

Research on the subject of media and gender has come from both within and outside the academy. There are, as yet, no dedicated academic journals on gender and media in Africa. Research in this area has been circulated principally through African journals on media and communication such as *Africa Media Review*, *Equid Novi: African Journalism Studies*, *Global Media Journal African Edition*, *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, *Journal of African Media Studies*, and *African Communication Research*. African gender journals such as *Feminist Africa and Studies in Gender and Development in Africa* as well as a small collection of African studies journals, have also been sites where academic articles on gender and media can be found. Disappointedly, there have been few books published which specifically address gender and media in Africa. What abounds instead, are comprehensive reports and technical documents dealing with the subject, mostly emanating from civil society and conference proceedings.

Another notable lacuna in gender and media studies has resulted from the language divide alluded to by McLaughlin and Carter (2001), which in Africa has been particularly devastating because of colonial histories that have divided the continent into Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone blocs. This language divide has created separate spheres in the domain of scholarship and constitutes a huge barrier in access and knowledge sharing among African academics. Gender and media scholars in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, have little communicative access to the scholarly perspectives of colleagues in nearby Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Burkina Faso, Senegal,

Mozambique, Angola, etc. Only a few media journals, notably *Africa Media Review*, are bi-lingual.

The language divide is particularly evident in film studies, which shows a tendency for Francophone scholars to generate knowledge on Francophone films and related cultural events such as the very influential biennial FESPACO festival on film, while Anglophones train their sights on Nollywood and film production in Southern Africa and countries such as Ghana. Much of the rich theoretical perspectives generated from Africa's oldest (mostly Francophone) cinema are, consequently, generally inaccessible to many Anglophone scholars. Indeed, rarely do Anglophone scholars reference Francophone scholars in the growing number of academic articles and books on the subject, unless they happen to be bilingual and writing for an English-speaking audience.

Contributions to research by civil society

Very significant contributions to research and intellectual thought on gender and media have come from civil society organizations that work primarily on gender or media and gender. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) serves as a good exemplar. Although not specifically focused on Africa, GMMP findings provide us with the most reliable disaggregated data on how gender is represented in African news media and is widely cited. The 2010 report, for example, contains data on 26 African countries and like other regions of the world provides a separate report on Africa. The GMMP is coordinated not in an academic institution, but by the World Association of Christian Communicators (WACC), a global network of communicators promoting communication for social change. GMMP research is led by Margaret Gallagher, one of the foremost contemporary researchers on gender and media, with the help of a world-wide team of volunteer researchers drawn from both academia and civil society.

Billed as the "world's longest-running and most extensive research on gender in the news media" (GMMP, 2010), the first GMMP report came out in 1995, and served to underscore the call for action made during the Beijing conference. There have been three other reports since then – in 2000, 2005 and 2010. GMMP is indicative of the reciprocal relationship between action and research and the kinds of contributions activism can make to intellectual inquiry. It validates notions that scholarship can serve as a form of activism and demonstrates also that instead of a uni-directional flow of research

from academia to others, academia can benefit from scholarship coming from outside the academe.

Other examples of individual and collaborative research on media and gender by civil society can be drawn from South African gender non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as Gender Links (2005), Gender and Media Southern Africa (GEMSA, 2003), Network and media NGOs such as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA). Gender Links and MISA conducted the Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS, 2003), a comprehensive regional study on gender and media in Southern Africa. They followed up the baseline study by partnering GEMSA, universities and media advocacy organizations to produce the Gender and Media Audience Study (GMAS), with a gendered dimension, covering 13 Southern African countries. Again in 2009/2010 the three NGOs – Gender Links, GEMSA and MISA – undertook the Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) covering over 30,000 news items in 14 African countries. It is important to note also that Gender Links and GEMSA manage the Gender and Media

The Gender and Media

Diversity Journal, a biennial journal, which contains intellectual articles on gender and media. These Southern African research initiatives are by no means the only ones happening on the continent. There are other regional research initiatives on media content being undertaken by civil society organizations. The Eastern Africa Journalists Association (EAJA), in collaboration with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) Africa office, has published a study titled “Enhancing Gender in the Media in East Africa,” (2008) involving 10 Eastern Africa countries.

Another innovative example of a research initiative located outside academe is the Gender Research in Africa into ICTs for Empowerment (GRACE) project. Initiated in 2005, GRACE is an IDRC (International Development Research Centre) research program for African researchers interested in information and communication technologies (ICTs) and women’s empowerment in 12 African countries. The project encourages researchers to adopt a critical action research approach using qualitative research techniques. GRACE research articles are accessible through the book, *African Women and ICTs Investigating Technology, Gender and Empowerment* (Buskens and Webb, 2009). The articles interrogate variously the ways in which women in Africa use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to empower themselves, the external, structural barriers as well as the internal factors which prevent or enable them to use ICTs to their advantage,

and the strategies they employ to overcome these impediments.

Finally, also worth mentioning is the research coming out of AudienceScapes, an online research program which regularly conducts audience research on access to and use of media; access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as word of mouth communication habits, and how these factors affect people's acquisition of knowledge about key development topics. AudienceScapes research is on developing countries, and includes African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania. The research is often gender disaggregated and at times specifically on the gendered aspects of audience media use, for example, *Are New Media Closing the Information Gap* (AudienceScapes, March, 2010).

Dominant trends in gender and media research

Research on gender and media in Africa emerging from these varied sources has exhibited a range of preoccupations, although academic inquiry has been largely dominated by studies on representation in print and broadcast news, film, and, increasingly, new media content. There have been relatively few articles produced on audience reception, newsroom production practices, journalism epistemology and hidden histories. The following sections provide an analysis of some of the studies under taken in these areas.

Studies on gender and representation in African media

Some of the early research on the subject of gender and representation can be found in Dorothy Mbilinyi's and Cuthbert Omari's (1996) edited volume of 11 papers on *Gender Relations and Women's Images in the Media*. These papers address issues such as the gendered images of women in different kinds of mass media – school textbooks, radio programs, advertisements, newspaper reporting, Kiswahili fiction, poetry and taarab songs. The selections in the book signal the range of mass media sites early researchers in Africa were concerned with, and is premised on the notion that socially constructed gender relations can be de-constructed through the mass media. Another dated but relevant study on the press and representational practice, is H. Leslie Steeves' (1997) textual analysis on how the Kenyan press covered a crime of gender violence in a mixed secondary school in Kenya.

Drawing from hegemonic theories of Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, Steeves' research demonstrates how media texts act as the locus of the construction, contestation and struggle over larger cultural understandings of issues such as gender-based violence, and how the media betray gender biases and stereotypes in Africa. Her work continues to be widely cited in research on press coverage of gender. Gadzekpo (2009), for example, draws on some of the framing techniques discussed in Steeves' research in her qualitative content analysis of how the press in Ghana validate or invalidate certain discourses surrounding domestic violence. Similarly, Worthington's (2011) qualitative analysis on how the *Sowetan Online* (the online version of South Africa's popular newspaper, *Sowetan*), framed stories of rape is informed by Steeves' theoretical perspectives. In her study Worthington concludes that the dominant framing pattern used in *Sowetan Online* to frame rape defied hegemonic journalistic tendencies because it was consistent with an "ubuntuism philosophy," "which privileges educating the public, facilitating dialogue, and eradicating social hierarchy" (Worthington, 2011, p. 609). She therefore posits that when news frames are grounded in ubuntuism they can challenge cultural discourses that resist progressive reform.

Other findings on gender representation have been mixed. For instance, Jill Johannessen's (2009) research focused on how gender is constructed in newspapers and local television drama in Tanzania. Johannessen's study is one of the few scholarly works exploring how media are implicated in political and economic reforms in Africa. Drawing from critical cultural studies and feminist post-structuralism, Johannessen (2009) argues that as Tanzania transits from socialism to capitalism the media have become an arena for conflict and cultural contestation. This has resulted in increased coverage of sensational stories of women as victims of gender violence, sexual abuse, as well as persisting images of women as prostitutes and gold-diggers. According to Johannessen (2009) the dominant gender discourse in the media supports a social conservative force, which might hinder women from taking an active part in society and development. But she argues that at the same time market liberation of the media represents more autonomy for the media to explore new and more varied themes that contest traditional gender roles.

Like much of the research on representation of gender in the African media, GMMP research findings have also consistently shown that African news suffers from various afflictions, including the fact

that women are underrepresented and misrepresented in news media coverage, and the fact that news is gender biased and reinforcing of gender stereotypes (GMMP 2010). GMMP (2010) also indicates that internet news continues the same trends and in some respects can be considered even more culpable than traditional news media in the manner in which women are represented.

Are women any better represented in African cinema than they are in the news? According to Haynes (2010) much of the literature on African videos tends to be in the form of essays and lacks an empirical research agenda. However, he notes also that research on African cinema is often built around concepts emanating from postcolonial, gender or cultural studies. This suggests that scholarship is being generated on the gendered dimensions of film. Indeed, Haynes (2010, p. 107) argues that some of the authors writing on African film, such as Abdalla Uba Adamu and Brian Larkin, “construct Hausa videos as sites of ‘parallel modernities’ where gender and generational roles are contested and the norms of Islam and Hausa culture are debated.” Other film studies have made the connection between the influence of religion and the gendered images resulting from it. In her research on Pentecostalite film culture in Ghana, for example, Meyer (2003, p. 24) observes that in an effort to appeal to their female audiences, many of whom actively practice a Pentecostal brand of Christianity, Ghanaian film-makers,

usually try to make films which suit the taste of women, who appear to regard film as a sort of civilizing device which will teach their boy friend or husband the virtue of fidelity and other aspects of good partnership. Many films, therefore, celebrate the loving mother and housewife, giving the loose whore and the irresponsible, weak husband the punishment they deserve according to local morality, which is highly inflected with Christian values.

The burgeoning Nigerian film industry, especially, has provided fertile ground for research on gendered representational practices, some of which document similar influences of religion in the construction of gender in films. Dominica Dipio’s (2009) analysis of Nollywood videos with Catholic themes argues that positioned as they are as a major form of critical commentary on Nigerian culture, these films are a reflection of societal attitudes toward gender. Nigerian films,

according to Dipio (2009, p. 86), “create super protagonists and reinforce the popular hero stereotypes” which tend to also “reinforce the ideologies of power” and to “build an acceptance of the structures of dominance in Nigerian society.” Citing from other literature on Nigerian films, Dipio (2009 p. 86) identifies the stereotypical images Nigerian films purvey of women such as seductive threats to the virtue of men; witches with evil powers; weak and treacherous beings. Consistent with other Nollywood critiques she observes that rarely are women depicted as educated professionals capable of confronting social problems in Nigerian society. On the occasions when they are portrayed as professionals, Dipio (2009) notes, they are often shown as incapable of managing in the domestic sphere. Clearly, Nigerian films serve to perpetuate the private-public dichotomy between women and men.

Orlando’s (2007) article on African women in the film industry suggests that women themselves can act as the antidote to the disempowering images that Nollywood and other filmmakers portray of women. Orlando (2007, p. 454) observes that feminine film-making by Khady Sylla and Fatou Kand’e Senghor, for example, “promote an *womanist* philosophy that is rooted in Afrocentrist philosophy.” Orlando (2007) explains that “Afrocentrist womanists define feminism and their roles and places in their respective societies on their own terms, irrespective of Western feminist paradigms” and in doing so make powerful statements on the condition of women in contemporary Africa that is neither imitative of the West nor stuck in unprogressive traditional mores and customs.

Hannelie Marx (2008) opens up another possibility for the construction of more empowering images of women in the media by examining the role of soap opera narratives in constructing and deconstructing identities in South Africa. In her analysis Marx advances the notion that because soap operas are gendered as feminine they may be constituted as “other” and as such are possible sites for the deconstruction of hegemonic gender identities. Consequently, she argues that it should be possible for soap operas to contribute to the construction of a woman-centred self-defining “other”, which is oppositional to the hegemonic male-centred constructions of female identity, and which can be used to strengthen women’s voice.

Audience reception research

Discussions on media content lead quite naturally to questions on reception, and in this context, how gendered audiences receive and process media texts. Not very many gendered studies have been conducted on African audiences even though women constitute a significant audience for some of the genres of media whose representational practices are constantly problematized by researchers, for example, film and tabloid journalism. Birgit Meyer (2002) discovered in her study on Ghanaian film for which she interviewed cinema audiences, that women were the ones who persuaded their male partners to watch movies either by dragging them to the theatre or bringing home videos. She also found that young women were attracted to the films because they were embedded with Christian values. According to Meyer, young women wanted to learn about marriage life and how to avoid marriage problems from the films, as well as how to lead virtuous lives.

An insight into gendered audiences in Africa is provided by research on the content and audience of three Southern African tabloids conducted by Morna and Ndlovu (2008). The study revealed that, though editors target women, men are the main buyers of tabloids. Only 43% of women buy tabloids directly compared to 62% of men, although women are more likely than men to get the paper from a spouse, other family member, friend or neighbor (Morna and Ndlovu, 2008). Women's motivations for reading tabloids were different from men. According to the study,

The main reason for reading tabloids, especially among women, is for entertainment and escapism: Some 60% women and 50% men said they read tabloids to "catch up on the gossip". Other reasons given by women included looking at photos of celebrities and "to have a laugh." Other reasons given by men included more serious reasons, like news coverage. Men also like the headlines. Significantly, none of the women said they liked the headlines, which often perpetrate blatant gender stereotypes (Morna and Ndlovu, 2008, p.7).

Importantly, Morna and Ndlovu (2008) found that, although tabloids enjoy good patronage, readers are unhappy about what they are getting. The research reported that women were especially

unhappy about the blatant stereotypes and sexualized images of women in the tabloids. And both men and women would like to see less negative news, violence, pornography and images that degrade women.

Gender and ICTs

The spread of new Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) is considered by some feminists as liberating and by others as embedded in masculine values that disadvantage women (van Zoonen, 2001). Like traditional media ICTs are contested media. Women's access to and use of ICTs are perceived as linked to their gender positions and identities in society. Research in Africa, therefore, has tended to focus on the gendered-qualities in the adoption and integration of ICTs (Buskens and Webb, 2009; AudienceScapes, 2010) as well as how other media, such as newspapers and reports on ICTs (Kwami, 2007). Kwami (2007) found in her research that stories on ICTs in Ghanaian newspapers were highly inflected by gender; they were mostly covered by male journalists who relied on male sources and photographs for their stories. Other research suggests that African women are especially disadvantaged by the digital divide. In an article questioning whether new media are closing the information gender gap, AudienceScapes (2010) concludes from national surveys conducted in Ghana and Kenya in 2009 that the gender gap in information extends to new media such as cellphones and the internet, partly because of an access gap in information sources. Ineke Buskens and Anne Webb (2009) arrived at a similar conclusion in their review of the research from the GRACE project, observing that ICTs act as tools that can help people transform their realities, but do not change inequitable systems and values.

The GRACE research findings highlighted different scenarios that explain women's experiences and relationships with ICTs. For example, some of the research found that while some women were affected by ICTs in a "passive" way, ICTs allowed others to consciously create or access female-only spaces where they could more easily escape, express themselves, learn and network among other gender likes (Buskens and Webb, 2009). Research findings also show that ICTs enabled women to have more control over their time and space and in the process to defy gendered norms and roles in existing public spaces (Buskens and Webb, 2009). GRACE researchers also documented case studies highlighting how ICTs were enabling women to create new

spaces for themselves and others to live in, and how the technology assists women to influence public spaces on the household, local, national and international level (Buskens and Webb, 2009).

The potential of ICTs to empower women finds resonance also in Oreoluwa Somolu's (2007) research on women blogging for social change in which he shows how by embracing ICTs women are bypassing mainstream media and are generating content that is more empowering and responsive to their needs. Using major African blog aggregators to generate his sample, Somulu was able to review the nature and content of the female African blogosphere and to conclude that the blogs were like personal journals that chronicle the everyday lives and experiences of African women. According to Somulu (2007) the female African blogosphere reveals that women are concerned about issues such as the cultural expectations of women's roles in life, sexual harassment from men, pressure on women to look attractive, and societal pressure on women to marry early.

Media production practices

Early feminist media research has pointed an accusing finger at the hiring practices and production processes that largely account for gendered representation (See, for example, Tuchman, 1978a). Essays by Nassanga (2002) and Okunna (2005) and other reports (for example Gender and Media Baseline Study, 2003; [Gender Equality in the Media in Eastern Africa](#), (2008) suggest not only do male journalists still far outnumber female journalists in many newsrooms in Africa, especially in decision-making positions, but women journalists still face challenges such as gender discrimination in the allocation of assignments. According to the Gender Equality in the Media in Eastern Africa study (Eastern African Journalists Association, 2008), only 3% of the total number of women journalists working in the nine East African countries included in the study, are in decision-making positions.

Okunna (2005) argues that despite years of attention to improving the status of women in the media, research evidence continues to show that the power to define the media agenda in Nigeria is still mainly a male privilege. Nigerian female journalists, according to Okunna, are still largely "invisible" in the Nigerian press as the overwhelming majority of people who report the news are men.

However, as Morna, and Ndlovu (2008) found in research on the tabloid press in Southern Africa, an increase of women in the newsroom may not be enough to address issues of gender

representation in newsrooms and news representation. Newsroom culture would have to change and so must the quality of training and sensitization of the gamut of people who work in the media generally.

Academics have written copiously about the gendered inequalities in the media industry, but the research on media education and training institutions shows that the physicians themselves need some healing. Some of that research confirms that much of the gender inequalities and representations in newsrooms are replicated in classrooms (Rabe, 2004; Ashong and Batta, 2011). In fact Rabe's (2004) research on faculties in the South African media studies and training sector suggests that the media industry may be doing much better than the academy. According to Rabe, while "en-gendering" has become a term used to describe the mainstreaming of gender into newsrooms, little en-gendering is happening in the classroom as women in media education and training still experience major discrimination. Almost 50% of the women Rabe sampled for her study said they currently experience discrimination.

Studies in countries such as Nigeria reveal a huge disparity between the number of male and female faculty. In a survey of 28 federal, state and private Nigerian universities, Ashong and Batta (2011) discovered that almost 80% of communication educators were male. They conclude therefore that "for communication educators and practitioners to add significant value to the ideal of gender justice in Africa, they must cast off the toga of masculine hegemony; and thereby position themselves as major change agents and advocates of gender equity" (Ashong and Batta, 2011, p. 13).

Hidden histories

As research interest on gender and media continues to grow, more attention is being paid to uncovering evidence that would help answer fundamental research questions about the trajectory of women in the different types of media and the diverse entry routes they took to enter into the field. Gadzekpo's research on women in the early Ghanaian press dates their visible presence as audiences and writers to as early as the last quarter of the 19th century and uncovers the uncelebrated women who were part of press history (Gadzekpo, 2005, Gadzekpo, 2006). She argues that gendered discourses found in the early press expose how gender identities and notions were constructed and challenged within the margins of newspaper texts during the colonial era (Gadzekpo, 2001).

Like Gadzekpo, Orlando (2007) offers rich gendered perspectives on African filmmaking by situating women in the film-making industry alongside their better known male counterparts. Asserting that African women have been engaged in the film industry almost as long as men Orlando (2007) has documented some of the “heroines” of African film such as Senegal’s Safi Faye and Khady Sylla, Togolese Anne-Laure Folly, Burkina Faso’s Fanta Regina Nacro and Angolian/Guadeloupian filmmaker Sara Maldoror. Such efforts at restoring women’s histories in different media spaces are important in dismantling cultural hierarchies of scholarship that contribute to misleading notions of the lack of African women’s agency in the public sphere and in the production of media texts.

Looking ahead

Margaretha Geertsema (2010) co-opts a quote from the first chairperson of Gender Links in the title of a study she carried out on that organization in which working on gender in media is likened to “challenging a lion in its den.” There is no denying, as the analogy implies, that the enormity of the task for researchers interested in gender and media is as “frightening as challenging a lion” (Geertsema, 2010). As this review suggests some work has been accomplished already, but in the trans-disciplinary field of gender and media, it would appear that a lot more remains to be done. Collaboration between academics and civil society has resulted in more attention being paid to the epistemology of journalism and the sociology of newsrooms, and has produced empirical data of great value to intellectual inquiry. Similar synergies must be built among and between various outlets of research as well, for example, among other developing country scholars and across the Anglophone-Francophone-Lusophone divide. The field of study is full of richness and lends itself to a research agenda that can be creative, dynamic and responsive to the developmental needs of Africa. Research as activism means that not only must research stimulate academic discourse and inform learning, but it must influence policy and practice, ultimately leading to more empowerment and equality for African women. This is particularly important in the context of Africa where the perception persists that academics reside in an ivory tower conducting research of little relevance to Africa’s developmental needs.

Ossome (2011, p. 22) warns that by shifting away from analyzing the social structures within which gendered media practice to the

current cultural studies approach that is preoccupied with discourses and symbols, feminist media studies is side-stepping the broader "moral, political and economic questions" (Steeves and Wasko, 2002 as cited in Ossome, 2011, p. 22). These questions are crucial in establishing the connections between "the day-to-day lived experience of people and the structures of capitalism and patriarchy" (Ossome, 2011, p. 24). This is partly why scholarship must link, in a more conscious way, the research agenda on gender and media with Africa's developmental imperatives, and engage with larger issues of social justice that underpin women's exploitation, marginalization and inequalities in Africa. As researchers we must examine, for example, whether the media agenda lends itself to the coverage of issues relating to women's access to capital, land, health, and social services. We must question how the media package and frame these issues for public debate. Are these issues being mainstreamed or ghettoized on women's pages only? Outstanding questions persist also about the nature of coverage and representations of women's victimization resulting from civil conflict, domestic violence and human trafficking, for example.

Gendered research must produce a more nuanced and candid analysis of the differentiations between rural and urban mediascapes and audiences, as well as of media use among different demographic groups – the Millennials (14-26), Generation X (27-43), Boomers (44-62) and the often-neglected Matures (63 and over). This is especially crucial as more research is produced on gender, ICTs and social media. For instance, how are younger female digital citizens representing themselves, developing civic identities and participating in society. How is that different from older users of ICTs and social media? Do the uses, gratifications and self-representations of young female ICT users suggest a feminist consciousness or a lack of appreciation of the gendered nature of the kinds of communication they are producing, re-presenting and consuming? Such critical questions remain largely unanswered.

In the main the articles contained in this volume of *African Communication Research* revisit the "old ghosts" of how gender is represented in the news, in films and in cartoons and provide an intellectual discussion of old and new theoretical perspectives underpinned by empirical evidence. But some old themes, such as representation in advertisement, remain surprisingly under-researched at a time when Africa's media and related industries like advertising are

being integrated into the larger global media economy. Advertising spending in Nigeria, for example, is estimated to have quintupled in real terms between 2001 and 2010, to 98 billion naira or \$646m. (*The Economist*, April 28, 2011). Yet there is very little research to inform our understandings on the transformations in the field of advertising in Africa and the gendered representations and gender-targeted nature of that booming industry.

Another old struggle, which has been waged through research and advocacy for a long time, has been how to get more women into newsrooms and especially into decision-making positions. The research agenda here has tended to focus on analysing the disparities in numbers, positions and assignments of female versus male media practitioners. What is missing is empirical data to help determine whether the increasing numbers of women in media training institutions and newsrooms in Africa has impacted positively on media content, or whether, as Tuchman (1996) contended a decade and a half ago, women's judgments about news still resemble those of men, because they have the same priorities, preferences and stereotypes as their male counterparts.

Finally, since gender studies goes beyond just women studies, gender and media scholars in Africa must expand their research focus to embrace masculinities and develop empirical and theoretical understandings of the gendering of men in African media. Do media texts always represent men as neutral in terms of gender or has there been change as sensitivities about gender improve? Under what circumstances, if any, do media give men meaning as a gender? Interrogating such contextual aspects of representation will not only provide new insights into how journalism and media practice is gendered but lead to more critical understandings of the shifts that are occurring in both media scholarship and gender scholarship on the Continent.

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The Wanjiku metonymy: Challenging gender stereotypes in Kenya's editorial cartoons

By Duncan Omanga

Abstract

Following the post-election violence that rocked the country in 2007/8, critics blamed the media for their role in abetting and fanning the violence. However, as the crisis deepened, the media rose above petty identities and affiliations and began spirited campaigns for peace, reconciliation and reflection. Specifically, this study highlights a series of editorial cartoons that appeared in the *Daily Nation*, East Africa's largest circulating paper, and how they framed the event from a gender perspective. The study focuses on how five editorial cartoons appropriated Maxine Molyneux's concept of "combative motherhood" through the metaphorical image of one Kenyan woman, *Wanjiku*. Emerging from the political discourse surrounding the clamour for a new constitution in Kenya far back in the late 90s, *Wanjiku* soon became a metonym for the common and average Kenyan citizen. Come 2008, she emerges in the editorial cartoons when the country was literally burning; challenging several rigid conceptions of gender. Using a critical approach to media framing, the study reveals how images of the empowered mother reconstruct and redefine the place of women in both the social and symbolic spheres.

Key words: framing, gender, hegemony, empowered motherhood, editorial cartoons

Introduction:

Research on how the media in Africa have covered women normally betrays a western gaze (Worthington, 2001). Often the theoretical assumptions deployed have reproduced questionable universalisms regarding feminist gender discourses. Oyewumi (1997) rightly argues that analysis and interpretations of Africa must start with Africa. Meanings and interpretation must pay close attention to specific cultural and local contexts.

Author biographical note

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The article focuses on a series of editorial cartoons by the renowned Kenyan cartoonist, Godfrey Mwampembwa, published in the *Daily Nation* shortly after Kenya's post-election violence. The selected cartoons focus on a now metaphorical character, *Wanjiku*, a trope symbolically representing the "average citizen" in Kenya. *The Daily Nation* was founded in the early 60s by the Aga Khan, the world leader of the Ismailia, and, for years, has been the newspaper with the largest circulation in East and Central Africa. The Aga Khan's intention was to use British expertise to nurture young blacks who would become, in the post independence years, the leading voices in Kenyan journalism. Although the *Daily Nation* prides itself as an independent newspaper, it was much more leftist in the early 90s before shifting to a more right wing position after multiparty democracy in 1992¹.

The aim of this article is to probe the extent to which editorial cartoons with *Wanjiku* as the central character have interrogated gender shortly after the post-election violence in Kenya. This period was significant as it represented Kenya's biggest crisis since independence, and, beyond the focus on the violence and its management, some of the representations of this event reflected side discourses of gender issues. The study examines how the cartoons represented *Wanjiku*, in an empowered and combative role of motherhood, "a type of advocacy that defies the ways in which the presumed female association with family life marginalizes women in politics and media representations" (Worthington, 2001, p.168).

The paper is organized into three main sections. The first section provides the introductory remarks and a brief overview of the theoretical assumptions guiding the study. The second section describes the method used and how particular frames were extracted from the editorial cartoons analyzed in the study. The third section provides the main body of this work and contains the findings from the analyzed content. The concluding section links the emergent frames of the symbolic *Wanjiku* with substantive strides made by well-known Kenyan mothers in the local and international arena, notable among them being Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai.

Background

It is difficult to accurately trace the whole career of the "*Wanjiku*" metaphor over time and how it acquired the kind of status it has in Kenya's social and political space today. *Wanjiku* is a common Kikuyu female name that is fondly abbreviated to 'Shiko' in reference to young

girls bearing the name. According to Wairimu Njambi (2011) the name *Wanjiku* originally came from one of the daughters of the mythical founders of the Agikuyu community. In Gikuyu history (from which the name comes), we find that this most populous Kenyan ethnic group had no founding fathers but a founding mother named *Mumbi* who had nine daughters from whom the Kikuyu sprang. Each Gikuyu clan is identified by the name of one of the nine daughters. *Wanjiku* is the name of one of the founding daughters and indeed all Kikuyu women bear at least one of the names of these ten founders (Njambi and O'Brien, 2005). To put it another way, there are no Kikuyu female names that are not one of these mythical historic names. (Kikuyu male names do not have the same history or importance.)

The centrality of mothers in the construction of Gikuyu identity, and more specifically the emergence of one of these founding figures as the emblematic Kenyan citizen is not an accident. *Wanjiku* is resonant in Kenya because of the sheer numbers of women who bear the name and thus the ubiquity of the name *Wanjiku* ensures that she is indeed every Kenyan.

About two decades ago, the name *Wanjiku* mutated into a veritable metaphor after finding itself at the heart of Kenya's discourses on national reform politics when President Arap Moi used it condescendingly to connote the ignorance within the general citizenry. The debate on political reform and in particular constitutional reform was to a large extent muted in the 70s and the early 80s, but frequent political detentions, the choking and the extremely inhibiting one-party state forced the discussions for a new constitution to gain several octaves of volume.

In 1991 Daniel Arap Moi, then president of Kenya, after repeated pressure from within and without, coupled with increased isolation and the withholding of much needed aid from the international community, capitulated. He repealed the one-party constitution and allowed for multi-party politics and the opening up of democratic space. But still this was not enough. After losing two subsequent elections, the opposition wallowed in denial, and argued that their defeat came as a result of a flawed constitution which allowed the executive sweeping powers that made losing virtually impossible for an incumbent. The long road to constitutional reform acquired more impetus². Around this time a debate emerged on whether to do a nationwide survey on what kind of constitution Kenyans wanted or whether to hire experts who could fix the job faster and away from the

annoying din and clamour from ambitious politicians and media-hungry civil society groups (CRECO, 2010). Moi, always a lone voice against a loud majority, favored a small team of experts to work on the document, a team he could easily manipulate away from the prying eyes of the public (Sihanya, 2011). At a public rally, Moi sought to convince his audience that constitution making was a very complicated exercise for the common *mwananchi* (Swahili word for citizen). In a rather condescending manner he asked “do you think Wanjiku understands what a constitution is?” From that day on, the name *Wanjiku* became a metonym that transcends gender, class and ethnic differences to refer to the Kenyan citizenry.

Post-post election violence

At the beginning of 2008 Kenya grabbed international headlines, not for its world class athletes, but for a botched election, a tribalized political space, and a nocturnal, hurried swearing-in ceremony of incumbent President Kibaki. All this ushered in national conflict which turned into a bloodbath (Murunga, 2007). The resulting conflict claimed the lives of 1300 people with several thousand wounded. Over 300,000 Kenyans were internally displaced. Aside from human lives the estimated loss ran into billions of Kenya shillings (CIPEV, 2008). Germane to this study was how *Wanjiku*, as the voice of the common citizen, articulated and confronted these anxious times, and in so doing, sought to challenge the more traditional categories of gender roles and expectations.

Methodology

This study is set in the period when Kenya went through one of its worst crises since independence – the 2007/8 post-election violence. During this period incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, running on a Party of National Unity (PNU), was locked in a deadly power struggle following a disputed election victory against opposition leader and former ally Raila Odinga, who ran on an Orange Democratic Party (ODM). The focus of the study is on the *Wanjiku* cartoons in the *Daily Nation*, which were published between January and February of 2008, at the height of the violence. A total of five cartoons, representing all the editorial cartoons with *Wanjiku* as the central actor, constitute the sample used in the study. Although the number of cartoons is relatively small, they represent an important aspect of ongoing public discourse and reaction to an issue of national salience.

A framing analysis based on the constructivist approach was done on the sample of cartoons, following the ideas of Van Gorp (2007) and Gamson & Stuart (1992). Both Van Gorp (2007) and Gamson & Stuart (1992) suggest the extraction of the (core) frame by isolating the framing and reasoning devices. According to Van Gorp (2007), upon exposure or interaction with a media text, the frame will manifest itself in the text through several framing devices. These devices will include, but are not limited to: word choice, metaphors, exemplars, descriptions, arguments, visual imagery, visual metaphors, stereotypes, catch phrases, dramatic characters, graphics, and lexical choices. Similarly, Gamson and Stuart (1992) consider these devices more like sign posts that "suggest the ³core frame in shorthand fashion" (1992, p. 60). The core frame has "reasoning devices", which scholars agree (Taylor, 2008, Van Gorp, 2007; Gamson & Lasch, 1983) are related to the four functions of framing as conceived by Entman (1993).

The researcher and an assistant separately did an analysis of the manifest and reasoning devices to get the structural foundations of the core frame. The two analyses were compared and final core frames were reconstituted. As expected, the core frames identified were related to nationalism, the violence and seeking a way forward out of the crisis. Although the "independent coder" (the assistant) came up with similar frames as the researcher, he did not perceive an explicit gender dimension. This was anticipated since as a member of the same cultural space, the coder perceived *Wanjiku* in her metonymical sense, and not necessarily in her being a woman. Accordingly, it was the researcher who linked the gender dimension, but without losing sight of the core frame. Given the concordance of the two analyses, the analysis was judged to have a relatively high level of validity. This is worth noting, since culture plays a crucial role in the framing. The context becomes very important in anchoring the core frame. And so, analysis of the prevailing frames included the broader cultural context. In this study, the researcher's knowledge of the then prevailing events, coupled with commentaries and editorials by the newspaper (*Daily Nation*) enter into the interpretation of the analysis. However, the conclusions are drawn primarily from the core frames identified.

While *Wanjiku* has been effective and has survived long in public discourses of a political nature, this metonymy has thrived in the realm of the economy of space of the editorial cartoon. This is because the editorial cartoon is a medium that condenses multiple elements and conceals other multiple significations in a very limited space. In so

doing, by appropriating the powerful image of an African mother, *Wanjiku*, acquires the multiple roles of the public watchdog and the people's advocate. *Wanjiku* appears to be the most level-headed actor at a time of heightened political tension when reason and sobriety were much needed, but often times sorely lacking. The representation and emergence of *Wanjiku* as a character in editorial cartoons challenged and redefined notions of gender by drawing on women's moral authority as both mothers and political actors. Molyneux (1985) describes how women in Nicaragua drew from their traditional influential roles as mothers, providers and nurturers to challenge the political establishment. This study brings in some of these cultural elements in extracting the emergent frames in the editorial cartoons by assuming that media frames are a factor of construction, whose origin is not in the media text itself, but mostly drawn from discourses that situate a cultural item at its core. This means that the frames do not simply emerge from the media itself, but are a result of broader discourses prevailing in the socio-cultural context.

In his work, Van Gorp (2007) argues for the centrality of a cultural dimension in identifying media frames. He adopts the frequently quoted definition of framing by Entman (1993) as a project in which framing highlights aspects of a communication text in such a way as to "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (1993, p. 52). In this particular paradigm, culture is thought to be the primary base from which knowledge is constituted, and culture influences the meaning and comprehension of the symbolic construction (Hall, 1997). However, since a cultural item is central to the constructionist framing project and influences how one perceives the frames, how then does one argue for the existence of particular frames that seem incongruent with the social reality of the Kenyan woman? It is precisely for this reason that this study incorporates Gramsci's (1986) notion that the hegemonic ideology co-opts the worldview of dominated groups to assure its own existence and domination.⁴ Ideology in this paper is defined as a particular framing of reality that privileges the interests of a particular social group.

Studies undertaken in media representations of women in Africa indicate that women have been marginalized in terms of presence (symbolic annihilation), trivialized, objectified and stereotyped (Gadzekpo, 2009; Gallagher, 1981; Steeves, 1997; Gakahu & Mukhongo, 2007; Omanga, 2010). Feminists have drawn from

hegemony theory to consider news representations of Kenyan women in relation to the media environment and the cultural contexts in which they occur (Worthington, 2001; Steeves, 1997). The conclusion is that African news representations of women must be examined broadly as products of African culture as well as within journalistic conventions that are partly Western.

Wanjiku and gender constructions

As a metonym of the Kenyan citizenry, the framing of *Wanjiku* confronts tensions that characterize the contradictions dividing the real world and the symbolic world, and in subtle ways provokes a reconstruction of the 'new woman.' attempted to transgress commonly held conceptions of the womenfolk in the public space. The study extracted the following four frames from the editorial cartoons; the first frame was "*keeping country first*", which we felt also spoke into the concept of citizenship and gender. Second, the frame "*keeping citizens first*" also emerged, and which also foregrounded the relationship between gender and civic awareness. Thirdly, the frame "*abuse of force*", equally made comments on the appropriation of urban and social space in relation to gender. Finally, the frame of "*social institutional failure*" in the wake of the Kenyan crisis teased out the perennial debate of the gender and leadership in the church. As earlier said, the relationship between the extracted frames and gender was one that the researcher heuristically made with an eye on the frame.

Keeping country first: Gender and citizenship

As President Kibaki stood his ground that he won the elections fair and square, and his opponent Raila Odinga insisted that victory was stolen from him, the country began hurtling towards what would have been a civil war pitting ethnic groups against each other. Two major ethnic groups the Kalenjins and Luos, most of whom supported Odinga, clashed with Kikuyu, most of whom voted for Kibaki. The other ethnic groups were generically lumped along these two apparent mutually irreconcilable categories. Eldoret, one of the fastest growing cities in Kenya and the then bedrock of Odinga's support, became the epicenter of some of the worst violence in this tribal conflict. Perhaps the worst day of the violence in the country was the 1st of January 2008, when a group of youth razed down a church filled with mostly women and children, who had apparently sought refuge in a church

compound, in the naïve hope that no sane person will attack “God’s sanctuary”.

This unfortunate incident made headlines the world over. But sadly, politicians on both sides of the divide traded accusations and carelessly bandied ethnic provocations. At this point there was a growing and urgent need for the mainstreaming and foregrounding of voices that called for a right perspective to the conflict. Sadly, what came through the media was a series of expensively funded propaganda material from both sides of the political divide which attempted to lay blame on the other side (Oriare, 2008; BBC, World Service Trust, 2008). Voices calling for the need to focus on the posterity and the future of the “country were pitifully lacking. In a “keep country first’ core frame, *Wanjiku* stepped in to fill the yawning gap. As the editorial cartoon below, published a day after the church burning suggested, Kenya was in desperate need of nationalists, those who would put the country above the tribe and redefine the concept of citizenship irrespective of gender, class or ethnicity. The frame came out shortly before a media-sponsored campaign dubbed “Save our Country,” after both Kibaki and Odinga called press conferences blaming each other for the violence and insisting that the other is the villain.

“Kenya is Bigger than all our Tribes”



Figure 1: *The Daily Nation*, Jan.4, 2008. Reprinted with permission

In Figure 1, appearing simply dressed, a *kiondo*⁵ held by her side, *Wanjiku* emerges as the most visible framing device by merely occupying the central portion of the text. Her simplicity belies her courage and straight talk. She looks the reader straight in the eye, and tells the reader what very few politicians had the courage to say: "Kenya is bigger than all tribes." This lexical item forms a crucial framing device, and that acts as a signature to the frame *keeping country first* in the editorial. At the bottom of the cartoon, a "Lilliputian"⁶ is bemused, perhaps at the realization of how true the words are.

The reminder of putting the country first, coming from a woman in the form of *Wanjiku*, challenged the gender notion of male leadership, and equally questioned the carelessly held idea that power lies in brute force. In this sense *Wanjiku* affirms a new kind of citizenship based on equality and justice, in contrast to the destructive ethnic citizenship. As a woman in an age whose citizenship is still male-centered, she challenges both the social, cultural and legal barriers that have for long defined citizenship in terms of the male figure in the household (Lister, 1997). Notably, like all the other editorial cartoons, *Wanjiku's* African femininity is foregrounded. She is cast conservatively dressed, and with her *kiondo* faithfully held by her side, revealing the unassuming powerful image of an African mother. Additionally, her manifest peasantry equally challenges the widely-held but potentially erroneous notion of the voiceless, inarticulate and trampled upon rural woman.

On the 10th of January, roughly a week later, (Figure 2) *Wanjiku* emerges in a rather ambivalent imagery, appearing both as part of the symbolism of peace, and also as a fitting metaphor illustrating the precarious point of national life. The label "Kenya" was placed on *Wanjiku*, elevating her role from that of a mere leader in the previous section, to that of the whole country. She becomes the metonymy for not just the Kenyan citizenry, or its leadership, but the whole country in a frame that directs the focus on Kenya as a nation. As a result, she plays a unifying role in which differences in gender, class and ethnicity are totally blurred. The editorial cartoon deploys the near universal symbol of peace, a dove with a twig in its beak, a fitting cultural symbol in a country that is largely Christian, to show that peace for the country is more important at this point than anything else. *Wanjiku's* missing shoe (which we are led to imagine dropped as a result of the prevailing condition) in the depiction, acts as an absent framing device that prompts a reasoning frame that Kenya is on the edge of a precipice and most probably, only the divine can rescue her.

“Kenya on the Precipice”

Figure 2: *Daily Nation*, Jan. 10, 2008. Reprinted with permission

This frame also directs our attention to consider a broad conceptualization of peacemaking and peacemakers, beyond that which is male. Here we are invited to flirt with two seemingly incompatible possibilities, women as vulnerable and women as agents of peace. Some scholars have argued that gender has been an effective tool in constructing victimhood, more so when using the images of women and children in times of crises (Furedi, 2003; Clark-Kazak, 2009). Such representations have been thought to entrench the widespread myth that women need help and protection, and can therefore not lead independent yet successful lives (without a man’s shadow lurking). But although there are hints of her vulnerability it is tightly interwoven with the powerful symbolism of an agent of peace.

Keeping citizens first: Gender and civic awareness

After a very brief but extremely costly orgy of violence, both sides of the political divide saw the urgent need for talks to end the crises. An African Union committee of eminent persons was hastily cobbled together led by former United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan, and made up of former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa and former South African First Lady *Graça* Machel. However, the two

opposing camps had different expectations from these talks reflected in the kind of words they used to label the talks. The PNU side preferred to use the term "mediation" in reference to the talks. For them, the most important thing was a return to normalcy without much political sacrifice on their part. The ODM used the term "negotiation" to refer to the same talks in which their most desired outcome from the talks was a recount or the nullification of the presidential vote, or power sharing if the first two objectives were not met. In an editorial appearing in the *Daily Nation* on 10th January, the newspaper revealed what was supposedly the substance of the conditions set by the two opposing camps at the mediation talks:

On one end, Mr. Kibaki wants the rival group to recognize his presidency and government; help stem the wave of violence...for good measure, (he) would only accede to a coalition with a position of a non-executive powers going to ODM. The Odinga camp, however, wants Mr. Kibaki to accept that he is in office illegally; agree to a vote recount; and ultimately a re-run of the presidential contest. Outside that, they can join a coalition on the condition that they have a prime minister's position with executive powers (*Daily Nation*, 10th January, 2008 p. 10).

In Figure 3, the editorial cartoon below, published on the 12th of January soon after the talks began, ridicules these intentions. Kibaki, *Wanjiku* and Odinga appear as the key framing devices, each clutching a set of demands in the talks. Combatively, *Wanjiku*, faces the two men and drawing on the righteous anger of an aggrieved mother, she angrily asks them if they have thought of "her" demands. In a "keep citizens first" core frame, she displays in her hand a list of what at that particular point were the things closest to the *wananchi's* desire: an immediate end to the violence; dialogue; peace with justice; reconstruction and jobs. Worth noting, she returns to her metonymical role as the spokesman of the citizenry, thereby constructing binarism between the political leadership and the citizens. Although the editorial cartoon does not reveal the demands of Odinga and Kibaki, a contextual understanding of the then prevailing situation was that the two were focused more on the political spoils of the post- election talks than the welfare of the country.

“The Citizens’ Demands”



Figure 3: Daily Nation, Jan. 12, 2008. Reprinted with permission

In directly addressing the two most powerful men in Kenya in a blunt and direct manner, *Wanjiku* challenges the power relationship that exists at various levels between the ruled and the rulers, the elected and the elected, and women and men. With both political leaders standing slightly stooped, both slightly leaning towards *Wanjiku* as she “addresses” them, a power relationship emerges in which there is no doubt who is in charge. Culturally, in holding her hands as she does, *Wanjiku* assumes the quintessential role of a mother chastising her wayward children, made more real by Kibaki’s and Odinga’s arms which are held back in a show of respect and reverence to the speaker. The compelling and powerful role of mother naturally compels the two “wayward kids” to hold their hands backs (and demands) back. Connotatively, the needs of the citizenry, clearly and confidently displayed by *Wanjiku* are more important than the selfish wants of politicians.

In taking up the role of the people’s advocate, *Wanjiku* steps into the strong mother image known in many African homes, but used here effectively to capture the attention of the powerful at a time of needed

sobriety. She is articulate, abrasive when her rights and that of her children are denied, and strong. Furthermore, in a country where women voters are more than male voters, she represents a latent civic power with the potential to tilt the political and social landscape if well harnessed. On the other hand, the image could also be seen ideologically as an attempt by a political class (mostly dominated by men) acquiescing to some of the demands of the electorate (mostly women) provided they do not threaten their political hegemony. As seen, none of the demands by *Wanjiku* (an immediate end to the violence; dialogue; peace with justice; reconstruction and jobs) attempts to wrest or threaten the male-dominated political hegemony.

The abuse of force: Gender and the public space

As the talks were going on, every moment of disagreement or a stall in talks was punctuated by threats of mass action by the ODM side. On the other hand the PNU government deployed thousands of police in those places where calls for mass action had been heeded. Often times, there were clashes between the police and members of the public which lead to injuries and death. Accusations flew from several corners that the police were using an overwhelmingly disproportionate force to quell the protests. In its paranoia, the government maintained a more than usual heavy police presence at almost all significant public spaces and baton-wielding police spent much of their time guarding empty spaces and walking in formations along city streets. Much to the chagrin of the *wananchi*, the police assumed unprecedented room to abuse their powers. For example, at the least provocation tear gas would be unleashed on harmless groups of people. The following editorial in the *Daily Nation* argued that the continued use of force to quell protests was counter-productive:

It is time the police and other relevant organs stepped back and rethought the strategy of using force to block opposition rallies. It is apparent, for instance, that since the ODM programme of nationwide protests resumed on Wednesday, in areas where the police exercised restraint, peaceful demonstrations passed with hardly any cases of violence. Shouldn't the authorities start considering whether ...use of force to disperse all gatherings are themselves contributing to the perennial violence (*Daily Nation*, 18th January, 2008, p.10).

Perhaps as a result of these developments, jokes began emerging that it was the police and not the public that were rioting and causing damage. The editorial cartoon below, published on the 18th of January, ridicules the overzealous conduct of the Kenyan police in dealing with the public. The framing devices and contextual clues suggest this is Nairobi (specifically Kenyatta Avenue), and it is a working day. Apparently, the intimidating, combat-ready police marching in formation seem to have caused a major interruption to normal city life.

“Mass Action by the police”



Figure 4: *Daily Nation*, Jan. 18, 2008. Reprinted with permission

As a framing device, three columns of police in full anti-riot gear act as a metonymy for what was going on in all major cities in Kenya. Men and women prefer to watch the proceedings from the comforts of the “fortified” high-rise buildings. Published on the day that ODM had hoped to stage mass action protests across the country, *Wanjiku* points out in the speech bulb that the planned mass action had succeeded, except that the actors were the police themselves and not the masses. The framing and reasoning devices secrete the “abuse of force” frame, by deploying satirical tools to illustrate police tyranny in times of crises. But even more germane to the central argument of the paper, is how *Wanjiku* challenges gender constructions as a woman. She not only acts

in this setting as the voice of *wananchi* against the overbearing conduct of the police and the excesses of the government, but she transgresses constructed gender inhibitions on accessing and appropriating the public urban space.

After the ban on live broadcasts by the government following the election crisis, the urban space was transformed as a site of informal political deliberations in an attempt to fill this information vacuum (Rasmussen & Omanga, 2011). In addition, during mass protests and riots the urban space was the most contested, and, over time, it provided the platform for confrontations with the police, a confrontation that is equally male where police and mostly male protesters face off in hurling projectiles at each other. *Wanjiku* not only accesses this urban space, but she does so even as the usual occupants and mainstays of the space (mostly men) are hiding behind walls. In the process, she creates a binarism that features the marauding police and her on opposing sides, and the rest of the citizens relegated to mere onlookers. Her strength, contrasted with the heavily armed police, is not found in brute force, weaponry and things external to herself, but in her simplicity and things internal such as her powerful role as a combative mother and her wit of mind. This way, she affirms her role as a public spokeswoman, and as a result also affirms her role in the urban space, where much of the action seems to be taking place.

Social institutionf failure: Gender and the pulpit

In a country were 70 percent consider themselves Christians,⁷ the church has always played a pivotal role in the public affair of the country. During the clamor for multiparty democracy, the church was looked upon as an institution that embodied courage, integrity and justice. Since then, the church has straddled Kenya's public space like a colossus giving its voice on key prevailing issues as the conscience of the nation. Accordingly, the power of the church has not only been in the religious sphere, but also on the political front. This has meant that the church has always taken a position on political issues whether during election time, a referendum, appointment of personnel to key government positions, social trends, as well as local and national disputes. In these times, the church has found itself in direct confrontation with the government or sections of the population. Meanwhile the church has had to contend with internal tensions with debate concerning gender and the place of women in its leadership. Drawing from the Holy Scriptures, there has been a near perennial

debate for and against the prospect of women taking on senior roles in the church leadership, more so with regard to being the ultimate leaders in these congregations (Massey, 2002; Howe, 1982). For instance, the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the African Inland Church are some of the most influential churches in the country, yet none of them allows women to rise up as bishops or priests. Indeed, this is a question that is not up for debate. As a result, the history of the Kenyan church with regard to its civil role has always been male-dominated.

Prior to the 2007 elections, the church was held in high regard following its determined opposition to a government sponsored draft constitution that was defeated at a 2005 referendum. But during the presidential elections, it appeared as if the church was divided along ethnic lines. It was therefore not surprising that when the post-election mayhem erupted, fingers were pointed at a divided church for failing when her direction was needed most. While some of these accusations were not entirely correct, they were drawing on fresh history in which the church had become rather “activist”.

The editorial cartoon below was published on 20th February, 2008 to illustrate the extent to which the church and other institutions had failed in their mandate, thus leading the country to the brink of collapse. It contains, as the more striking framing device, *Wanjiku* seated in a confessional, a notable transgression of sacred space as the room is only meant for the clergy. Kneeling and pleading for pardon for not being impartial in the just concluded poll is Kenya’s cardinal, metonymic for the Kenyan Christian leadership. Although the scene is obviously Catholic in several ways, a Muslim leader, a business man and a media owner are standing in line, most probably to seek the same request from *Wanjiku*.

In a frame that suggests accuses the church as a part of the “social institutional failure” that preceded the post election violence. The reasoning devices suggest that the media, the business community, the broad array of religious bodies (both Christian and Muslim), failed at the greatest hour of need. Most significant though is the perceived failure of the church. But of even more interest is the particular role that *Wanjiku* plays, and the unbridled power that has been bestowed upon her – that of granting or withholding mercy.

In the confession Box'

Figure 5: *Daily Nation*, Feb. 20, 2008. Reprinted with permission

Wanjiku plays a role few women in the real world have ever imagined. While several women have overcome social constraints to pursue a calling in the church and other faith-based careers, virtually none has occupied the hallowed confession box. The church, especially the Catholic Church, has maintained its centuries old tradition that no woman can serve as a priest. This particular cartoon permits the realization of a woman in this sacred space and the honor of her playing priest, albeit symbolically. Granted, while the church is depicted symbolically as being in dire need of the citizen's pardon and grace, the reversed role of *Wanjiku* playing priest and the cardinal kneeling in supplication not only rattles the power structures in the church, but flirts with the idea of women positioning themselves for arenas long thought to be no-go zones for them.

Still, upon closer scrutiny, one sees evidence of a male hegemonic rule legitimized through this editorial cartoon. *Wanjiku* appears somewhat uneasy in her new role that has suddenly bequeathed her unimaginable influence and even while she is playing priest, the garments and the vestiges of authority that go with that particular office are still not accessible to her.

The supplicating cardinal still wears them. Male hegemony in business, religious institutions and the media is further buttressed by the clear absencing of women in this particular frame. And so, while on the one hand this image appears to challenge gender in relation to the pulpit, at perhaps its most sensitive point (the confession box) it nevertheless takes much of the thunder from it, by naturalizing male leadership in other spheres of influence such as business, the media and even the church itself.

Conclusions

Over the years several studies have explained how gender is represented in media texts in Africa (Gadzekpo, 2009; Okuna, 1996; Wanyeki, 2002; Lowe, 2007; Gakahu and Mukhongo, 2007). While such efforts have concentrated on the material forms of discourse, there is a growing need to focus on the equally powerful symbolic and representational aspect of gendered media texts (Omanga, 2010). As this paper reveals, a series of unfortunate events created the mythical *Wanjiku*. *Wanjiku* is best understood in the context of Kenya's political and social space, and the name itself has now become a recognized metonymy in Kenya's editorial cartoons for the Kenyan citizenry.

Positioned in her influential role of the empowered and sometimes combative mother, the symbolic *Wanjiku* is not a mere creation of the cartoonists or the politicians, but has become emblematic of the strides Kenyan women have made, especially at the political front. In fact, Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, who fought Moi's dictatorship and paid dearly with beatings, arrests and imprisonment, best exemplifies the real *Wanjiku*. It can be argued that somewhere at the corner of Moi's mind *Wanjiku* and *Wangari* were probably conflated. Partly due to Kenyan history and contemporary references such as Moi's the *Wanjiku* narrative has become a part of the popular imagination in Kenya, a fact that is probably not lost on the creators of the media character *Wanjiku*. The editorial cartoons in the *Daily Nation* can therefore be read as art which is merely imitating life and the symbolic *Wanjiku* a metaphor of the vibrant activism of the Kenyan women, especially in times of crises.

Notes

¹ The western concepts of a leftist or right wing paper as rigid concepts would scarcely be adequate in describing the press in Kenya. For instance, newspapers will, at different times, be either leftist or rightist depending mostly on the political class in power.

² This does not mean that this was the start of the clamor for constitutional change, for a detailed analysis of the historical side of this analysis, see Maxon, Robert (2009).

Constitution-Making in Contemporary Kenya: Lessons from the Twentieth Century. *Kenya Studies Review*: 1, 11-30.

³ The core frame and the frame are essentially the same thing

⁴ It was the scholar ,Todd Gitlin, who mainstreamed Gramsci's political thoughts into media studies. For more details see Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching. Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left* . Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

⁵ A kiondo is a hand-woven handbag made from sisal with leather trimmings. It is indigenous to the kikuyu and the Kamba ethnic groups in Kenya. It was and still remains a vital part of a woman's life in Kenya.

⁶ I use this word, drawn from Jonathan Swift's classic, *Gulliver Travels*, to refer to this tiny mouse-like, sometimes human, creature. He appears in virtually all cartoons by Gado (GodfreyMwampembwa) and sometimes plays a role in anchoring the core frame.

⁷ From the last census held in 2009, whose results were released a year later, it emerged that 70% of Kenyans consider themselves Christians, 20 % Catholic and 50 % Protestants. The rest are Muslims, traditionalist and so on.

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Beyond unequal visibilities: Are women treated differently from men in the news?

By Rosemary Kimani and Abena Yeboah

Abstract

Research evidence shows that compared to men, women are underrepresented in the news as subjects and sources (GMMP 2010; Yeboah 2010). But beyond this situation of unequal visibilities, are women treated similarly to men in terms of the quality of their appearance once they make it through the news gates? In this study, we examine this by comparing the proportion of women who feature prominently to the proportion of men who feature prominently. We start by asking the question: “what proportion of the few women who appear is featured prominently and does this compare well to that of men”? Three “prominence variables” -; appearance in photographs, direct attribution, and function as experts - were used for the analysis. Though across gender groups, disparities in visibilities were replayed, we report that differences observed in the levels of prominence enjoyed by women relative to men were marginal. Thus, we argue that the bigger problem with women’s involvement in the news may be that of underrepresentation and that, if that is reversed, the women who appear are unlikely to face discrimination in terms of how prominently they appear relative to men. This study provides a Ghanaian angle to discourses regarding women’s involvement with the news.

Key words: gender, sources, newsmakers, male and female newsmakers, newspapers, Ghana

Introduction:

The news (broadcast and print) provides the major forum by which people keep abreast of local, national and global events and it remains the most influential information source in spite of the growing popularity of social media (GMMP, 2010). But the actual news, the events themselves, are not the media’s sole prerogative and, as aptly noted by Ketzinger (2002), its production is neither a neutral nor objective process. Indeed, there is a power relationship between the

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media and news subjects and sources in deciding what should be the published news (Reese, as cited in Berkowitz and Terkeurst, 1999). The media owners, editors and reporters select what and whom should be covered, but newsmakers and sources determine the details of the actual stories making the news and, by so doing, bring credibility and relevance to the story. Thus, whereas news subjects and sources provide flesh for media content, the media owners, editors and reporters also give voice and status to those selected (Miller and Kurpius, 2010). The news is, therefore, a result of this symbiotic relationship between sources and the news producers.

Media actors seem to wield more power in this equation, however, because it is they who determine who gets covered, who gets to speak in the news and in what capacity. Ross (2007) argues, for example, that although the mass media are generally conceived of as the epitome of the modern day public sphere, it allows the so-called public only a limited role in deciding what should take place on its platform. Whom media editors select to partake in the news process either as subjects or sources, is, therefore, a question of critical concern to gender and media researchers as it “says crucially important things about who ‘counts’ in society, [and] whose voices have legitimacy and status” (Ross, 2007). While it seems no longer a matter of debate that women are woefully underrepresented in the news and as such woefully underrepresented in key roles (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah, 2010), no attention seems to have been paid to their prominence relative to male sources.

Female representation in the news

The literature on women’s representation in the news is focused on two main concerns: their coverage and role as sources, and their role as reporters. Without a doubt, the most consistent report of studies examining women’s inclusion in the news is that when it comes to the news, women are a marginalized group failing to receive coverage commensurate to their population representation (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah, 2010; Ross, 2007; Shwartz, 2011; Asamoah, 1994; Mensah, 2002). Since 1995, the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) has observed men and women’s appearance in the news of the world and has been consistent in reporting that women enjoy limited visibility in the news. Beyond this situation of unequal visibilities and inclusions, however, lies the bigger question of what women say and do in the news as well as how prominently they are portrayed relative to male

news subjects and sources. We report, below, some research findings in this regard on three “prominence variables” - – photographs, attribution and function – that have implications for this study.

Photographs

These do not only add color and credibility to the news story but may also help tilt audiences’ thoughts about what men and women do and should do in our societies. The research trajectory on this variable presents a general picture in which females are far less likely to be photographed than male news sources and subjects. In 1975, Miller found that the number of photos of men were double or triple the number of photos of women in different newspapers. More than 10 years later Luebke (1989) studied 184 issues of newspapers and reported that photos were much more likely to portray men than women, particularly on the front pages. More recently, Len-Ríos et al (2006) have used a feminist framework to examine photographic representation of women in two newspapers (one large and the other medium-sized) and compared these to news staff and readers’ perceptions of such representations. They found that in both newspapers, women were less likely than men to have photos of them accompany stories. Also important for the benefit of this study is their finding on how aware audiences and news workers are of the disparities in the media’s use of photographs of men and women. They found that audiences tended to notice such disparities better than news workers. Evidently, photographic depictions of men and women can be important in framing the perceptions of audiences, considering that they do notice disparities.

Research on attribution

The literature examining the nature of attribution to male and female sources was limited and findings appear mixed, with more reports favoring a tendency to quote male sources directly than females. The GMMP reports of 2000 and 2005 showed that male sources were slightly more likely to be quoted directly in the news than females. Semetko and Boomgaarden (2007) analyzed Germany’s 2005 election coverage and found that, between male and female politicians, the latter received more in terms of sound bites and quotations. More recently, however, the GMMP (2010) has reported that a slightly bigger percentage of the women covered in the news (52%) were directly quoted compared to the percentage of men who were quoted (50%).

Function:

Generally, the literature points to a dominance of expert and elite news sources, the majority of whom are male. The media's preference for such sources places a limit on how many women may appear as experts. Ross (2007) contends that when it comes to deciding who should serve as sources, "women are almost never as equal as men". She found that women are three times more likely than men to appear as ordinary members of the public while men are twice as likely as women to appear as business people. The GMMP (2010) also reports that women constitute only 20% of the expert voices and only 19% of spokespersons' voices in the news. Women were found to appear mostly as eye witnesses and popular opinion providers. Freedman and Fico (2005) have also reported that the proportion of women experts covered in the news exaggerated the gender imbalance of experts in the population observed. Another study by Freedman, Fico and Love (2007) reported that expert male sources appeared four times more than expert female sources.

News and the construction of realities

Two theories help in understanding coverage of men and women as well as its implications for the formation of perceptions about them. Gerbner's cultivation theory (Gerbner, 1998) indicates the media's ability to cultivate a certain reality of a person's environment. Through its demonstration of how media audiences internalize the images they are exposed to, the theory offers us an opportunity to understand the relationship between news portrayals of women and the eventual potential effect this might have on audiences. Where, repeatedly, the news covers women in less significant roles and treats them with relatively less prominence than men, it is possible that audiences, including women themselves, would internalize such portrayals and limit their expectations of women's relevance and abilities.

Tuchman (1978) has argued that the mass media deal in symbols which have implications for realities. These symbols may be unrepresentative of changing realities thereby limiting perceptions of the misrepresented, a process she labelled "symbolic annihilation". In other words, when they fail to capture the daily realities of women's expanding roles as individuals capable of, and actually contributing to society, the media are symbolically annihilating them. According to Tuchman, this can also result in members of the misrepresented group defining their own abilities by the images they are exposed to.

Stereotypic presentation of women as opinion givers, victims and hardly as experts can make young girls internalize such symbols and thereby define their abilities. This theory finds support in Bonnot and Croizet's (2007) report indicating that women internalize stereotypes concerning their abilities.

In Ghana, Yeboah (2010) has reported that women are significantly under represented in the news covered by the most widely-circulated newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, making up only 12% of all sources cited. While the relationship between media content and audience perceptions may not be direct, being mediated by a host of other factors including audience members' levels of enlightenment, this theory shows that a relationship does exist nonetheless. Thus, in this study, we seek to explore what cues news audiences were given with which to form their views about men and women in the Ghanaian society.

The muted group theory offers some further insights for this discussion as it suggests that a situation of "muting" arises as a result of recurrent neglect of the realities of marginalized groups (Ardener as cited in Katherine Miller, 2002). To this extent, where media overlook the changing realities and roles of women in public life and discourse and continually present them in limited roles and even stereotypic contexts, they would be creating a situation of "mutedness" in which women (as the marginalized group) would fail to see themselves as important enough to partake in societal discourses that affect them, thinking that such activity should be left for the dominant group (men).

This theory helps to explain media practitioners' common excuse for failing to include women in the news – the fact that they are unwilling to step into the public debate. Perhaps, such women, being products of patriarchal cultures, may have so internalized the muting process that they see media involvement as interference in what should otherwise be left for men. Amancio (as cited in Lobo and Cabecinhas, 2010) suggests that the apparent lack of ambition often attributed to women should not be divorced from the limits imposed by gender representations because the ideological gender frame interferes with the goals individuals set. Lobo and Cabecinhas (2010) also argue that because gender is a discursive construction and media production is entrenched in power structures that produce meaning according to previously internalized stereotypes, there is reason for changing gender portrayals in the media to prevent distortions.

According to the muted group theory, dominant groups name reality using their own standards, and marginalized groups have their interest subsumed in this process. Given that the media are controlled by men as owners, editors and reporters, tenets for coverage have been defined using male perspectives. Against this background, merely increasing visibility for females in the news may have little impact as characteristics attending their appearance may still conform to masculine stereotypic notions. Feminist linguists argue that merely allowing women speaking rights in situations where the modes of speech and are defined according to male priorities marks little progress for women (McDonald, 2002, p. 106). What is the use if women are included as voices in the news but must play to male dictates or achieve male standards of discoursing in order to be accepted? More importantly, how effective would this inclusion be if the women covered are treated less prominently than men? The section below details the methods we used in assessing the proportional levels of prominence enjoyed by the few women who appear in the news relative to the proportional levels of the men who appear.

Content analysis of six newspapers

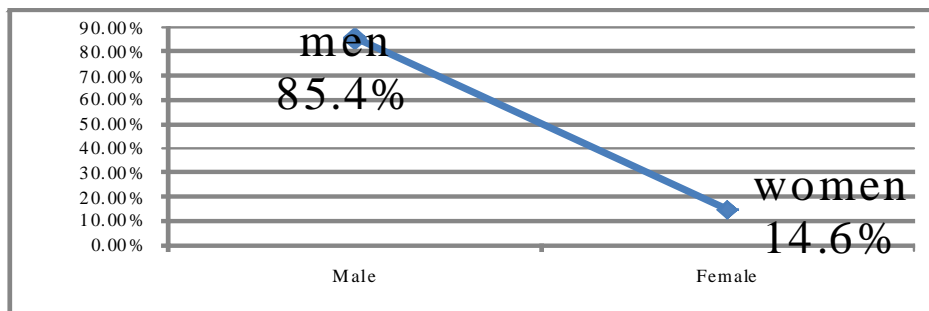
We analyzed the content of 12 issues each of six local newspapers in Ghana: *The Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Graphic Nsempa*, *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *The Heritage*. *The Daily Graphic*, *Ghanaian Times* and *Graphic Nsempa* are state-owned while *Daily Guide*, *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *The Heritage* are privately owned. All the newspapers were purposively selected. The first paper was selected due to its position as the most widely-circulated newspaper in the country, while the remaining were selected due to their participation in a special project aimed at improving journalism practice called the Ghana Media Standards Improvement Project (GMSIP), the project for which this study was originally conducted. From each newspaper's 2010 issues, one Monday (being the common issue day to all the papers) was randomly selected out of every month. Each title, therefore, had 12 issues making a sample size of 72. All news stories and news features (except those clearly not generated by the papers' reporters) were subjected to quantitative analysis to answer one principal question: when women appear in the news, are they treated with similar levels of prominence as the men who appear? We defined prominence as the amount of personal presence and authority allowed an individual in his/her appearance in the news, and isolated three

prominence variables as the units of analysis: appearance in photograph, attribution, and function. These variables were chosen based on our theoretical assumption that a person's appearance in a photo, opportunity to speak directly to audiences (attribution) and positioning in terms of function can have implications for how prominently they are perceived. We coded information on each person appearing in the news either as subject or source, regarding gender, presence or absence of photographs, nature of attribution and function in the news story. Data was analysed cumulatively with no emphasis on individual newspaper's respective behavior. Our data analysis was also conducted within gender groups to enable us draw conclusions regarding the relative proportions of men and women who were featured prominently. Instead of analyzing across gender groups to arrive at the usual picture of "men are treated better", we sought to look at the female group and measure the proportion of it which was treated prominently in comparison to the proportion of the male group which was treated prominently. We present a descriptive analysis of our data below.

Women's visibility as newsmakers/sources

We present below a descriptive analysis of our data showing the proportional levels of prominence enjoyed by men and women in the sample across the three prominence variables isolated. Stories coded numbered 1770 out of which 2937 persons were counted. There were a total of 529 news subjects whose gender could either not be determined or who were gender neutral. For the purpose of concentrating the analysis on males and females, news subjects which were gender neutral or whose gender could not be determined have been left out of the sample.

Figure 1: Overall male-female representation in data



The sample shows that in 2010, most of the persons written about in the news of the selected newspapers as well as those who served in various source capacities were predominantly male. Only 14.6% (429) were females. This means that for every female newsmaker/source there were (almost) six men.

This finding confirms earlier studies (GMMP, 2010 and Yeboah, 2010) regarding the disproportionate number of female newsmakers/sources in newspapers. Yeboah's (2010) study which was conducted in Ghana and which examined the visibility variable and how it relates to female reporter activity found that only 12% of the sources used by the *Daily Graphic* in 2006 were females. The global average recorded by the GMMP in 2010 was 24%, almost 10 percentile points higher than the Ghana average in this study.

Clearly women are not gaining as much access to the news as are men, and so audiences hear stories of their world mainly from male perspectives. Women's visibility in the news is at variance with the nation's population dynamics. According to the 2010 census, 51.3% of Ghana's population is female (Ghana Statistical Service, 2011). This being the case, it means that the selected newspapers woefully fail to include female input commensurate to female population size.

Do women enjoy levels of attribution similar to men?

One way by which newsmakers attain prominence and individuality in the news is through the manner in which information is attributed to them. Direct quotes from news sources add credibility to news stories. But they also indicate that what was said is so relevant and meaningful, it is best presented without any attempt at dilution (paraphrasing) from the reporter. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, reduces the personal presence of a source while at the same time reducing the relevance of what was said. Further, there is always the tendency for the reporter to misrepresent or even reduce the effect of that which was said.

Table 1: Male and female proportional levels of direct attribution

Male and female proportional levels of direct attribution			
		Male	Female
Attribution of news subject	Not attributed	309	56
		12.3%	13.1%
	Quoted	24	0
		1.0%	.0%
	Paraphrased	1502	273
		59.9%	63.6%
	Quoted and paraphrased	673	100
		26.8%	23.3%
Total		2508	429
		100.0%	100.0%

Our data show that while women were slightly more likely to be paraphrased than men, the difference is only marginal. Of the 429 women who appeared in stories, nearly 64% were paraphrased compared to nearly 60% of males. In addition there was only a percentage difference between the proportion of men who were directly quoted without an accompanying paraphrase and the proportion of women treated similarly. Indeed, in the case of the women none was ever quoted directly without an accompanying paraphrase.

Where they were quoted and paraphrased, the proportion of women given attribution is less than the proportion of men, an indication of a general tendency for women to be denied the power of direct quotation. We found that proportionally, more of the men who appeared in stories (26.8%) were quoted and paraphrased than women (23.3%). This suggests that women were, overall, less likely than men to be heard directly and more likely to be paraphrased. But, again, the difference recorded here is quite marginal.

Do women appear in less important functional roles than men?

The proportion of women who were featured in prominent functional roles differed only marginally from that of men. Three key functions were isolated in this study: expert, spokesperson and other (encompassing opinion, personal experience, etc). Among the three, "expert" is the most prominent function followed by the "spokesperson" role and then the "other" function.

Table 2: Male/Female proportional appearance in various functions

Male/Female proportional appearance in various functions			
Function of news subject in story		Male	Female
	Expert/commentator	133	18
		5.3%	4.2%
	Spokesperson	1821	295
		72.6%	68.8%
	Other: opinion, experience etc	359	85
		14.3%	19.8%
	N/A	0	0
		.0%	.0%
	Not clear	195	31
		7.8%	7.2%
Total		2508	429
		100.0%	100.0%

Across the functions isolated in the study, it appears that the spokesperson function is the most popular for both men and women. The majority of the men and women who made it to the news did so as spokespersons of groups, organizations or causes. However, more of the men who appeared in the news did so as spokespersons than did women (about 73% of males compared to 69% of the females). The most prominent and prestigious function a person may appear in is as “expert”. Experts enjoy credibility for their mastery of the issues they speak to and may go unchallenged for their views. We found that men and women have almost an equal chance of appearing as experts in the news. The proportion of men who appeared as experts surpasses that of women by only one percent. When two prestigious functions of “expert” and “spokesperson” are combined however the gap between men and women widens to five percentage points (78% “other”, women led marginally in their proportional appearances.

Are women photographed less than men?

We sought to measure the proportion of females versus males who appeared in photographs alongside their appearance as newsmakers and sources. Photographs add personal presence to the persons being covered in the news and depending on whether such persons are featured alone, or in group photographs, they enjoy different levels of prominence. Our analysis was limited to the appearance and nature of appearance of newsmakers in photographs and did not cover qualitative analysis of their portrayal and depiction.

Generally, both men and women have just about the same chances of not appearing in photographs. More than half of all the men and women who appeared were not accompanied by photographs. Where they were, not much difference was observed in whether they appeared alone or in a group.

Table 3: Male/Female proportional appearance in photographs

Male/Female proportional appearance in photographs			
		Male	Female
Use of photograph	No photograph	1359	232
		54.2%	54.1%
	News subject in group photograph	435	87
		17.3%	20.3%
	News subject alone in photograph	344	53
		13.7%	12.4%
	Photograph unrelated to news subject	287	46
11.4%		10.7%	
N/A	0	0	
not sure	83	11	
	3.3%	2.6%	
Total		2508	429
		100.0%	100.0%

The proportion of women who appeared alone in photographs was only one percent short of that of men, although women appeared more in group photographs than men (20% compared with 17%).

Concluding discussions

The literature reviewed across the three prominence variables showed that male and female appearance in the news is gendered with men being given more prominence than women. Irrespective of what variables are considered, whether it is access, or the nature of their portrayal, such studies as the GMMP have indicated that men and women are treated differently. For instance, a person has a far better chance of making it into the news if he is male than if she is female (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah, 2010). Further, once a person makes it through the news gates, his or her chances of having photos (of himself or herself) accompany the appearance, of speaking to audiences directly through quotations and of appearing as an expert may also be

determined by his/her gender. But, as indicated, most of these studies analyzed data across gender, thus often the disparities found between men and women arose from unequal visibilities. The attempt by this study to analyze data within gender groups to find the comparative proportions of men and women being treated prominently has yielded, perhaps, a more encouraging picture of women's appearance.

We found that, across the three prominence variables isolated, the proportion of the few women who appeared in the news were treated prominently did not differ much from the proportion of the many males who appeared who were treated similarly. Where differences existed, they were marginal. It does appear, therefore, that if more women were given access to the news as sources, their overall prominence will not differ from men.

These findings have implications regarding how the media may be affecting the formation of views about the collective genders among audiences. According to Tuchman's symbolic annihilation concept, the media influence audience views about men and women by presenting them with symbols. Drawing from this it can be argued that how prominently men and women are treated in the news in terms of their photographic appearance, function as experts and other elite sources and through direct attribution can be viewed as part of the symbols with which audiences are being invited to form views about the genders. This study's findings indicate that when the within gender group proportions are taken into consideration, the media may be seen to be presenting symbols about women, regarding their prominence, that do not differ significantly from those about men. If the few women who are covered are not treated differently or featured less prominently than men, then the symbols that are presented to audiences with which they form their images of women, may not lead to views that are discriminatory of women.

This is not to suggest that annihilation may not be taking place in the media. Indeed, big disparities still exist between the number of men and the number of women who appear in news stories. Rather, the findings in this study are an indication that the annihilation taking place may relate more to numbers (drawing from the general failure to cover women and use them as sources) than to particular prominence symbols. It does not lie within the scope of the study to identify the reasons behind the limited differences observed. However, we cannot help but mention the possible implication of news values and their effects in determining how media practitioners cover persons and use

them as sources. Reporters and editors are guided by these news values in making decisions about who to cover, what to say and show about them, as well as what to allow them to say about themselves and their activities. For instance, what a women says can be presented as a direct quotation only in so far as it is deemed valuable and worth reporting as the news. A person's photograph would not be used merely because she is male but because the photograph adds to the telling of the story and is in itself valuable to the news being told. Thus, these news values place limits on how much liberty reporters and editors exercise in covering men and women. The levels of prominence enjoyed by male and female who make it into the news, therefore becomes a function of how well they fare on the news values radar.

As the muted group theory suggests, this is a man's world and women are a silent group who must live up to expectations that favor men. Since the news values criteria apply to men and women equally, the differences observed in this study may derive from the fact that the few women who made it into the news, having passed the news values test, merited similar treatment as that accorded men. However, it may be useful for further research to explore the linkages between news values and women's representation in the news.

In addition, this study did not attempt to review qualitatively the nature of portrayals of men and women who appeared in the news. We are mindful that while this descriptive study reports similar levels of prominence for both men and women, a qualitative approach looking at, for instance, sexualization, objectification and other photographic portrayals may yield a different picture in which men fare better than women. Future research should explore this angle.

Representations matter as they have the tendency to affect the learning of sex-role stereotypes and, as shown by this study, as women gain better numerical representation in the news, their very appearance may affect the corporate representation (image) of their gender. This implies that audiences' perceptions of women and their relevance in the daily activities that keep society moving may be positively altered. As they encounter more women in the news (being treated no less prominently than men) audiences may be invited by the newspapers to conceive of a world in which men and women collaborate on an equal footing in making things happen.

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Gendered narratives and identities of nationhood in documentaries on Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) between 2000 and 2009

By Ngonidzashe Muwonwa

Abstract

This article highlights the gendered image construction and representation of the Zimbabwean nation made available through television programming by positioning television as a cultural production space. The paper identifies specific gendered identity elements of the Zimbabwean nation that the programs highlighted. The theoretical framework operating in this article adopts the theories which have problematized the relationship between nationalism and gender, postulating that male theorists of nation are indifferent to the gendering of the nation. The article highlights the fact that the representation of self as a metaphor of nation and belonging co-opts such identity constructions as the “founding father” identity to legitimate a regime that uses fatherhood to foreclose political debate. Related to this is how paternity is used as a trope for scripting national identity. Father figures serve to provide an uncontested, benevolent authorship of the nation and the state. This gendered story-telling technique inevitably leads to the exclusion of other participants and contributors towards the existence of the Zimbabwean nation. Such an alienation of female agency and gender bias in regards to national representation is damaging to gender relations within society and has consequently led to many contesting versions of the liberation war and national imaginary.

Key words: gendered images, nation, national identity, female agency

Introduction:

Feminist theorists have problematized the relationship between nationalism and gender, postulating that male theorists of nation are often blind to the gendering of the nation (Bolzt, 2007). Adopting the position that all nationalism is gendered, theorists such as Boehmer (1992), Yuval-Davis (1997) and McClintock (1997) have criticized other theorists like Anderson (1983) and Gellner (1983) whose theoretical conceptions of nation have found wide currency. They point out that

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Anderson's references to "deep comradeship" and Gellner's position that "men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as being from the same nation" exclude women and women's agency, resistance or subversion.

Boehmer (2007), for example, argues that while the imagined and invented nature of nations has found wide theoretical currency, explorations of the gendering of the national imaginary have been few. As noted by Pateman (1989, p. 9) "political theory is full of stories of men giving political birth and of men creating new forms of political life." This paper benefits from such arguments in its analysis of the gendered narratives of nationhood and subsequent representations of national identities in the formation of a Zimbabwean nationhood. These representations become especially apparent in threats of Zimbabwean nationhood by internal and external socio-economic and political forces.

This study identifies specific gendered identity elements of the Zimbabwean nation, highlighted through programs on Zimbabwean TV. The gendered image is also found in attempts to provide boundaries of those who belong and don't belong, especially against a background of confrontational cultural and political fragmentation. Television in Zimbabwe is a state monopoly, functioning primarily as a political institution. Dissident voices and programs never make it to their studios. Thus, the underlying argument in the paper is that television and its programming serve as an agent for the creation and transmission of specific and composite gendered identity narratives that privilege males as icons of Zimbabwean nationhood.

The study's main thrust emanates from an understanding that gender constructions are political and that an investigation of a people's visual culture can lead to an understanding and exposition of sexist perceptions which may lead to empowering transformative identity politics. The paper proposes that nationhood emerges from, takes shape in and is constantly being defined and redefined in collective cultural activities but especially in media such as television. This premise guided the analysis of constructions of gender and identity in the narratives of documentary programs aired on Zimbabwean national television (ZTV) between the period 2000 and 2009.

The research analyzes three types of documentaries that dominated the television screen during the period under study. The first is the war documentary. This is a type of documentary that offers a historical perspective of the liberation war and the brutality that black Africans

suffered at the hands of the White colonial regime. Such documentaries were pieced together from archival footage and include the following examples: *End of an Era-Joshua Nkomo* (2000), *Mugabe the Revolutionary* (2001), *Life History of Joshua Nkomo* (2002), *Mugabe @ 82* (2004) and *Mugabe the Man* (2005).

These documentaries were all produced by the ZTV Current Affairs Department and aired as many times as there was an opportunity, with the intent to historicize the birth of the nation. In that period also there was a reinvention of the scheduling of programs on ZTV with more serious, often documentary programs, being aired during prime-time viewing. Less serious programs, such as comedy, were removed altogether from the prime-time slot. Such a reinvention of scheduling practices suggests a desire to connect genre, hegemonic ideology and nationhood. The second type of documentary enterprise is represented by the historical and autobiographical documentaries under the title *Chimurenga (Liberation War) Files*, produced by New Ziana, a government news agency and media house. These documentaries featured liberation war stories and experiences from former freedom fighters, war collaborators and peasants. The task of historicizing through the biographical documentary uses a method of selecting and ordering past occurrences in order to influence the present state of affairs.

Another set of documentary programs analyzed in this study, also produced by the Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) Current Affairs Department, were dedicated to women and their contribution to the liberation struggle and to post-independence Zimbabwean nationhood. These include *Mothers of the Struggle* (2002), *Female Ex-Combatants* (2002), *Women and the War of Liberation* (2000), *The Forgotten Heroes* (2004), *Our Motherland* (2002) and *Portrait of a Matriarch-Joice Mujuru* (2006).

The procedure for selecting the documentaries analyzed in this paper was based upon availability of the documentary programs. Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) has a very poor archival system. Documentaries logged in their broadcasting log sheets were most of the time no longer available. The underlying reasons for this poor archival system was due to the rampant staff turnover as senior staff members left the television station. Furthermore, the constraints in resources forced the station to reuse broadcasting tapes in order to minimize costs, a situation which resulted in many documentary programs being wiped out to accommodate the latest recording demands.

Following the selection of the documentaries, a gender analysis framework was utilized to interrogate the manner in which gender identity has been used in the construction and representation of Zimbabwean nationhood to form specific tangible and intangible boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

Gender dynamics in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's gender policies are framed under the National Gender Policy (2004), which is an offshoot of many regional and international protocols on gender such as the SADC Gender Protocol, African Union Solemn Declaration on 50-50 Gender Representation and the Beijing Platform for Action. The policy lays out the government's guidelines and institutional framework for combating gender inequalities in the country. Contained in the policy are strategies in key resource areas such as land, industry and commerce, mining, agriculture and information and media, highlighting mechanisms to mainstream gender dynamics.

Zimbabwe is a patriarchal society, historically and culturally characterized by the exclusion of women from participation in the major decision-making structures and processes, and from ownership of the critical productive resources (Zuidberg, McFadden and Chigudu, 2004). Moreover, colonial regimes codified some traditional practices into formal customary laws applicable to Africans only, leaving little room for black women to negotiate a fair degree of influence over important family matters (for example, in terms of the ownership and disposal of savings and assets and especially the disposal of estates of the deceased). The inequalities in power relations, in ownership and control over resources and in the public and private division of labor are cast in legal concrete. Women were and are still poorly represented in the formal labor market because the colonial regimes favored employment of men.

The National Policy acknowledges that access to information is critical to enable individuals and communities to make decisions about their lives. The policy highlights that the media continues to portray women negatively and it continues to perpetuate cultural, social, political and economic stereotypes, attitudes and practices. However, what is lacking in the policy are tangible strategies to transform the media and make it gender sensitive in output by training media personnel, ensuring the inclusion of gender and media modules in media training institutions and facilitating the positive portrayal of

women by the media to fight negative cultural practices and traditions in order to enhance equality among women and men. Mawarire and Nyakuni (2007, p. 6) state that ZBC and consequently Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) have no gender policy or editorial policy and that the lack of these policies operates as policy itself in order to allow for manipulation. Mawarire and Nyakuni (2007) argue that whatever the authorities choose to do or not do, becomes policy in the absence of a written document. Such policy gaps are responsible for the damaging and stereotypical representations of women in media programs. The programming at ZTV does not show much gender sensitivity and balance but continues to mirror and mainstream male figures as the standard citizens of the nation, to reflect patriarchal dominance.

Mediated public sphere

The period under study – 2000-2009 – represents a time frame in which Zimbabwe experienced socio-economic and political challenges that accentuated discourses of nation. It was a period when the ruling government responded to the critical challenges to its legitimacy by undertaking reconstructive processes in socio-economic and political spheres which had an effect of redefining the national contours. Faced with an unprecedented “threat” to the nation’s political security, the ruling elite resorted to both legal and extra-legal processes designed to contain the increasingly restless civil society and media.

The government created a “mediated” public sphere which it defined and dominated with its “official” or “national” ideology and in order to monitor, manage, and regulate public debate and influence the “daily plebiscite” (Renan, 1881, p.3) of Zimbabwean nationhood, it passed various forms of legislation. These included the Public Order and Security Act (2002), which regulated the holding of “public meetings”, processions and demonstrations, and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2002), earmarked to set parameters for the operations of media houses in Zimbabwe. The third restrictive law was the Broadcasting Services Act (2001), that made provisions for the establishment of a broadcasting authority responsible for regulation of frequencies and allocation of licences to new broadcasters.

The BSA contains several clauses that make it difficult for new players to enter the broadcasting market, which, to some extent, explains why after its introduction, not a single private broadcaster has been licensed. Such laws had the effect of institutionalizing fear into

society (Lush and Khupe, 2005, p. 2), and further curtailing criticism in the public sphere, limiting alternative viewpoints and closing off diversity of thought in the imagining of the nation. The laws also represent the mainstay of ZANU-PF's efforts at rebuffing internal and external challenges to "Zimbabwean nationhood". However, the measures elaborated above were not the only ones that were utilized as responses to such "threats". Numerous other attempts were made at social and cultural re-engineering of national values to build a renewed sense of nationhood, especially among the young people¹.

Television, genre criticism and nationhood

Curran and Seaton (1989 p. 263) argue that the work of broadcasting should be regarded as a public service for social purposes. This concept of broadcasting has always been that of a comprehensive service that gives the public corporation a duty to bring to public awareness the whole range of activities and expressions developed in society. This includes issues of gender sensitivity, balance and equality, and accords well with the concept of media social responsibility put forward by McQuail (1994) and others. The social responsibility theory was formulated in order to specify the main standards and principles which the public media should observe. Central in its obligations is the representation of all social groups and the reflection of diversity in a society by giving all sectors, including genders, equal access and equal voice.

These normative presuppositions are foundational for the analysis of this paper which interrogates gender representations and misrepresentations in the media. Attali (1989, p. 3) has shown that there is an intimate relationship between the spaces and modalities of any cultural production and the development of national cultures, emphasizing its role as a "tool for the creation and consolidation of a community". Shapiro (2001) places Attali's insights in context, highlighting that throughout the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century, and despite significant contestation, various official and artistic genres, under varying degrees of state control, have been instruments of national cultural formation. Map making, landscape painting and photography, epic poetry and novels, theatrical performances and musical compositions have all been vehicles of "national narratives". These have provided the temporal frames within which the state apparatus have promoted nation-state status as coherent cultural as well as territorial entities.

The uses of genre are crucial because the genre categories function as far more than descriptive classifications. Berger (1992) has argued that genre usage provides the organization of cultural formulations regarding social issues, human experience, and normative behavior. Genres introduce ways of thinking about the world and how to conceptualize the nation. In Zimbabwe the usage of certain genre-related program formats has been directly linked to their political and ideological purposes. These purposes are engraved within the formats, to connect the hegemonic ideology of the ruling elites with the expected conformity of the populace. The documentary enterprise, which is the focus of analysis in this paper, is a category of film or television that seeks to frame real life events and circumstances through the perspectives of mechanically recorded images. There are definitional problems relating to the documentary genre, but the analysis adopted here is one that emphasizes the non-fictional attempts engraved within the program. The documentary genre is a creative interpretation of reality and a product of film practice that “selects and constructs” reality using camera angles, voice over, interview orientation and musical tone. Corner (1986) concludes that these aesthetic interpretations of documentary practice belie any protestations of “innocence” as there is no objective representation in pretending to just “tell it like it is” or, more potently still, “show it like it is”.

The documentary enterprise adopted by Zimbabwe Television (ZTV) has had as its central objective, scope and power the articulation of social, political and economic issues through a reproduction of “traces of reality”. The documentaries attempted to provide information and imaginatively put people in touch with one another as a community. They thus incorporate political leadership by seeking in some measure to extend the mutuality and trust depicted in the programs across the separate regions, classes, workplaces and communities of the audience.

“Imagined identities”

The Zimbabwean documentary programs analyzed in this research provide ample evidence that the construction of national mythologies draws heavily on gender roles and symbols as the nation is envisioned from the perspective of the family metaphor, *‘mhuri yeZimbabwe’* (*Zimbabwe family*). This kind of family motif has been responsible for the privileging of kinship discourse that utilizes titles

such as Baba (father), Amai (mother) Mukoma (brother) Sis (Sister) and Tete (Aunt). The documentaries also indicate a mode of discourse that articulated the revolutionary and liberationist tradition of the ruling party, ZANU PF, which constructed “macho liberatory heroes”. One of the major driving identities promoted in the documentaries was the “founding fathers” identity. Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo are emphasized in many of the programs as the legitimate and responsible leaders who were and are still instrumental in the creation of the Zimbabwean nation. Zimbabwe’s narrative of national birth has drawn heavily on the memory of the liberation war in order to constitute nationhood and create its own authoritative code of membership. That nationhood is realized, not uncommonly, through struggle against an enemy (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, p. 279). Anderson (1990, p.129–31) understood this when he attributed the attachment and willingness to die for the national ideal as an outcome of the nation’s depiction in terms associated with kinship and home. Zimbabwe’s war memory provides a classificatory scheme and a set of categories to think about who belongs to the Zimbabwean nation.

For example, in the documentary *Mugabe the Revolutionary* (2001), the program celebrates Robert Mugabe’s leadership during the liberation struggle. It chronicles Robert Mugabe’s active organization of the liberation struggle in exile and identifies him as the principal architect in the success of the liberation war against Rhodesians. Such constructions make Robert Mugabe a principal character in the foundation of the Zimbabwean nation. Joshua Nkomo is admitted into the narrative of Robert Mugabe as a revolutionary when the documentary highlights that the signing of the 1987 Unity Accord represents the greatest achievement in Zimbabwe’s nation-building efforts. Mugabe and Nkomo are privileged as the “founding fathers” of the Zimbabwean nation, identities that legitimate them as the authentic leaders of the nation. Such identity construction is supported and legitimated by countless broadcasts of the “historic” Unity Accord of 1987, which have Mugabe and Nkomo clutching their hands together.

However, closer analysis of the documentary programs reveals that the focal point of the “founding fathers” identity construction had shifted entirely towards Robert Mugabe in the post-2000 era. This can be assumed was a result of the fact that the post-2000 era represented a new epoch in the historical development of the nation which demanded a “new set of relations and modes of power” (Brannigan, 2000, p. 169). Robert Mugabe gains the attribute as the architect of the

Unity Accord, having invited Joshua Nkomo into government. This narrative is even evident in documentaries and other short programs that attempted to celebrate Joshua Nkomo's life. In *Life History of Joshua Nkomo* (2002), the narration clearly points out that:

After so many years in self-imposed exile, Joshua Nkomo decided to come back home and contribute to the development of the nation when Cde Robert Mugabe invited him to join the government....

There are other examples which subtly delegitimize Joshua Nkomo as an authentic father figure of the nation in the very attempts to create a father figure image. In *End of An Era- Joshua Nkomo* (2002), Ngwabi Bhebe, a prominent Ndebele historian is employed to down play Joshua Nkomo and construct him as responsible for the post-independence disturbances in the country when he points out that:

ZAPU did not mobilize people during the struggle as did ZANU-PF as they banked on earlier support which they had across the country. This is why they were disappointed when it came to election results and they thought they had been cheated. Therefore, they did not go into the government of national unity genuinely...

Such constructions leave Robert Mugabe as the unchallenged and fully legitimized national founder. The mainstreaming of Robert Mugabe as the "father figure" could be as a result of the fact that Robert Mugabe has outlived Joshua Nkomo and as the incumbent President of the socio-politically challenged Republic of Zimbabwe. Mugabe needed such "refocusing" of founding myths as a legitimizing process against challenges to his authenticity.

The concept of identity is role-related in the sense that it produces specific tasks that are in line with the perceived identity, which the target audience is expected to identify with, relate to and circulate. For example in *Mugabe the Revolutionary* (2001) the documentary reveals a deliberate initiative to establish a common history and foundational basis from which the nation originates by mainstreaming Robert Mugabe as the focal point of reference for the existence of the nation. The documentary narrator argues:

...Robert Mugabe has single-handed(ly) led an economic and agrarian revolution from the early years of the country's independence to empower the black majority..'

Such focalization individualizes the development of the nation by admitting only a few people into the national narrative. This can be read as an attempt to define Robert Mugabe and, to a lesser extent, Joshua Nkomo as "messianic leaders", whose absence from the liberation struggle could have caused the absolute failure of the revolution. By extension, this implies that their removal from office in the present circumstances could herald disaster for the nation.

It is interesting how Robert Mugabe's age has entered into the "founding father" identity narrative. *Mugabe the Revolutionary* and many other documentary programs have not missed an opportunity to remind members of the Zimbabwean nation of Robert Mugabe's age. In *Mugabe the Revolutionary*, he was 77 and there have been many other programs which play with the age concept such as *Mugabe @ 82* (2004) and *Mugabe the Man* (2005). Age and the concept of "founding father" identity coalesce in that his advanced years empower and engineer the attributes of wisdom, legitimacy and experience as the authentic leader of the nation. Age in African culture is an important identity index that has related positive values of accumulated knowledge, wisdom and experience.

These attributes are especially important because Mugabe has been criticized for being too advanced in age to continue ruling the nation. The age index is therefore utilized to counter these criticism and is presented in a positive manner to help in the legitimation process. This process is validated by comments by Ibbo Mandaza, a prominent political commentator, in *End of an Era-Tribute to Joshua Nkomo* (2002):

Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe and others are a special category of nationalists, the first group of nationalists, which makes me very nervous of the new breed of young leaders that are emerging today in Zimbabwe. They don't have the same credentials and visions as these men.

This casts individuals like Mugabe as principal guarantors of the Zimbabwean nation and, by extension, guarantors of the African continent against foreign abuse and mistreatment. In *Mugabe the Man* and *Mugabe the Revolutionary*, Robert Mugabe speaks of how Britain

and its allies have caused the suffering of the Zimbabwean people, “our people”. He justifies the land reform program and the displacement of white farmers as Britain’s fault in refusing to honor its pledge to support the redistribution program. Such a standpoint is allowed to go unchallenged without critical analysis in order to maintain the status of Robert Mugabe as guarantor for the people of Zimbabwe. It positions him as a man, a “father” ready to stand for the rights of “his family and people” against oppressive and imperialist agendas. Therefore, the “founding father” identity trope manifests itself at the level of self, community and nation as narratives of self are imbricated within national discourse. Muchemwa (2007, p. 1) further elaborates that the representation of self as a metaphor of nation and belonging co-opts such identity constructions as the “founding father” identity to legitimate a regime that uses fatherhood to foreclose political debate. Muchemwa’s position highlights how paternity is used as a trope for scripting national identity. Father figures serve to provide an uncontested, benevolent authorship of the nation and the state. This gendered story-telling technique inevitably leads to the exclusion of other participants and contributors towards the existence of the Zimbabwean nation.

Zimbabweans have been reminded of the “war of liberation that dislodged almost 100 years of white colonial rule”. The quotation is the opening line for many programs that chronicle the Second Chimurenga War between ZANLA and ZIPRA forces against Rhodesian forces and insinuates heroism on the part of those who participated in the liberation struggle. Such insinuations enforce a need to celebrate and respect those who contributed to the dislodgement. Such a process constructs and buttresses new identity features of “messianic liberators” who rose and dedicated their lives for the freedom of their people.

Documentary programs that have been instrumental in the creation of this identity feature have been *Chimurenga (War) Files*. This collection of liberation war stories from surviving combatants are styled in an autobiographical format. Memory is useful in autobiography, according to Molloy (1991 p.7) as it can begin to function as a valid source for history so that a communal past may not be lost. However, memory is selective; it is a selective revalidation of the past which opens it to manipulation, deliberate omission which distorts the experience. The single desire of these “files” is to tell as many liberation stories as possible. The logic of the producers was that:

... many Zimbabweans were not aware of the liberation war and what transpired in the bush, and therefore these documentaries will go a long way in informing people of how this nation came to be. (Bright Matonga: (then) Deputy Minister of Information on ZTV, 2002.)

Such comments resonate well with other efforts by the government to “educate” people on the liberation war and spirit through sanctioning social, educational and even economic circles to peddle the history of the nation. The figuration guiding the documentary texts of *Chimurenga Files* is one that pictures itself as self and country in one realm. The person becomes inseparable from the nation as they reveal the self-made and self-taught hero. In *War and Dreams* (2007), a war ex-combatant, Comrade Joseph Mudiwa interweaves personal history with the history of the nation and thereby “muralizes” himself and many other names he drops in retelling his story, within the fibres of the Zimbabwean nation. He chronicles the fact that he joined the army as a result of the humiliating treatment the African community was receiving from white Rhodesians. He narrates the hardships of crossing into Mozambique for training and when in Mozambique, the gruelling conditions of survival. He recollects how he survived the Rhodesian Forces’ ambush at Nyadzonia which killed many “innocent women and children”. Comrade Mudiwa offers a gendered narrative which casts men as the “liberators” and women and children as the “victims”. This kind of narrative helps in creating an exceptional force around those who sacrificed their lives for the liberation of the nation considering what they had to go through at the war front. Their “blood” waters the Zimbabwean nation in an essence, echoing the threatening dictum repeated in speeches and songs about the liberation war heroes.

Admitting women into the nation

As the principal representative motif of Zimbabwean nationhood has been the liberation war, women’s contribution to this nationhood has suffered omission, but the documentary programs dedicated to women in the time period under study represented attempts to admit women into the national narrative. The appointment of Joice Mujuru as the

first female Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe inspired the documentary *Portrait of a Matriarch-Joice Mujuru* in 2006. The documentary highlighted the contributions of Joice Mujuru to the liberation war and her heroic exploits at the battle front, which resonated well with her war pseudonym, Teurairopa (*Spill Blood*).

The documentary, like most in the tradition, informs the audience of how she joined the struggle and where she trained. She highlights in the interview that she was never treated like a woman by male combatants because she always exhibited the same strength and skill as her male counterparts:

General Tongogara never took me for my physical outlook. He used to give me assignments just as he gave my fellow male comrades, especially when I shot down an enemy helicopter during an operation (Mujuru Joice: *Portrait of a Matriarch*, 2006)

This becomes important background information to the full understanding of where Mujuru is coming from. Her war credentials are presented as impeccable to dispel any negative considerations towards her appointment, which was marred by controversy. Apparently Joice Mujuru was appointed to the top position as a replacement to the late Simon Muzenda, amidst a lot of jostling within ZANU-PF leadership, which cost some of its members like Jonathan Moyo and Emerson Mnangangwa their privileged positions within the party. Vice-President Mujuru clearly states in the documentary that her strength as a wife, mother, and sister in the Women's League was going to empower her to override all the challenges that the nation has been facing. She refuses to acknowledge that women have been marginalized and replaying "the nation as family" metaphor she quickly points out that men and women have different roles within the nation space just like in the home:

Women and men have different roles and it is important not to be overzealous. As women there are things that we know we can do and the men know it too. So instead of fighting for positions, we should know our place. However, it does not mean inequality but means respect of gender roles. (Mujuru Joice: *Portrait of a Matriarch*, 2006)

In this way she attaches to herself the identity of “Mother of the Nation”. The documentary therefore continues to provide a gendered imagery of Zimbabwean nationhood while naturalizing political authority through the discourse of kinship, of fathers and mothers of the nation. In *Women and the War of Liberation* (2000), Abigail Mvududu, the producer-presenter, chronicles the contribution of women in the liberation struggle from Mbuya Nehanda, a spiritual and cultural icon of the First Chimurenga or Liberation Struggle of 1896. Mbuya Nehanda, in the documentary is used as the source and inspiration of women’s participation during the liberation struggle. Mvududu emphasizes that “women fought alongside men”. This sets the tone for the whole documentary enterprise as its main effort is aimed at including the voices of women in the imagination and representation of the nation. Three women, Irene, Gladys, and Hazel, chronicle their stories of how they joined the struggle. The program attempts to equate the contribution of women to that of men as the three women focus on the horrors of the liberation war just like the other programs do with males. Their narrations are given authenticity through remembering exact dates and places fierce battles against the Rhodesian army took place, like the Mkushi attack, which is one of the most “celebrated” and most referred to battles in Zimbabwean history. However, the documentary casts a contradictory ideology that is not in line with nationalist imagination as one of the women, Irene, bravely declares:

‘...but it seems as if we went to war for men...’

This statement resonates with what this article has already highlighted in relation to masculine citizenship. Such statements disturb the homogeneity and unity that television as a site of consensual discourse sought to infuse into the representation of Zimbabwean nationhood. Still, the documentaries that focus on women’s contribution to the liberation war can be read as oppositional texts for the national imagination. Women’s contribution to the liberation struggle seem to be narrated as an afterthought which could be the reason for the not-so-heroic titles that introduce the programs. The texts and the stories seem contrived and unnatural against the seamless and natural stories retold by their male counterparts.

Bhabha (1994, pp. 153-155) points out the ambivalent nature of narrating the nation which relies on forgetting the gendered relations of

power. The discourses of narrating women's and men's roles in society through a symbolic imagery in which women are the symbol of the purity of the nation and men protect the nation. Women function to naturalize men as legitimate rulers of the nation. Yuval-Davis (1997, p. 23) conceptualizes that although women's voices are often silenced in the authority of national narratives, women themselves serve an important function in nation-building projects and nationalistic perspectives. As already alluded to, the Zimbabwean nation is imagined through a masculine voice, through males who speak on its behalf, but interestingly there is also a semiotic burden thrust upon women to represent the nation as mothers. Nationalist mythology as retrieved from the documentary programmes is filled with images of the nation as mother (our motherland). The representation model of nationhood utilizes symbols and signifying practices. Boehmer (1992, p. 232) argues that looking at metaphors contained in terms of "motherland" (most used term in the documentaries) and "fatherland" (rarely used in the programs), one notices that images of men and mothers occupy different spaces and levels in the nation. Boehmer argues that the epithet "father" cannot be used interchangeably with that of "mother" and also meanings which stand in connection with the mother metaphor when applied to lands and languages and other national activities preclude the idea of the father.

For example, Zimbabwe is described as "our motherland" in the documentary, *Our Motherland*. The documentary equates motherhood with the lands that are found within the territories of Zimbabwe. The program chronicles the long trajectory of war that secured the lands and points out the post-colonial achievements in education, health, agriculture and industry that have helped propel the nation forward. The documentary also celebrates the natural beauty of the different regions of the nation, pin-pointing the unique climatic conditions that prevail in each region such as in Nyanga where: *White people had attempted to create their Little England because of the cool temperatures....the scenic mountains (Our Motherland, 2002).*

The basic message in this documentary is that Zimbabwe is a beautiful country, endowed with natural resources which make it the center of neo-colonial imperialist agendas. It closes by making a clarion call to all: *"Sons of the soil', rise up(sic)and defend your nation..."*

It is therefore evident that the nation is imagined through feminine imagery, of motherhood, beauty and by extension weakness and a need for protection by "sons of the soil". Women are given the semiotic

burden of representing the nation, to invite connotations of origin, birth, home and roots. Boehmer (2007, p.73) points out that even in Zimbabwe where women fought alongside men in the war national consciousness was composed by male leaders. It is evident from this documentary that ways of representing the land and national territory were transferred and conferred upon the woman, the mother. In this metaphor, women are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honor. Appiah (2000, pp. 607-615) argues that identities come with normative as well as descriptive expectations. Imagining the nation as feminine is apt for the current focalization on "masculinized memory" of the liberation struggle. The metaphor links well with the celebrated "son of the soil" identity that is so often attached to "messianic liberators" of the nation, as soil, the motherland, is attributed the responsibility of bearing "sons". Lyons (2004 p. 234) succinctly points out that:

Zimbabwe, the motherland born of her sons and daughters-favouritism has emerged. Aside from political alliances, the favourite child remains the son of the soil.'

Gaidzanwa (1992) as quoted in Lyons (2004) has argued that women's roles in liberation struggles have been through a process of re-domestication. Her argument is underscored by the documentary, *Mothers of the Struggle* (2002). The program interviews mostly widows of liberation war heroes like Herbert Chitepo, Joshua Nkomo, Simon Muzenda and Josiah Tongogara. The program questions how the women survived the liberation struggle with politically active husbands. It celebrates how the women were strong, managed to run their families with absent husbands, and survived the emotional stress and long periods of anxiety when their husbands were arrested, detained or imprisoned. The documentary focuses on the maternal responsibilities the women undertook and their supportive roles towards their husbands work. By choosing these women, whose political careers were already in the shadows of their husbands, the documentary is complicit in silencing the stories of women as active agents within the liberation struggle. Furthermore, the documentary helps to re-inscribe women into the domestic sphere as it focuses on women's maternal survival skills, to purvey the now contested objectification and victimization of women.

Conclusion

This study has highlighted that the “father figure” and “messianic liberators” political identities as emphasized in documentary programs utilized in re-imagining Zimbabwean nationhood link personal and collective identities to correspond with Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” in processes of in-group formation to emphasize what the nation shares, giving greater emotional weight to the war as the nation’s historical exegesis, while reinforcing it with ideology linked with national development. The “nation as family” motif is responsible for the “imagined identities” of founding fathers and messianic liberators identity tropes which privilege male identity features. What has been seen in most documentary programs evaluated in this article is that the programs hold masculine identities and communication as the standard and equivalent to national communication. The representation of Zimbabwean nationhood through masculine identities follows stereotypical media narratives which focus on men as pillars of strength and as fighters, while at the same time endorsing other themes of dominance, force and violence. Male heroes are held as responsible for the creation of the nation, emphasizing a patriarchal narrative of Zimbabwean nationhood, and “deep comradeship”.

The result is a gendered imagery within Zimbabwean nationalist discourse that bears the male icon as a standard figure to Zimbabwean nationhood, and invites audiences to visualize the authentic citizen as male and by extension, naturalizes male political authority. Such an alienation of female agency and gender bias in regards to national representation is damaging to gender relations within society and has consequently led to many contesting versions of the liberation war in the form of novels, documentaries and films being authored by women. Such works include writings by the poet and activist Freedom *Flame* by Ingrid Sinclair and other fictional and non-fictional works that chronicle and record the liberation war from women’s perspectives. Christiansen (2005, pp. 105-109; 2007) has commented that the upsurge of contestations of Zimbabwean nationhood represents an attempted process of rewriting or renegotiation through feminist re-workings of the gendered nature of the nation’s history, to inscribe vital female agency into the foundational narrative of the nation.

What is evident from this study is that positive male constructions were allowed to pass due to the national agenda of uniting Zimbabweans but in the process women's agency was diminished. Such media strategies need to be addressed as they codify negative gender perceptions, which limit the participation and power of women in national affairs. The way forward would be to erect structures within national gender institutions to strategically monitor the media in order to raise adequate consciousness against gendered representations and gendered narratives such as those found on national TV and within other media.

Footnotes)

¹ Initiatives such as Youth Training centres and remodelling of high school and tertiary history syllabi were some of the attempts to influence the young people and bring them into accepting the liberation rhetoric.

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Reporting women: Do female journalists have a gender agenda

By Abena Animwaa Yeboah

Abstract

A cursory look at the literature on news and source gender reveals a tendency on the part of female reporters to use more female sources than their male counterparts (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah, 2010). Is this a demonstration of a certain consciousness on the part of female reporters towards improving female source visibility in the news? In this study, I explore journalists' gender consciousness at the point of source selection to see whether gender of source is a consideration in the parameters reporters (particularly females) use in selecting sources for their stories. Findings indicate that this is largely not the case and that female journalists' tendency for using more female sources is not indicative of any special interest in opening up the news to female sources.

Key words: gender, news, news sources, gender consciousness, women, journalists

Introduction:

The use of news sources in news reporting is a very important strategy for lending credence to the events reported by the journalist. Ross (2007) argues that this process of using sources in the news is also an indication of the point of view being supported by reporters as they refer to sources whose comments give backing to their own beliefs and inclinations about the event. This assertion finds support in literature which suggests that reporters go to sources that are like themselves (Powers and Fico, 1994).

To that extent, it becomes obvious that the use of sources is not an innocent act on the part of the journalist. As Ross (2007) argues, there is a sly deceit concealed within journalists' use of sources as apparently independent and authoritative commentators which enables the former to masquerade as mere conveyors of the perspectives of others'.

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Berkowitz (2009) also argues that the interaction between journalists and their sources represents a long-term influence on society in terms of shaping meanings in a culture. Thus, source use becomes the evidence of what images reporters champion for audiences. Research findings pointing to a tendency for female reporters to use more female sources than do male reporters (GMMP, 2010; Yeboah, 2010). This poses an interesting question for inquiry regarding the motivations of female reporters.

According to Liebler (1994), reporters have different levels of newsroom autonomy which may be related to their gender and which then may influence source choices. Considered against a background of extensive research findings that journalists' use of sources is gendered (GMMP 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010; Yeboah, 2010; Freedman and Fico, 2005, Rodgers and Thorson 2003), the question that arises is how much of the exercise of a reporter's autonomy in source selection is informed by his/her gender. This article interrogates this phenomenon by posing the basic question: do male and female reporters consciously consider gender at the point of source selection? I am mindful of the fact that other factors such as source newsworthiness, time availability and source readiness to participate in the news-making process may influence the degree to which the gender variable enters into the source decision. However, I argue that the consistency of research findings pointing to gender influence on source choice by journalists merits further empirical testing.

Does gender affect the news?

Antecedents to this study have sought a broader issue for interrogation: individual influences on the news (Craft and Wanta, 2004). Indeed, journalism studies have long questioned how the individual news producer may affect news content. Starting with the gate-keeping studies of David Manning White (as cited in Craft and Wanta, 2004), the tradition explored the possibility that news is not just happenstance but rather a result of various interventions guided by the editor's personal attributes and knowledge of what the audience needs and expects. Later research suggested that this gatekeeping may actually be institutionalized rather than operating on the level of individual reporters and their personal interests. According to Gieber, (cited in Craft and Wanta 2004, p. 125) "the news story is controlled by the frame of reference created by the bureaucratic structure of which the communicator is a member." This opened the floodgates of

discussion into extra-individual level influences on the news and the prevailing general orientation that news results from routines and expectations which together may mute the individual journalist's influence on content but not take it away altogether.

Thus, individual level influences such as reporter gender still are significant for discovering whose news gets published. Craft and Wanta (2004) compared issue agendas and story focus of newspapers with high numbers of female editors and those with low numbers of female editors and reported differences observable along the lines of gender. Newspapers with high female editor presence tended to focus more on reporting the news positively and to show little tendency for variations in male-female reporter assignment to beats compared to those with male editors. Two of the possible reasons adduced for the second finding are insightful for this discussion on whether gender colors the news content. Firstly, Craft and Wanta (2004) suggest that possibly female editors do not discriminate because having faced discrimination during their rise on the career ladder, they feel a need to "prop" their gender likes up the ladder now that they have the opportunity to do so. Secondly, they suggest that male reporters on such female-edited newspapers may accept unconventionally male beat assignments or even choose them as a way of endearing themselves to their female editors. This may seem a rather patronizing view, but none the less useful in explaining how gendered actions may eventually affect what gets covered and how it gets covered.

In Ghana, Yeboah (2010) also reported that female reporters on a local newspaper, the *Daily Graphic*, tended to use more females as news sources in their stories. The four Global Media Monitoring Projects (GMMP 1995, GMMP 2000, GMMP 2005, GMMP 2010) so far have also consistently shown that the news may be viewed with gendered lenses with female reporters showing a tendency to use many more females in their stories than their male counterparts. The implication here appears to be that increased female reporter presence in newsrooms may affect source diversity more positively in terms of opening up the news to female perspectives.

Some writers have, however, cautioned against omnibus expectations that the mere presence of females in the newsroom would have positive implications for the appearance of female sources in the news. Liesbet van Zoonen (2002) argues that it is problematic to assume that individual journalists (male or female) have sufficient autonomy to act any differently from prescribed modes of

professionalism. She adds that female journalists, like males, base their reporting activities on more factors than just their femininity. Liebler and Smith (1997) have also reported that they found few differences between women and men correspondents in their choice and treatment of male and female sources when they analyzed 159 stories broadcast on ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC during the first one hundred days of the Clinton Administration. They reported that, although “a critical mass of women correspondents may exist, it has made little difference in the reporting analyzed here: women and men network journalists report policy news in pretty much the same fashion”. Yeboah (2010) also reported that even though reporter gender and the manner in which a story was generated (routine or enterprise) seemed to affect source gender the two together explained only a fraction of all possible changes that may occur in source gender.

Clearly, more knowledge is needed on the factors underlying female reporters’ use of female sources. In taking the debate further, this study seeks to interrogate gender consciousness on the part of reporters and how this affects the source selection decision.

According to standpoint theory (Hartsock, as cited in Miller, 2002), men and women (as reporters) are products of differing co-cultures and, as a result, form different worldviews which then influence their relations with others. Though both male and female journalists must subscribe to similar norms of practice in the newsroom, their gendered backgrounds create a certain standpoint from which they view the world and possibly approach their work – in this case news source selection.

Standpoint theory takes the view of a world based on inequalities, which then form the foundations of what can be experienced by members of the unequal groupings. Male and female journalists by virtue of their different sex are socialized differently and can therefore be expected to have formed different standpoints from which they engage their work. This standpoint formation need not end in the home. Female reporters may find themselves in an environment that replays the inequalities they may have grown up with. For instance, news routines and practices have all been defined by male forebears and are rather enduring in their nature, allowing female reporters little room to affect the status quo.

But, playing by the rules also means consulting gendered norms of sourcing news from the perspective of male sources, a situation which according to Kramarae’s muted group theory (as cited in Miller, 2002)

may make female reporters, sensing the general absence of their gender likes from the news, want to change the tide by using more of the latter when they write. In other words, their standpoint as the minority (not necessarily in number but more in terms of power) and the standpoint of female sources as a minority (in terms of numbers) may interact to make the former more prone to using more of the latter in their news. Do these factors explain the female journalists' tendency for using more female sources as opposed to the practice by male reporters? This study seeks to explore this issue.

Media in Ghana and source participation in content production

Ghana enjoys a very vibrant media environment in the African context with experts, politicians, commentators, media practitioners and audience members coming together to contribute to debates on issues. In both print and electronic media, and increasingly on the internet, Ghanaians actively discuss matters that affect their social, economic and political lives.

Media discussions are largely through the auspices of voluntary participation or invitation from electronic media organizations seeking people to join discussion panels on issues raised. Indeed, some social commentators have become regular panellists on some stations serving dishes of commentary on all issues irrespective of their background or expertise. Audiences are also active participants who use phone calls, SMS, emails, faxes, letters and social networking sites of media organizations to contribute their opinions and knowledge on issues.

In this frame of discussion, both men and women are active participants (Akrofi-Quarcoo, 2007), but this appears to apply only to situations where agency on the part of the contributor influences the decision to participate. Where journalists have the power to select contributors to content, however, the picture changes to one of male domination. Yeboah (2010) and Yeboah and Kimani (forthcoming) have both reported from studies conducted in Ghana that female sources constitute less than 15 percent of the news discourse. Further, there appears to be a certain amount of gendering in how male and female reporters use female sources in their stories (Yeboah, 2010). Put alongside similar findings by the four GMMP reports (1995, 2000, 2005, 2010), this study has as its objective: to find out whether reporters, males and particularly females, *are conscious of gender at the point of making source decisions.*

Methodology and rationale

Journalists’ display of gendered autonomy in source selection is a matter of interest in the quest for finding ways of improving female source visibility in the news. If findings point to a consciousness in selecting certain sources on the basis of gender, then effort could go into “engendering” the minds of reporters to consciously seek out female sources when they present the news. To investigate journalistic display of gender consciousness, the study took the survey approach. This was deemed necessary to allow a sampling of reporters across different media organizations in the country.

Data were collected from a total of 114 reporters (male and female) from six media organizations stationed in the nation’s capital Accra, which also doubles as the hub of news and news dissemination. Three of the organizations were privately-owned and the other three, state-owned. The sample comprised reporters selected from television, radio and print because these traditional media enjoy active patronage from the consuming public, and, in spite of the rise of the internet, remain altogether the preferred sources of news in the country. Selecting the three genres from both public and private media was to account for any differences that may pertain to the nature of their ownership.

Reporters from these media organizations were sampled from lists of active reporters provided by their news editors. From each newsroom, the number of male and female reporters selected was commensurate to their proportional representation. Thus, the overall total of females and males selected from each newsroom was determined by the overall size of that gender group in the respective newsroom’s active editorial staff. The two radio and two TV stations selected, irrespective of ownership type, tended to have fairly large staff sizes. For this reason, the total number of reporters sampled from these was approximately half of the staff (with proportional quotas used to determine male and female representation). The print media tended to have smaller staff sizes and so all reporters were included in the study. Below is a table detailing the number of male and female reporters from each of the media organizations:

Table 1: Number of male and female reporters from selected media organizations

Genre	Media Organization	Number of males	Number of females
Radio	GBC Radio	11	17
	Joy FM	10	5
Print	Ghanaian Times	7	2
	Daily Guide	7	8
Television	GTV	11	23
	TV3	5	8
Total		51	63

Data were collected using a questionnaire administered in person by a research assistant recruited from each of the selected newsrooms. Data collection took place during the respective newsrooms editorial meetings to allow for access to respondents.

Findings

Overall, the findings do not support the existence of a conscious effort among female journalists in the Ghanaian context to select more female sources.

Reporters' choice of news sources results both from their journalistic autonomy and the contextual factors operating at the time of making the choice. Some researchers have indicated that reporters enjoy different levels of newsroom autonomy which may be related to their gender and which then may influence source choices (Liebler, 1994). But this autonomy does not operate alone as certain contextual factors as well as operational norms such as news values of timeliness and source newsworthiness may interact with the autonomy of the reporter to affect the source selection decision. Indeed so strong is this view of controls on the reporter's level and use of autonomy that van Zoonen (2002) has argued that individual journalists (male or female) may lack sufficient autonomy to act any differently from prescribed modes of professionalism.

Against this background, this researcher sought to interrogate research findings indicating a tendency on the part of female reporters to use more female sources in their news by restricting reporters' decisions to conditions under which they enjoyed relative autonomy – enterprise reporting. The data below (Table 1) presents a finding that is both confirmatory of previous research and insightful on its own.

Table 2: Which gender of source do you mostly choose when doing self-generated stories?

Which gender of source do you mostly choose when doing self-generated stories?	Reporter sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Male	41	36	77
	80.4%	57.1%	67.5%
Female	10	27	37
	19.6%	42.9%	32.5%
Total	51	63	114
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The data indicates that where they have the power of choice (i.e. under enterprise news conditions), female reporters do choose to use more female sources. Indeed more than twice the percentage of men (about 20% of the men sampled) who said they use female sources under enterprise conditions was registered for female reporters.

This finding also supports earlier reports by Yeboah (2010) that enterprise news could open up the news to more female sources. Whereas routinized news limits the ability of female reporters to challenge the status quo, enterprise news on the other hand allows them more flexibility and as shown in this finding, they exploit this flexibility to the advantage of female source visibility.

But is this seeming interest on the part of the female reporters to use more female sources when they they have the freedom to choose indicative of any clear desire to open up the news to women? To carry the discussion further, the study examined the positions (standpoints) of male and female reporters on whether the news was, in their opinion, too male-centered and must, therefore, be opened up to female voices. Consistently, the literature reports that news is male-centered (GMMP 2010), but how conscious are reporters of this picture of the world they present to their audiences? Further, is there any relationship between such a consciousness and the female reporters' tendency for including more female voices in their stories? Below are descriptive analyses of the data collected:

Table 3: The news must be opened up for more women's voices/opinions to be heard.

The news must be opened up for more women's voices/opinions to be heard	Reporter sex		Total
	Male	Female	
Strongly agree	18 35.3%	20 31.7%	38 33.3%
Agree	17 33.3%	22 34.9%	39 34.2%
Disagree	3 5.9%	9 14.3%	12 10.5%
Strongly disagree	4 7.8%	8 12.7%	12 10.5%
Do not have an opinion on it	9 17.6%	4 6.3%	13 11.4%
Total	51 100.0%	63 100.0%	114 100.0%

If such a consciousness exists, particularly on the part of female reporters, then it does not seem very discernable from this sample. According to the data, far fewer males than females disagree with opening up the news to include more female voices. Of the 51 males sampled, only seven (13%) disagreed (or strongly disagreed) with this point of view compared to 27% (17) of the females sampled. Agreement (strongly agree and agree) with the suggestion to open up the news to include more female voices also appears to slightly tilt favorably in the direction of males as 68% of those sampled agreed. The figure represents two percentage points difference from the 66% recorded for the females sampled.

The finding is supported by the study's attempt to further interrogate whether the seeming tendency for female reporters to use more female sources is a result of a conscious effort to choose female sources. Of the sampled journalists who reported consciously seeking out female views to the issues they cover, a bigger percentage (about 69%) was recorded for males than for females (60%).

Table 4: Do you ever consciously seek out female views regarding the issues you cover?

		Reporter Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Do you ever consciously seek out female views to the issues you cover?	Yes	35 68.6%	38 60.3%	73 64.0%
	No	16 31.4%	25 39.7%	41 36.0%

While these two findings do not refute the first finding that the female journalists use more female sources when they have the power of choice, they do show (at least within the context of this sample) that that tendency is not necessarily due to a conscious desire on the part of female journalists to open up the news to women. This calls for further exploration of the factors contributing to what we see in terms of female reporters’ use of female sources. It appears, though, that one of the possible factors may be a perception on the part of the female reporters that their audiences prefer to hear the news from female voices. As Table 4 below shows, female reporters’ better use of female sources may be because the former feels their audiences prefer to hear the news from the latter. Their tendency to use more female sources,

Table 5: Which gender do you think your audience likes to hear information from?

		Reporter Sex		Total
		Male	Female	
Which gender do you think your audience likes to hear information from?	Male	9 17.6%	7 11.1%	16 14.0%
	Female	9 17.6%	10 15.9%	19 16.7%
	Do not know	33 64.7%	46 73.0%	79 69.3%
Total		51 100.0%	63 100.0%	114 100.0%

therefore, may not draw from an inner consciousness to open up the news to the female voice. Both male and female reporters generally have no idea whether their audiences prefer to hear the news from the perspectives of males or females. This is understandable, granted that very little audience and media consumption research may be taking

place within the news industry to equip reporters with this kind of knowledge. In this study, however, what was sought was insight into the reporters' perception rather than any empirical knowledge of who their audiences prefer to hear the news from because their perceptions regarding this may have implications for their practice. It appears that even though both male and female journalists sampled are unsure of audience preferences, more female journalists think their audiences prefer to hear the news from female sources. The same number of male journalists reported thinking that their audiences preferred either male or female voices. In the case of female journalists, 11% felt their audiences preferred male voices while 16% felt the same about female sources.

Perhaps this partially explains female journalists' reported tendency for using more female sources than do male journalists. It appears that female reporters' use of more female sources is due more to their perception that their audiences prefer such sources. In using more female sources than their male counterparts, therefore, female journalists may just be responding to perceived audience preferences rather than seeking to promote female source visibility through their work.

In Ghana, both historically and culturally, public sphere activity and discourse has been dominated by men. It is to be expected, therefore, that members of the public, being used to male voices and perspectives may have formed worldviews that make them expect to continue to hear the news from men. In recent years, however, women's rights advocates, feminist academics and civil society organizations in the country have deployed various public platforms to condemn the exclusion of women from mainstream activities. They continue to call on media practitioners to be more sensitive to women's issues and the inclusion of their perspectives in public discourses. This seems to have made some impact as increasingly public perceptions about women's roles in development (at least as seen in audience contributions to radio and TV talk show discussions) appear to be becoming more accommodating of more complementary notions of women.

While it is difficult to pin the finding on female journalists' perceptions of audience preferences to any particular reason (because the study did not delve into it), it may have something to do with the situation described above. Within this general milieu it is possible that female reporters may be equating the persistent demands of women's

rights advocates and feminist academics to the expectations of the general news consuming public.

Conclusions from findings

At the point of source selection decision, reporters are faced with a combination of factors they must consider in order to make the right choices. This is owed to the fact that sources are a strategic addition to the credibility of the story. Such factors as the source's credibility, newsworthiness, time conditions at hand, and perceived knowledge of the given topic may all be consulted in this process which is so fast paced that it may be done even without the journalist's consciousness of his/her involvement in the process. Besides these factors, research has indicated a certain level of gendering of news source selection such that men and women are thought to appear in the news in differing numbers and under differing conditions. One of such differences lies in their use by male and female reporters with the latter showing a tendency for using more female sources.

What was not clear in spite of repeated similar findings indicating the above was whether female reporters were exhibiting a conscious tendency that could then be used as a channel for improving female source visibility in the news. This is what the study sought to establish. Overall, the major finding of this study has been that while female reporters do tend to use more female sources in their news stories (GMMP 2010, etc), this does not seem to be resulting from any conscious action towards supporting the cause for improving female source visibility.

The finding seems to lend support to van Zoonen's (2002) argument that too many factors are at play in journalistic practice for female reporters, just by virtue of being female, to be expected to become the panacea for the female source invisibility. It appears that under enterprise conditions the female journalists sampled have other reasons for choosing more female sources rather than a personal and conscious decision of opening up the news to their gender-like. Indeed, male reporters appeared to be more receptive to an interest in opening up the news to women than were females sampled. Among the variables explored: "desire to open up the news", "conscious action to bring in female sources" and "perception of audience source preference", it did appear that among females sampled their use of more female sources is based on a perception that their audiences preferred that this be done.

Further, female reporters may just be choosing to go to sources who are like themselves (Powers and Fico, 1994). In this case, it is more the convenience of being able to associate with their gender-likes as sources rather than a consciousness to open up the news to them. It is also possible that being themselves better users of female sources, the female journalists sampled feel the news is already open to women (seeing themselves as the channels for this) and may therefore not openly respond to further calls in that direction. This second reason may also explain why the male journalists sampled are more inclined to accept the suggestion to open up the news to women. Being channels for mainstream male sources rather than marginalized female sources, the male journalists' position on the issue may be expressive of a desire to do better for the cause of women by opening up the news to them. Possibly, too, female journalists, operating in a male-dominated industry (in terms of power) may have so imbibed journalistic norms that define ordinary women out of news worthiness that they fail to see that there is any problem. These factors all call for further exploration in research to establish their relationship with the gendered nature of news source use as reported in the literature.

Future directions

While it is true that female and male journalists may be members of different experiential and socializing cultures and may thus be influenced by these standpoints in the discharge of their professional duties, the findings of this study have shown that it may be overly ambitious to expect that these standpoints, by themselves, may be so influential as to be informing the use of a particular gender as news sources. For this reason, I recommend further research, preferably using in-depth interview methodology and focus group discussions, to engage the issue further and to ascertain the extent to which socialization of female journalists, both at home and on the job, could help explain the gendered source use reported in the literature.

Further attention should also be paid to the effectiveness of training programs in their effort to politicize gender and news and seek corrective measures. While such training programs are not lacking in the country (women's rights advocacy groups, NGOs, and donor organizations regularly organize such programs for journalists often with a bias for female participants), it does appear that they are generating minimal effects among their targets. Such training should, therefore, not be done in isolation. Consideration should go into

newsroom conditions and routines, and how these may serve to confound any consciousness on the part of journalists to seek to improve female source visibility through their work.

This study finds it interesting that male respondents seem agreeable to suggestions for opening up the news to include more female views and perspectives. Without assuming that males are innately opposed to women's media access, it is equally worthy to note the inference from the standpoint theory that because of their differing experiences, males would form markedly different worldviews and ways of approaching things in context. Their openness to such a suggestion as found in this study is therefore encouraging and indicative of a need to mainstream male reporters in efforts at injecting a female voice into the news.

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Sexual harassment content of Nollywood films: Consciousness of harassment by female audiences in Nigeria

By Jude T. Kur, Fabian I. Aagudosy, John A. Orhewere

Abstract

Using empirical data from focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with female audiences of Nollywood films drawn from four states across Nigeria, this article examines female audiences' consciousness of the content of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. The article argues that the audiences are able to identify acts of physical and threatening sexual harassment against women in the films, but not those of verbal, non-verbal, and environmental harassment. While some of the audiences are critical of the negative identities created and false representations of womanhood in these films, others are not. This, the article contends, has serious implications for media literacy: The audiences' level of media literacy is not yet adequate for critical interpretation of the film medium. Recommendations underscore the need for media education that develops a much more consciously critical interpretation of Nollywood films which leads to protests against film producers.

Key words: consciousness of sexual harassment, female audiences, media literacy, Nollywood films, sexual harassment in film

Introduction:

The concept "sexual harassment" has assumed an important place in academic discourses largely because of the increased attention being

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paid to it in feminism studies (Shishima, 2005) and the fact that many feminist movements and organizations are seriously battling the issue of sexual harassment as an aspect of violence against women. Even though this social vice has existed from time immemorial, it was not until 1976 that the term sexual harassment came into use (Mackinnon, 1979). Since then, awareness of its pervasiveness and negative consequences has continued to grow. This study is an attempt to add to this growing awareness by interrogating the content of Nigerian-made movies, popularly known as Nollywood films, and the reactions of female audiences to sexual harassment depicted in them.

The Nollywood film industry has attracted great attention globally largely because of the genre, which draws material from interesting African cultural backgrounds. A recent study by UNESCO (2009) has ranked Nollywood as the second largest film industry in the world, coming after Bollywood, the Indian film industry. The UNESCO (2009) study found that Nollywood produces, in both English and local Nigerian languages, more films in a year than the Hollywood-centered American movie industry ,

Historical and thematic overview of Nollywood Films

The foundations of Nollywood can be traced to indigenous film making in Nigeria, which started in 1970 with the successful adaptation of Wole Soyinka's play, *Kongi's Harvest* (Balogun, 1987). Soon after, other indigenous Nigerians joined in the indigenous movie-making venture. Famous among them were: Francis Oladele (*Bullfrog in the Sun*, 1971), Ola Balogun (*Alpha*, 1972), Saruya Dosunmu (*Dinner with the Devil*, 1975), Jab Adu (*Bisi, Daughter of the River*, 1977); Eddie Ugbomah (*The Rise and Fall of Dr. Oyenusi*, 1977), Adamu Halilu (*Shehu Umar*, 1976), Herbert Ogunde (*Jaiyesinmi*, 1980), Ayo Razak (*Anikura*, 1983), Rufus Omotehinse (*The Wrath of Agbako*, 1983), Ade Folayan (*Taxi Driver*, 1983), Wale Adenuga (*Papa Ajasco*, 1984), Wole Soyinka (*Blues for a Prodigal*, 1984), and Awada Kerikeri (*Ogun Ajaye*, 1986). Films during this period centred on the traditional lives of Nigerians, and took a long time to produce (Mgbejume, 1989). The films were of low standard (in terms of quality) largely because the

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industry was still at its infancy, and was lacking in most of the requirements needed for the production of films of international standard such as equipment, laboratories, studios and skilled manpower (Balogun, 1987). A landmark achievement in indigenous film making came with the debut in 1992 of the Igbo language film, *Living in Bondage*, produced by Kenneth Nnebue of NEK Home Video Production (Shaka, 2003). This achievement marked the advent of home video production in Nigeria. With the success story of the huge sales of this film followed the production of very many home video films in the 1990s. Today, many film companies have sprung up in Nigeria and are engaged in producing such home movies, inundating not only the African continent, but the entire world.

Mbamara (2005) observes that between 500 and 1,000 Nigerian home movies are made each year, selling across the whole world. The Nigerian Film Censorship Board has stated that 1,080 Nigerian home movies were marketed overseas between 1997 and 2000 (Adewope, 2005). The figure has since risen. Statistics reported by Uwah (2008) indicate that films officially passed by the Nigerian Film Censorship Board quickly rose from three in 1994 to 233 in 1996, 389 in 1999, 712 in 2000, 1,018 in 2002 and 1,711 in 2005. By 2010, this figure almost doubled (Nigerian Film and Censors' Board (NFVCB) website: www.nfvcb.gov.ng/statistics.php). This figure does not include many other films produced and sent to the market without passing through the NFVCB. Nollywood films have attracted a wide patronage within and outside Nigeria (Uwah, 2010) and are hugely entertaining for Africans. One of the reasons Nollywood films are successful is the construction of contemporary African identities. Uwah (2008, p.98) attributes this to the Nollywood aesthetic which he explains has the following elements:

Emphasis on cultural identities, the use of symbols of 'memorability', portrayal of the vastness of nature, the presentation of persons as one with the environment, the premise of unity and connectedness of inanimate, animate and spiritual world, and the assumed communalistic nature of human existence.

In his work on Nollywood and post-colonial pan-Africanism, Uwah argues that Nollywood films present a filmic system of representation close to Africa's perception of existential realities. He argues further:

The films provide [the] audience with different views of their identity construction. The portrayals of the people's cultures not only connect them to richer meanings and larger forces operating but also continental and ecological symbiosis towards realizing the ideological mission creating the vision of pan-Africanism (Uwah, 2011, p. 113).

In constructing African identities, Nigerian films reflect the unique way of African social life, which is seen in dance, festival, elaborate costume, and music. Okome and Haynes (1995) support this observation by noting that song and dance have become a hallmark of Nigerian popular indigenous films. Onabanjo (2008) similarly notes that Nigerian films play a role of cultural modifier, which portrays the culture of the Nigerian people. Despite their popularity Nollywood films are not without problems. Scholars and keen observers over the years (Haynes, 2000; Popoola, 2003; Iloegbunam, 2007; Onuzulike, 2007; Opeyemi, 2008; Mwanne, 2010; Akinyosoye, 2011; Ojeyemi & Sesan, 2011) have identified a number of shortcomings with the films. One often identified shortcoming is that many of the films portray ugly themes that contribute to anti-social behavior. Haynes (2000, p. 18) observed that "Nollywood film characters are saturated with a depiction of voodoo practice." Similarly, Martin Mangenda, a Zambian citizen, cited in Muchinba (2004, p. 18), complains that "the major problem with the Nigerian movies is that they show too much witchcraft and black magic. All Africans are not like that. Mind you, these films are watched by children. Their minds get affected. I have stopped my family from watching them."

Other shortcomings of Nollywood films include the over-concentration on the themes of fraud, get-rich-quick syndrome, rituals, sex (Anunike, 2005), armed robbery, prostitution, wife-snatching, kidnapping, brutal acquisition of wealth, man's inhumanity to man (Iloegbunam, 2007), love and romance (Onuzulike, 2007). Other questionable themes are barbarism and savagery, tendentious handling of facts, over-concentration on indices of under-development (e.g. poverty, "archaic" lifestyles, etc), romanticization of official corruption and perverted moral values, juvenile delinquency and violence, and many forms of sexual immorality (Nwanne, 2010). In their treatment of the aforementioned themes, Nollywood films exhibit a clear tendency to reinforce the ideologies of the patriarchal male protagonist. Olujinmi (2008) and Ewwierhoma (2008) observe in this regard that

many Nollywood films portray women in a negative light. Both scholars have argued that women in Nigerian films are often presented as seductive threats to the virtue of men and that witches are mostly women. Rarely are women presented as educated and professionals. Scholars have also observed that violence against women is a recurrent theme in many Nollywood films (Akpabio, 2004; Opeyemi, 2008; Anunike, 2009; Dipio, 2009; Nwanne, 2010) and it is in this theme that many issues of sexual harassment perpetrated by male characters against female characters are depicted.

Are female audiences of Nollywood films conscious of the portrayal of sexual harassment against females? In other words, are female audiences active or passive in consuming the content of Nollywood films as far as sexual harassment against women is concerned? This question arises from concerns that female audiences of Nollywood films might be carried away by the entertainment-filled content of the films and fail to be critically involved as they watch them. Anunike (2009, p. 39) gives credence to this possibility with the observation that the Nollywood films provide entertainment that gives pleasure and satisfaction to the unsophisticated audience so much so that he or she does not notice the poor artistic and aesthetic elements in the film. Ende and Udende (2011, p. 75) provide another reason to question whether Nollywood female audiences have sufficient levels of film literacy to be able to critically identify issues that affect them. They have found that that mass media audiences in Nigeria (specifically the young ones) "grossly lacked knowledge of the repertoire of competences that audiences require to effectively analyse, evaluate and create media messages in a wide variety of modes, genres and forms" (Ende & Udende, 2011, p. 75).

Objectives and methods of study

The present study seeks to explore the consciousness and reaction of female audiences to the portrayal of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. The specific objectives include the following:

- To investigate the audiences' ability to identify instances of sexual harassment against women portrayed in Nollywood films;
- to determine the types of sexual harassment against women the audiences are able to identify;

- to assess the audiences' reaction to the portrayal of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films.

In addressing the above objectives, the study adopted an interpretative research approach. This approach is qualitative in nature, takes advantage of triangulation (Marshall & Rossman, 1989), and has been often used in feminist media studies (van Zoonen, 1999). The interpretative research approach used in this study relied on in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) as data gathering tools.

The subjects of the study were female audiences of Nollywood films in Nigeria who represent the following socio-demographic categories: Northern and Southern Nigeria, urban and rural, and young and adult. Hence, purposively selected samples from Anambra, Edo (in Southern Nigeria), Benue and Bauchi (in Northern Nigeria) states were studied. In each state, urban and rural audiences were targets. Part of the urban audiences included final year undergraduate students of mass communication who have taken courses in film analysis. The universities studied included Anambra State University (ANSU), Igbariam Campus, Anambra State; Benue State University (BSU) Makurdi, Benue State; Federal Polytechnic Auchi (FPA), Edo State; and Bauchi State Polytechnic (BSP), Bauchi, Bauchi State. In each state, 25 in-depth interviews (10 in rural areas and 15 in urban areas), and 15 FGDs (5 in rural areas and 10 in urban areas) were conducted. Ages of the females who took part in the in-depth interviews and FGDs ranged from 21 – 55. The interviewees represent varying occupational groups (farmers, traders, students, full-time house wives, and civil servants). Ten discussants were used in each FGD.

The sample that was used for the in-depth interviews was different from that used for the FGDs. All the females who took part in the in-depth interviews and FGDs were shown five Nollywood films, which depicted different acts of sexual harassment. The films were: *Johnbull and Rosekate* (2004), *My Sister My Love* (2006), *Who will Tell the President* (2007), *Battle for Pride* (2009), *Heart of a Widow* (2011).

Understanding sexual harassment: Definitions and typologies

The concept of sexual harassment is difficult to define. What a person in a particular culture experiences and considers sexually offensive may not be so to someone else from another culture. The cultural space in which one finds himself influences his or her perception of issues (Martin & Nakayama, 2000). Cultural space is

defined not only in terms of differences in geopolitical boundaries, but also in terms of differences in family, religion, socio-economic-status, and peer group backgrounds. Our attempt here is to understand sexual harassment from different perspectives, and then identify the perspective of our focus in this study.

Sexual harassment, according to Bello (2007), arises when men or women go beyond silent or respectful forms of sexual recognition of another individual to demand interactive sexual recognition and rewards from that person. Bello's definition recognizes that both males and females are potential perpetrators and targets of sexual harassment. Thinking along the same lines as Bello are Catherine Mackinnon (cited in Griffin, 2000) and Shishima (2005). Mackinnon (cited in Griffin, 2000, p. 467) defines sexual harassment as "unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power." On his part, Shishima (2005, p. 43) defines sexual harassment as "a situation where the opposite sex (mostly in a privileged position) demands sex from the other persistently with threats in which sexual submission is made as a condition for one to enjoy one's right, and submission or refusal affects decisions on one. This could be either a man or a woman." This notion of both male and female being targets of sexual harassment has given rise to the distinction between "sexual harassment against females" and "sexual harassment against males" (Walsh-Childers, Chance & Herzog, 1996).

On the other hand, other scholars see sexual harassment as being targeted at females only. For example, Farley's (1978) understanding of the concept is unsolicited non-reciprocated male behavior which places a female's sexual role over and above her role as a worker. Similarly, New Responses Incorporated (cited in Shishima, 2005) conceptualizes sexual harassment as a behavior that makes an individual feel that her employment situation will, in some way, suffer unless social demands are met. For this study, we operationally define sexual harassment as perpetrated by males and targeted against females. Two reasons justify this definition. Firstly, sexual harassment generally is a function of power dynamics between the harasser and the harassed, with the harasser wielding power over the harassed (Barak, Fisher & Houston, 1992; Andsager, Baily & Nagy, 1997; Shishima, 2005). Nigeria, like many other parts of the world, is a male-dominated society in which females have little or no say over sexual advances and have difficulty negotiating sex. (Brown, & Flatow, 1997; Eghafona & Oluwabamide, 2003; Nwagbara, 2005; Samuel, 2009; Dipo, 2009). Thus, males (who

are powerful) are likely to be the harassers; and females (who are less powerful) the harassed. Secondly, in many traditional African societies, including Nigeria, it is a taboo for a female (even a married one) to make sexual advances, and to sexually assault a male. A female who does so is viewed as being sexually deviant.

The literature identifies two broad types of sexual harassment: *quid pro quo* (something for something) and "hostile environment" discrimination, that is, harassment as a continuing condition of work (Mackinnon 1979; Walsh-Childers, Chance & Herzog, 1996). *Quid pro quo* harassment involves three things: an advance, a response, and a consequence. The consequence could be: (1) one is punished when one declines a sexual demand; (2) one gains some benefits when one complies with a sexual demand; (3) one receives no subsequent harassment when one declines sexual demand. Hostile environment harassment is a situation in which a privileged person subjects an underprivileged person to a variety of actions or behaviors such as unwanted sexual advances and degrading sexual comments. These actions or behaviors towards the harassed which are inhospitable, intimidating or offensive render her unsafe in her environment (be it workplace or school), thus interfering unreasonably with her ability to perform her job well. Because this type of harassment appears to be less threatening, victims hardly complain about it. Some don't even see it as sexual harassment because as Shishima (2005, p.44) puts it "some women see it as part of complements on their personality."

Some scholars have come up with other typologies of sexual harassment, not radically different from the two types discussed above. Pamela Loy and Steward Lee (cited in Shishima, 2005) have identified four types of sexual harassment. They are: (1) Verbal commentary, which includes sexual messages delivered through teasing, off-color jokes and animal sounds; (2) verbal negotiations, which involves explicit sexual propositions and negotiations; (3) manhandling. This includes unwanted touching such as patting, looking, brushing against or pinching; and (4) sexual assault, which is the use of physical force.

Gannett Co. Inc. Corporate Training Programme as published in *ASNE Bulletin* of January/February 1992 (reproduced in Brown and Flatow, 1997) gives a more detailed description of sexual harassment by identifying five types of sexual harassment:

Physical sexual harassment: This is the case when a person is unwillingly touched. Touching a person's clothing, hair, or body; hugging, kissing, patting, or stroking; massaging a person's neck or

shoulders; standing close or brushing up against a person's clothing, hair, or body.

Verbal sexual harassment: Acts that constitute this type of sexual harassment include referring to an adult as a babe, girl or honey; wolf whistles; turning work discussions to sexual topics; telling sexual jokes or stories; asking personal questions of sexual nature; making sexual comments about a person's clothing, anatomy, or looks; asking someone repeatedly for dates and refusing to take 'no' for an answer; making kissing sounds, and smacking lips.

Threatening sexual harassment: Here, a person is rewarded in return for sexual favours.

Non verbal sexual harassment: Acts that explain this type of harassment include looking at a person up and down, prolong staring at a person; giving personal gifts; winking, throwing of kisses, or licking lips; and making sexual gestures with hands or through body movements.

Environmental sexual harassment: Suggestive cartoons, suggestive calendars, nude centerfolds and the like constitute this type of harassment.

This study adopts the typology of sexual harassment given by Gannett Co. Inc for the obvious reason that it is broader, more specific, clearer, simpler, and easier to identify than the other typologies discussed in this work.

Sexual harassment in films

Film production across the world, in its early stage (around 1920s-1970s), represented varying amounts of sex and sexuality related issues (Hanson, 2005). Research sponsored by the Payne Fund Foundation, which analyzed the content of movies produced during this period, revealed that crime and sex were among the major themes in the films (Hanson, 2005). DeFleur (2010) also notes that movies of this period were popular with the passive audience because they presented depictions of sexual promiscuity, among other vices. DeFleur (2010, p. 139) observes that "indeed, by the late 1920s, some films were even showing females in their undergarments – at a time when the majority of the population had barely emerged from the Victorian era of conservative dress and morality."

The situation after 1970 was no better. Traudt (2005) argues that the intensity of the depiction of sex and related issues increased with home viewing alternatives delivered through such technologies as video

cassette recorder/players, cable television, and satellite system of video transmission. Traudt (2005, p.117) contends that:

These now well-established system of video delivery forever established U.S. television as a prominent source for the depiction of sex themes and sexual behaviors. Even the traditionally conservative broadcast network channels air regular dramatic and comedic series promoting a range of sexual preferences and behaviours.

Large amounts of sexual portrayal in films have elements of sexual harassment in some form or other. One form of sexual harassment in the films is stereotyping of women, as observed by Rodman (2006, p. 177): "these films treat women as sex objects and victims of violence... happy to have their own sexual choices and refusal crushed by men." Rodman observes further that the small number of female film directors makes the case of stereotyping of women worse. But he hopes that when more women direct films, women's points of view will be found. Other forms of sexual harassment inherent in sexual portrayals in films include: criminal sex acts, sexual language, verbal innuendo, suggestive displays, sexual touching (Sapolsky & Tabarlet, 1991), physical harassment, sexual violence, fellatio, cunnilingus, rape and fondling of female and male genitalia (Brosius, Weaver & Staab, 1993).

Sexual harassment in Nollywood films

There are few published works on sexual harassment content in Nollywood films. What is available are studies of sexual immorality and general violence against women (Evwierhoma, 2008; Olujinmi, 2008; Nunike, 2009; Nwanne, 2010). However, these themes can reveal different types of sexual harassment. A first stage in the present research was exploratory research to examine the extent of portrayal of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. The authors of the present study did a content analysis of 10 popular Nollywood films as presented in Table 1 and 2 below. The films were selected with a purposive and convenience sampling approach; purposive because the films contained incidents of sexual harassment and convenience because the films were readily available. The unit of analysis was incidents of male-female interaction in scenes in the films. The content categories were: (1) sexual harassment (SH) incidents, and (2) non-

sexual harassment (Non SH) incidents. Sexual harassment incidents were defined along the five descriptions of sexual harassment offered by Gannett Co. Inc. Corporate Training Programme (cited in Brown and Flatow, 1997), which include physical, verbal, threatening, non-verbal and environmental sexual harassment. These five descriptions of sexual harassment are explained above in this work. Non-sexual harassment incidents were defined as male-female interactions that did not feature any of the above five descriptions of sexual harassment. Every scene that contained any act of sexual harassment was counted as a sexual harassment scene, and any scene that did not was counted as a non-sexual harassment scene.

The findings show that acts of sexual harassment perpetrated by males against females constitute more than half (57%) of the scenes of male-female interactions in the 10 Nollywood movies studied, as shown in Table 1. *Heart of a Widow* (72.7%) and *Final Widow* (73%) depict the most acts of sexual harassment. Films that depict the least acts of sexual harassment are *The Master* (37.5%) and *Who Will Tell the President* (38.9%). Acts of physical (24.2%), verbal (25%) and threatening (21.2%) harassments dominate the other types of sexual harassment, which are non-verbal (17.4%) and environmental (12.1%), as shown in Table 2. There is more physical harassment in *A Better Place* (33.3%) and *Royal Coup* (33.3%), and less in *Johnbull and Rosekate* (14.3%), *The Master* (16.7%) and *Battle for Pride* (18.2%). While there is more verbal harassment in *My Sister My Love* (60%), there is less in *Royal Coup* (8.3%), *Final Widow* (14.8%), *Ukwa* (20%), *Heart of a Widow* (20.8%) and *A Better Place* (22.2%). Threatening harassment is found more in *Ukwa* (30%) and *The Master* (33.3%) and is completely absent in *My Sister My Love*, *Who Will Tell the President* and *A Better Place*. There is more non-verbal harassment in *A Better Place* (33.3%), *Who Will Tell the President* (28.6%) and *Battle for Pride* (27.3%), but absent in *The Master* and less in *Ukwa* (10%), *Johnbull and Rosekate* (14.3%), *Final Widow* (14.8%) and *Heart of a Widow* (16.7%). Environmental harassment is generally low in all the films, with no film recording more than 20 percent. More details are presented in Tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 1: Incidents of sexual harassment (against females) in scenes of male-female interactions in 10 selected Nollywood films

Film	SH F (%)	Non SH F (%)	Total F (%)
<i>Ukwa</i>	10(45.5)	12(54.5)	22(100)
<i>The Master</i>	6(37.5)	10(62.5)	16(100)
<i>My Sister my Love</i>	5(41.7)	7(58.3)	12(100)
<i>Johnbull and RoseKate</i>	21(63.6)	12(36.4)	33(100)
<i>Who will tell the President</i>	7 (38.9)	11(61.1)	18(100)
<i>A Better Place</i>	9(47.4)	10(52.6)	19(100)
<i>Royal Coup</i>	12(57.1)	9(42.9)	21(100)
<i>Battle for Pride</i>	11(57.9)	8(42.1)	19(100)
<i>Heart of a Widow</i>	24(72.7)	9(27.3)	33(100)
<i>Final Widow</i>	27(73)	10(27)	37(100)
TOTAL	132(57.4)	98(42.6)	230(100)

*SOURCE: Authors' content analysis of Nollywood films, 2011 SH=Sexual Harassme
F = Frequency.*

Table 2: Types of sexual harassment against females identified in 10 selected Nollywood films

Film	Types of Sexual Harassment					Total F (%)
	Physical F (%)	Verbal F (%)	Threatening F(%)	Non-Verbal F(%)	Environment F(%)	
<i>Ukwa</i>	3(30)	2(20)	3(30)	1(10)	1(10)	10(100)
<i>The Master</i>	1(16.7)	2(33.3)	2(33.3)	0(0)	1(16.7)	6(100)
<i>My Sister my Love</i>	0(0)	3(60)	0(0)	1(20)	1(20)	5(100)
<i>Johnbull and RoseKate</i>	3(14.3)	8(38.1)	5(23.8)	3(14.3)	2(9.5)	21(100)
<i>Who will tell the President</i>	2(28.6)	3(42.8)	0(0)	2(28.6)	0(0)	2(9.5)
<i>A Better Place</i>	3(33.3)	2 (22.2)	0(0)	3(33.3)	1(11.1)	09(99.9)
<i>Royal Coup</i>	4(33.3)	1(8.3)	3(25)	2(16.7)	2(16.7)	12(100)
<i>Battle for Pride</i>	2(18.2)	3(27.3)	2(18.2)	3(27.3)	1(9.1)	11(100.1)
<i>Heart of a Widow</i>	6(25)	5(20.8)	6(25)	4(16.7)	3(12.5)	24(100)
<i>Final Widow</i>	8(29/6)	4(14.8)	7(25.9)	4(14.8)	4(14.8)	27(99.9)
TOTAL	32(24.2)	33(25)	28(21.2)	23(17.40)	16(12.1)	132(99.9)

SOURCE: Authors' content analysis of Nollywood films, 2011. F=Frequency

Film audiences

The basic concern of this study was to determine whether female audiences were conscious or unconscious of sexual harassment issues portrayed in films. Our study has drawn on Ellis (2000) and Liebes (2005) who have made perceptive analyses of film and television audiences in contemporary society. Even though Ellis's attempt is on television audiences, it also applies to film audiences since films feature as television programs. Ellis categorized television audiences into three historical phases: scarcity phase, availability phase, and plenty phase. The phase of scarcity, which is the era of the powerful media effects tradition, sees the audience as united citizens with less options of media content to attend to. The phase of availability is the era of the active audience, who had a lot of choices to make in their patronage of media content. Audiences in this phase are seen as consumers who are involved in media content. The current phase of plenty is described by Liebes (2005, p. 360) as "an era in which viewers are free to ignore the programming of nationwide channels, and seek the programmes they crave from a menu of several hundred channels. The audiences constructed by these changes are poor-rich consumers who, confronted with this abundance of infinite choice and experiencing 'time famine,' now face 'choice fatigue'."

The import of the foregoing is that contemporary film audiences are both passive and active, depending on whether they are "poor" or "rich" consumers. Like research paradigms in mass media effects, first, there were the powerful media effects; then came limited media effects, and now we are in the paradigm of both powerful and limited media effects (Baran, 2004; McQuail, 2005; Dominick, 2010). The audiences of the present era, called "juggler" by Liebes (2005, p. 365), are seen as being presented with imposed endless choices.

These theoretical perspectives provide a platform on which the concepts of active audience and passive audience could be understood in the context of Nollywood film audiences. The concept of active audience is also known as audience activity, or involvement, or critical ability (McQuail, 2005; Liebes, 2005). A basic characteristic of an active audience is that it is expected to make or negotiate its own meaning of the messages and images the media disseminate. From a cultural point of view, "the audience is seen as playing a relatively, autonomous role that is often interpreted as resistance to these messages and meanings" (Schiller, 2001, p. 329). Apart from involvement and critical ability, other terms that explain an active audience are selectivity (exercise of

choice and discrimination), intentionality (active cognitive of information and experience), and resistance to influence (limits of unwanted influence or learning) (McQuail, 2005). The passive audience, on the other hand, lacks the characteristics identified with an active audience, while an actively passive audience (argued here to be the case with the film audience) would therefore possess some features of an active audience and some features of a passive audience. This study defines film audiences from an operational point of view as being both active and passive. The audience is active if it possesses the critical ability and is involved in meaning negotiation of issues of sexual harassment portrayed in Nollywood films. Otherwise, it is passive.

Theoretical explanation of female audience perception

Cognitive processing theory and *feminist film theory* are two theoretical viewpoints that explain female audiences' activity with films portraying acts of sexual harassment against females. *Cognitive processing theory* explains how individuals process and construct meaning from the message and images presented to them (Baran & Davis, 2007).

Meaning construction has to do with mental treatment of information using the senses. DeFleur (2010, p. 77) defines cognition as referring to "how people think and how that influences their actions." A number of factors come to bear on our thought pattern and thinking process. These factors include our beliefs, attitudes, values, opinions, tastes, interests, stored memory structures, habits of attention and perception, imagery, and intelligence (Harris, 1994). All of these factors, and perhaps more, influence the media type and content we are exposed to and how we think and react to the content.

What this means in the context of this study is that a person attends to film content via the senses as an empirical experience. This person interprets and makes meaning out of the experience based on prior socialization. The person then situates his or her interpretation and meaning of the film experience within current and future situations. That is, the person examines the implications, and decides whether it is good, bad, dangerous, unimportant, or neutral. The person then commits the implication of the interpretation and meaning arrived at to memory and compares it to previously remembered experience. With this, the person reaches a decision of the kind of response or action that is needed, and then responds or acts accordingly.

Cognitive processing theory explains how female film audiences make meaning and react to sexual harassment issues portrayed in the films

they watch and whether they react actively or passively to the portrayal. This study tested this assumption. But to analyze how female film audiences react to sexual harassment against females portrayed in films, we turn to feminist film theory.

Feminist film theory is derived from feminist theory, which in turn is influenced by developments in feminism studies. It is an attempt to explain communication variables within the context of gender relationship (Anderson & Ross, 2002). Accordingly, feminist theory emphasizes that male-female differences in cultural patterns are attributable to conditions of power and powerlessness, as shown by the different strands of the theory, such as standpoint theory (Wood, 1999) and muted group theory (Griffin, 2000). These two strands of feminist theory explain that men who are powerful define the world, and women who are less powerful accept men's definition passively, unchallenged.

Feminist film theory assumes that the production of meaning in a film text affects the representation of women and reinforces sexism. This idea, largely drawn from the works of feminist film theorists such as Erens (1990), Johnston (1979) and Hooks (2003), point to the "male gaze" which dominates film making. The concept of male gaze describes the passive role of females and active role of males in films. In other words, male gaze explains how film creates space for female sexual objectification and exploitation through the combination of the patriarchal order of society, and "looking" as a pleasurable act of voyeurism. In this perspective the "cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking" (Laura Mulvey, quoted in Wikipedia, 2011).

Thus, feminist film theory advocates for a change in modern film structure so as to free females from their sexual objectification in film. This change should be in the form of destroying the element of voyeurism and introducing the notion of matrixial gaze to replace male gaze (Mulvey and Ettinger, cited in van Zoonen, 1999). In relation to this study, feminist film theory presupposes that female audiences' consciousness of negative portrayal of women in films (in issues of sexual harassment against them, which is the thrust of this study) is a step towards achieving matrixial gaze. Thus, feminist film theory would argue that female film audiences object to the negative portrayal of women in film and prefer a change in contemporary film structure.

Audience ability to identify sexual harassment in Nollywood films

To a large extent, the Nollywood female audiences studied showed a remarkable ability to identify scenes of sexual harassment against women portrayed in Nollywood films. The urban, young and literate (in sexual harassment issues) audiences exhibited this ability more than the rural, adult and illiterate (in sexual harassment issues) audiences. The university and polytechnic students who had taken courses in film criticism (which must have covered feminist approaches to film criticism) were able to recall instances of sexual harassment against women in films they had watched. One student at Anambra State

..... *Strong Desire* (2007):

Nigerian films simply see women as sex objects for the men. The men in the films abuse and harass the women physically. Even the religious men are not left out, as we see in *Strong Desire* where Reverend Fathers Laz and Rex harass females and commit sins of the flesh. If men of God could do this, then how much more of those who are not men of God? (FGD with female student at Anambra State University (ANSU), September, 2011.)

Other students and non-students alike in urban areas could recall that many films featuring Nkem Owoh (a popular Nollywood actor) have a number of scenes of sexual harassment against women. "Nkem Owoh", one student exclaimed, "is always harassing women, even reverend sisters as he does in *Johnbull and Rosekate*." Another student observes: "Many Nollywood films have plots which include instances of rape, which is sexual harassment." When asked to recall some of the films that have rape scenes, the student was able to recall *Dangerous Game*, *Wicked Intention*, *My Sister My Lover*, and *Kingdom Apart*. Indeed, all these films have scenes of rape.

However, the rural audiences studied, who were mostly illiterate in issues of feminism, were only able to identify scenes of sexual harassment against females in the films the researchers made them watch as part of the research exercise. Most of them could not recall scenes of sexual harassment in films they had watched previously. We suspected they had not been watching films. But when we asked them, they agreed that they watch films, and some were able to recall some titles of Nollywood productions they said they have watched. A 58-year old tailor in a rural community in Benue State said:

I watch a lot of films. In fact, whenever I have little or no work in the shop, I am at home watching films, as if I am a child.... I can tell you the films I have watched: I have watched *Ukwa*, *Royal Wives*, *A Better Place*, *Royal Coup*, *Friends and Lovers*, *The Master*, *Parish War*, *Rituals*, *Omaliko*, *Kill the Child*, *Odun Na Akwaeke*, *World Apart*, *Adoration Ministry* and many others. In fact, I cannot finish counting them (Interview with a rural woman in Benue state, September, 2011.)

It is likely, therefore, that the rural women watch Nollywood films frequently, but are not literate enough in sexual harassment issues to correctly identify acts of sexual harassment in films. This finding is confirmed by the observation that most of the rural women studied could not differentiate between sexual harassment and violence against women. Some of them wrongly adjudged the scene where Osuafia, in the film *Osuafia in London*, is threatening his wife, as sexual harassment, when it is actually violence against women. Similarly, some of them said the scene in *Kingdom Apart* where thieves rob women of money is sexual harassment.

A few rural audiences, however, were able to identify sexual harassment in films. A trader in Edo State was able to identify sexual harassment and recall its instances in Nollywood films she had previously watched. She was also able to give the correct meaning of sexual harassment when asked. She said: "sexual harassment is when a man uses his power in whatever way to engage in sexual affair with a woman against the wish of the woman." Interviews also revealed that the young audiences showed more ability than the adult audiences to identify acts of sexual harassment in Nollywood films. A number of elderly women said there are acts of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films but that they may not be able to recall them, since their main aim of watching is usually to be entertained, and not to be so critical in identifying individual issues. The foregoing findings suggest that Nollywood female audiences in Nigeria are able to identify acts of sexual harassment in films to a considerable extent. Some of them, however, are not conscious of the harassment since they are carried away by the entertainment in the films.

Ability to identify types of sexual harassment in Nollywood films

All of our discussants (in the FGDs) and interviewees who expressed views on this aspect of the findings were shown five Nollywood films containing different types of sexual harassment against women which included physical harassment, verbal harassment, threatening harassment, non-verbal harassment, and environmental harassment. The films are: *Who Will Tell the President* (2007), *My Sister My Lover* (2006), *Johnbull and Rosekate* (2006), *Heart of a Widow* (2011) and *Battle for Pride* (2009).

An overwhelming majority of the audiences studied was able to identify physical and threatening sexual harassment. They were able to cite correctly acts of rape as physical sexual harassment. They were also able to recall correctly the acts of threat by male characters against female characters for sexual gratification as threatening sexual harassment. However, their knowledge of physical harassment was restricted to violent acts. They did not see unwanted kissing, hugging and patting as physical sexual harassment. A middle-aged lady in Edo State, when asked whether unwanted kissing and hugging are acts of physical harassment as was portrayed in *Heart of a Widow*, she had this to say:

I do not see these acts as sexual harassment since the woman wanted (it). If she did not want (it), she would have resisted and no man would have carried out the acts on her... these acts are different from rape because, in rape the woman is overpowered, but in kissing and hugging she is not overpowered to resist (FGD with a 37-year if female at Auchu, August 2011).

Another student at Federal Polytechnic, Auchu, Edo State, made a similar remark:

I don't see how kissing is sexual harassment. If the woman does not give her consent the man cannot kiss her.(FGD with a female student at FPA, September, 2011

A lady in Bauchi State said hugging is a normal way of greeting in many African cultures. As such it cannot be said to be sexual harassment. But when she was confronted with the question of unwanted hugging with the intention of sexual gratification on the part

of the man, she replied: "hugging alone cannot lead to the realization of that gratification, since the women in question cannot be lured by hugging alone." (Interview with a 48-year old female in Bauchi State, September, 2011.)

For the other types of sexual harassment (verbal, non-verbal, and environmental), all the audiences studied, with the exception of six students at Benue State University and Anambra State University, did not see them as acts of sexual harassment. The six students, however, were correct in their identification of sexual gestures at women (as non-verbal sexual harassment), referring to women as "chic," "sweetheart", "my darling", "my missing rib", "my babe" etc. (as verbal sexual harassment), and suggestive tattoos on the body of males and all forms of nude pictures exposed to females (as acts of threatening sexual harassment). The following statements by some of the audiences studied at Benue State University are incisive:

The way Nkem Owoh teases girls in films is a kind of verbal sexual harassment. Yes, even his looks at girls sometimes suggest sexual invitation. This is nonverbal sexual harassment. (FGD with a 24-year old female student at BSU, September 2011.)

...tattoo on the arms and chest of those cultists in *Danger Gamble* is an act of environmental harassment. (FGD with a 22-year old female student at BSp, 2011.)

What is clear from these interviews is that Nollywood female audiences in Nigeria do recognize the sexual harassment in Nollywood films, but that they have limited knowledge of the diverse acts that constitute sexual harassment. Some of the acts, like a man starring at a lady, a man touching a lady's hair, and telling sexual jokes are subtle acts of sexual harassment that can go unnoticed. This finding resonates with that of Kur (2009) who studied the perception of sexual harassment by female students in Nigerian universities and found that students see sexual harassment in terms of physical and threatening sexual acts, but not in terms of verbal, non-verbal and environmental sexual acts. The issue of females in Nigeria having a limited knowledge of the definition of sexual harassment is rooted in the generally entrenched negative attitude towards feminism issues in Nigeria. The idea of men defining issues for women is still strong in Nigeria (Akpan, Iwokwagh, & Madaki 2009). On this basis, many women, who are still

under the yoke of negative traditional socio-economic and political practices against women, do not see patriarchal acts and ideas as actually against womanhood, but as normal practices in society (Iorvaa & Utulu, 2009).

Reactions to sexual harassment content in Nollywood films

All the audiences studied condemned the acts of sexual harassment against women portrayed in Nollywood films. Many of them said the portrayals affect the image of womanhood. A student at Federal Polytechnic Auchi, Edo State gave her verdict of such films:

I don't support those films that portray women at the receiving end of sexual harassment. It gives the impression that women are in the society to suffer from the hands of men. When men see such films, they are happy and reinforce the idea that it is a man's world; they are created to lord it over women and use them at will as mere sex objects. If we are really interested in changing the lot of women, we should begin to think of producing films that portray a woman's sexuality in a positive light. (FGD with a 23-year old female student at FPA, September, 2011).

The notion that films influence men's negative perception of women's sexuality has been empirically examined by scholars such as Jansma, Linz, Mulac, and Imrich (1997) who studied men's interactions with women after viewing sexually explicit films. The study, an experiment, found that men who view sexual films perceive their female partners as less sexually interested in them (men). Similarly, Perse (1994), used the survey method to investigate audience motives for using sexually explicit media and the relationships between exposure and negative perceptions of women, including acceptance of rape myths. Subjects of the study were undergraduate students. The findings revealed that males were more likely to use erotica for sexual release and substitution than females, and that erotic media use influenced feelings of hostility toward women. Males exposed to media sexual violence against women were more likely to accept rape myths. On the basis of these and other empirical evidence, the fears of the audiences in this study about sexual harassment content in Nollywood films are valid.

Some of the audiences studied expressed indifference to the content of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. A trader in Benue State said "I don't mind about the portrayal (sex harassment in Nollywood films). What is important to me is that the films entertain me." When asked her views on stopping such portrayal, she replied: "whether you stop it or not as long as the films continue to entertain me, I am satisfied. But I would not mind the stopping."

Another woman in Bauchi State remarked:

There are many problems associated with Nollywood films, not just sexual harassment. Think about the portrayal of witchcraft, which is often exaggerated, the negative image of the Catholic Church, acceptance of violence as a norm in society and many more. When you look at all these problems, we should be talking of a solution to the entire problem of themes, and not just one theme that concerns us women. (Interview with a 52-year old housewife in Bauchi State, August, 2011.)

It is clear that Nollywood films are of high entertainment value to the audience, as argued by Akinyosoye (2011, p.374): "it [Nollywood films] provides psychological relief through its provision of entertainment."

The audience in this study also reacted to the issue of whether the portrayal of sexual harassment in Nollywood is a reflection of reality in the Nigerian society. Many said it is not, while a few said it is. Those who said it is not based their argument on the premise that the moral decadence in the Nigerian society has not reached the high point portrayed in Nollywood films. As one audience member in Edo State noted with the following rhetorical questions:

Can you say, in Nigeria, fathers rape their daughters, sons rape their mothers, houseboys rape female landlords, priest rape church female members or sex goes on everywhere indiscriminately as we see in Nollywood films? Even if these acts really take place in everyday life, are they committed at that high frequency we see in very many Nollywood films? (Interview with a 48-year old female civil servant in Edo State, September, 2011.)

Another audience member in Bauchi State explained that other interesting issues of Nigeria's national life occur but the film producers do not capitalize on them as they do on issues that affect women. In her words:

Corruption in government and the private sector perpetrated by the men pervade the entire Nigerian society. In fact the whole world knows Nigeria as a very corrupt place, far more than they know the country's sexual immorality. Leadership has collapsed at all levels of government and public life. But not much of the films mirror these aspects of decadence; instead, they take pleasure in portraying women negatively because they are men and we are women. A man's failure should not be portrayed to the whole world, but a woman's failure should. I will not accept that the negative manner women are portrayed in Nigerian home movies is a total reality about women. (Interview with a 34-year old female civil servant in Bauchi State, August, 2011.)

The few audiences who said the portrayal is a reflection of reality were able to cite real life cases. A lady from Anambra State recounted an experience she said she witnessed in Lagos:

A man and his wife lived happily. One day, the sister to the wife visited them. The man began to make advances to the young girl whenever the wife was away. On this Sunday, the man said he was sick and could not go to the church. So the wife and children left for church leaving the man and the young female visitor in the house. This was at about seven am. The young girl was to attend service at another church at ten am. With the two of them in the house alone, the man was able to convince the girl and started having sex with her. Unfortunately, the wife returned after about 45 minutes and caught the two of them red handed. (FGD with a 39-year old housewife in Anambra State, September 2011.)

Other audiences belonging to this school of thought claim that film, even though fiction, is always a reflection of happenings in society, and

that the script writers get ideas largely from personal experience which may come to them either as a primary or a secondary idea. It would therefore not be correct for people to think that portrayals in films do not come out of real life experience.

Still, it can be inferred from such comments that female audiences in Nigeria react negatively to the portrayal of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. They feel such portrayals are exaggerated, done consciously to demean womanhood, and are not a true representation of real life situation. The few audience members who feel otherwise base their reasoning on theoretical assumptions that portrayals in film are a reflection of issues in society. On the whole, the findings of this study suggest that to a large extent female audiences are conscious in identifying and interpreting acts of sexual harassment against women portrayed in Nollywood films. Many adopt the feminist perspective that the representation of women in depictions of sexual harassment in such movies reinforces existing sexual stereotypes against women. They would like also to see women portrayed in a more positive light depicted in ways that capture the many aspects of womanhood in real life situations. Thus, the findings support the feminist film theory.

Implications for media literacy

Experts define media literacy as individuals' understanding of the place of the media in society as well as the place of the specifics of media production and consumption and how the process affects the final product (Ende & Udende, 2010; Samiu & Aminat, 2010). This means that a media literate person ought to be aware of the importance of media institutions in society and understand media content and factors that shape the content. Drawing from the definition offered by the USA 1992 National Conference on Media Literacy, Ende and Udende (2010, p. 60-61) explain media literacy as:

The possession of defined competences or tools necessary to effectively understand the media.....an active approach to media patronage where one is not a gullible patron/captive audience but puts every media message to a critical analysis which experts say, covers identification of author, purpose, point of view, examining construction techniques and genres, examining patterns of media representation and detecting propaganda, censorship, and bias.

Media literacy is necessary for audience members in order not to be short-changed by the ideologically inclined mass media messages. As noted by Krucsay (2008, p. 195), "media are never neutral vessels of information. The images, which we think are depictions of reality, are actually shaped, professionally constructed and this is why their decoding requires a high potential of media competence."

The findings of this study have shown that female audiences of Nollywood films in Nigeria have a relatively low level of media literacy. The fact that they could not identify subtle acts of sexual harassment (verbal, non-verbal and environmental), and that some of them see portrayal of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films as a normal film diet, suggests that they have not attained the requisite level of media literacy for healthy consumption of the contents of Nollywood films. This underscores the imperativeness of media education, which media literacy is a product of.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study has examined female audiences' consciousness of the presence of sexual harassment against women in Nollywood films. From the findings and the ensuing discussion, it is clear that Nollywood female audiences in Nigeria are conscious of sexual harassment issues in Nollywood films to a certain extent and capable of identifying and interpreting some acts of sexual harassment against women. Many adopt the feminist perspective that the representation of women in depictions of sexual harassment in such movies reinforces existing sexual stereotypes and would like to see women portrayed in a more positive light as well as depicted in ways that capture the many aspects of womanhood in real life situations. Thus, the findings support the feminist film theory which advocates for a change in modern film structure so as to free females from their sexual objectification in film.

However, their critical ability to identify the subtle acts of sexual harassment in the films is still in doubt. Similarly, to some extent, the audiences have not fully discovered the adverse influences of the portrayal on the identity of womanhood. These issues contribute to explain their undesirable level of media literacy. There is the need to step up media education in Nigeria's educational system beginning from elementary school. Stakeholders on feminism issues should work for the actualization of media literacy, which should include the informal sector, since many women in Nigeria have no formal school

education and may not be able to attend schools.

It is strongly recommended also that producers of Nollywood films should de-emphasize negative depictions and portray more positive images of females. Writers such as Ekwuazi (2008) feel that de-emphasizing negative issues about females would water down the entertainment value in films and reduce their popularity, thereby reducing the profit margins of the producers. This thinking suggests that business interests override social responsibility in the Nollywood industry, making it difficult for any change in depictions of negative themes. But the advice of Popoola (2003, p.129) should be taken very seriously when he notes, "except steps are taken by practitioners in the video film industry, government and relevant parastatals to curb further production of violent films, the status of the home video may soon change from an entertainment medium to schools for violence." This perspective argues that if Nollywood film makers do have creativity, they could produce highly entertaining films based on socially relevant themes and genres. When the industry begins to think along this line of creativity, professionalism will be enhanced.

Since this was more of an exploratory study, its purpose was to provide baseline data for understanding female audiences' reactions to sexual harassment content in Nollywood films. In the future, therefore, it may be worthwhile to broaden the scope of the current study to include other cultural regions in Nigeria. There is also the need for research with a longitudinal approach to verify the claims in this study over time. In this regard, quantitative research approaches integrated with the qualitative methods could substantiate (or negate) these claims.

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How successful are media women's associations in Africa? A case study of the Tanzanian Association of Media Women (TAMWA)

By Imane Duwe and Robert White

Abstract

There are now associations of women working as media professionals in virtually all countries of Africa. All of these associations ask themselves questions regarding their effectiveness. This article reports a recent evaluative survey of the Tanzanian Association of Media Women (TAMWA) and TAMWA's own self-evaluation. These studies show that TAMWA has been effective in seven areas: (1) special training programs for women in media to enable them to move to higher level positions of leadership and management in media houses; (2) establishing exchange programs of TAMWA members with media organizations in other parts of Africa, Europe and America; (3) advocacy journalism in favor of women and other human rights issues; (4) Getting women into positions of civic leadership; (5) mounting advocacy campaigns regarding major social problems; (6) promoting campaigns for improved legislation for women; and (7) building coalitions and networking for improvement of women's rights and in favor of other minorities. The major challenges facing TAMWA today are to bring more younger women media specialists into the organization and to get more women in leadership and management positions in media houses

Key words: associations of women media professionals, women in media in Africa, Tanzanian Association of Media Women, women's rights in Africa

Introduction:

In virtually all countries of Africa there are associations of women working as professionals in media. The objectives are similar: to overcome the barriers in media organizations against women's professional advancement, barriers that are so strong not only in Africa

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but elsewhere in the world. Most of these associations also become the media wing of a host of women's movements and organizations defending women's rights and human rights in general. So much of the general discrimination of women in Africa has been reinforced by the negative image of women in the media. Women working in the media have experienced directly the callousness of male editors and broadcasting program directors.

In East Africa there is the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK), the Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), the Ethiopian Media Women's Association (EMWA), the Zambian Media Women's Association (ZAMWA), and in Tanzania, the Tanzania Association of Women in Media. Media women's associations are also found in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Zimbabwe and South Sudan.

The central question in this article is: How effective are these organizations in achieving their central objective, improving the status of women in media organizations, but also the many other objectives associated with professional advancement. This article reports a 2009 study evaluating the achievements of TAMWA after some 25 years of efforts (Imane Duwe, 2010). The study is based on a survey of TAMWA members, extensive interviews with leaders of TAMWA and data provided in documents of TAMWA, including a small book on the history of accomplishments of TAMWA (Lema, 2008).

Factors leading to the founding of TAMWA

Women's movements in Tanzania have a long history stretching back to before independence in 1961. Women played an important role in the independence movement and women have held important positions in the first government of Tanzania (Geiger, 1997). Women have always played an important economic and political role in Tanzania (Rutashobya, 1995). TAMWA, however, has been a particularly important and visible movement in Tanzania.

Interest among women working in the media to form an association was sparked in part by the United Nations Women's Decade (1975-1985). The Third World Conference on Women took place in Nairobi, Kenya and this was attended by a number of women who eventually founded TAMWA (Maoulidi, 2008, pp 5-6). In general, during the 1980s there was a growing awareness in Tanzania and elsewhere in Africa of issues such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), discriminatory legislation against women, widespread violence against

women, poor health services for women and a host of other prejudicial practices.

TAMWA was founded in November, 1987 by a group of 12 women journalists in response to the problems of professional advancement of women in media in Tanzania. The association grew rapidly in the early 1990s with the liberalization of the media beyond the few government media organizations and the rapid growth of the number of people working in the media. At present the membership of TAMWA is about 110-120. Of these, approximately 17% date their membership from the foundation in 1987, about 43% from the 1990s and 40% from 2000. This is a relatively small percentage of the total number of women working in the media. The major objective of TAMWA is to build women's capacity for central positions in the media houses, especially to foster the advancement of women to higher level editorial and program director positions. In a 1999 survey of 250 women working in the media, out of 43 persons at the editor level only one was a woman (Tenganamba, 1999). Since then there has been some progress, but very limited. A survey in 2006 discovered that of 28 heads of departments in one of the largest media houses in Tanzania, Sahara Communications, only one of three supervisory positions was held by a woman. In the view of some, the lack of women in editorial positions has led to poor coverage of women in public affairs and poor coverage of women's issues. Overwhelmingly the images of women promoted in the media emphasized women's maternal or matrimonial role and less their professional image. In a study carried out at the University of Dar es Salaam, of 8,487 news items examined, only 833, about 10%, dealt with women's issues. And of those 833, more than 200 focused on scandals, sex and fashion. There were only 13 news items on women as professionals.

Women also were discriminated against in allocation of news reporting assignments. Assignments considered important such as the major political news, economic and finance news, sports, and investigative reporting generally were given to men. The performance on these so-called 'hard beats' are generally considered stepping stones to higher positions in the media organization. Women were assigned to beats considered trivial such as police and court proceedings or "softer" beats such health, human rights and gender equality (Ross and Byerly, 2003).

The founders of TAMWA also found that the existing professional media associations such as the Tanzania Association of Journalists were

dominated by men and were not concerned with women's issues. Today, given the pressure of women's organizations such as TAMWA, women journalists are more visible on television, especially as newscasters, reporters and program presenters. However, many highly experienced veteran female broadcasters such as Deborah Mwenda, Violet Maro, Edda Sanga and Mulidi Mwinyi say that it took almost a quarter of a century for them to reach a position where they were allowed to read the news.

A profile of TAMWA members

One of the central conditions for membership is holding a professional diploma in media training or other diploma in the social sciences or allied fields. This means usually at least a BA in communications or an equivalent advanced diploma in communications. When TAMWA was formed in the late 1980s there was only one institution offering an advanced diploma in print journalism, and most of the graduates at that time tended to be male. Most of the founders of TAMWA entered the media with advanced secondary school degrees, and many working in the media at that time had only form four degrees. At present there are four universities in Tanzania which offer the BA in communications, two of which offer the MA and one which offers the PhD. Each year there are literally hundreds of young women graduating with at least a BA degree in communications or related fields such as public relations. So, potentially, TAMWA has a large pool of candidates to draw from for its membership. In the survey of TAMWA members 13.6% have only a certificate, 42.4% a diploma (often equivalent to the BA), 32.2% the BA, and only 11.9% the MA. Of these 61% have a degree in communications or public relations and 37.3 % have training in the social sciences.

In the survey nearly 60% were working in government-related media, 24% in a private newspaper, 7% in private television and the rest in other jobs. Some 42% are working in newsrooms and 22% are working in radio or television production. Most of the members have fairly high status jobs: 32.2% are program producers, 32.2% are sub-editors or feature editors and only 28.8% are reporters. But few women are in top jobs: only 3.4% are announcers/news readers, 1.7% are camera persons and 1.7% are chief editors. The majority have a relatively long period of experience in the media: 44.1% have worked in the media more than 10 years and 30.5% are working in the media

between 5 to 10 years. Not surprisingly, those who have ten or more years experience in the media are in the higher positions in their media organizations.

The largest segment of the association, about 50% of the members, have at least 10 to 15 years of experience in the media and are in the 30-40 year age bracket. Only about 17% are young, just out of professional schools. About one third are from the original founding members in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and these tend to be the most active members of the association in its advocacy and promotional activities.

The objectives of TAMWA

The primary objective of TAMWA has been two tiered:

- (1) To build the capacity of women to move into higher level positions of editorial decision making which would also open up more opportunities for allowing women to set the agenda for news making.
- (2) To introduce a style of journalism which would change the image and understanding of women in public life.

However, as the description of the programs and projects of TAMWA indicates, the association has a very broad objective of promoting the rights, opportunities and conditions of women in general and of all people who are suffering inhuman conditions. One of the major objectives is to develop a media advocacy style which touches not only women's issues but virtually all issues of the civil society in Tanzania. Another important objective is to make the media advocacy approach of TAMWA the voice not just of its own organization but, by building coalitions with all forms of organizations involved in the defense of human rights, work to provide better services to all sectors of disadvantaged groups. Thus, the struggle of women to gain higher levels of decision making in the media is not simply to better the socio-economic status of women, but to enable women, who often have such a bitter experience of discrimination, to be in a position to defend many other disadvantaged groups. The major and long-range objective is to promote the foundations of a mature democracy, especially a culture of freedom and equality.

The major programs and projects of TAMWA

(1) Developing the capacity for leadership and management in media organizations.

The interviews with the founders of TAMWA and with the current leaders revealed that the major strategy of the association is what might be called “capacity building”. Capacity for leadership and management is multi-dimensional (Rowlands, 1997), but especially involves the following abilities:

- Leadership capacities: taking initiatives, ability to analyze and solve problems in work contexts, courage in the face of challenges, self confidence, effective time management (Rowe, 1999). To acquire these capacities, women had to get involved with organizations and contexts where leadership qualities are important (Amakwe, 2006; Eade, 1997, p. 35)
- Capacity for hard work and persistence: Most TAMWA members emphasized hard work as the most important factor in their achievement. They had to work twice as hard as the men to get promotions. This involves meeting deadlines, working under pressure and taking assignments nobody wants.
- Ability to work within organizations: above all, the capacity to maintain good communication with superiors but also laterally with other departments, especially negotiation capacities (Tannenbaum, 1968; Rowlands, 1997; Eade, 1997).
- Assertiveness: African women are often socialized to be subservient and withdrawing (Chukwuma and Osarenren, 2001, p. 36). TAMWA members stressed that they had to take initiatives when the men were holding back. Women had to step forward to take difficult assignments, especially when it is clear that this is work linked to higher management positions. It is necessary to get training in areas such as economics which are typically areas men are better in (Bernay and Cantor, 1992, p. 17; Fox and Lawless, 2004, p. 264).
- Very clear goals and ambitions: women in media have to set their goals and find ways such as taking special courses, to prepare themselves for higher positions (Afshar and Eade, 2003).

- The ability to move in the world of civil society: having contact with human rights organizations, professional associations such as lawyers' associations, understanding the major issues in national development (Alvarez, A. and Alvarez, S., 1992; Eade and Williams, 1996; Rowlands, 1997; Eade, 1997).
- Commitment to "bottoms-up" development: the new vision of development is stressed, especially the role of minority groups such as youth, women, and rural people. Development has to be built on the empowerment of these groups (Sen and Grown, 1988; Rowlands, 1995; Mushi, 2001).

Women and TAMWA members have been especially successful at the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC) holding the following positions: chief editors of TBC radio and television newsrooms. Five TAMWA members working at TBC have been promoted to editorial positions. Two TAMWA members have held editorial positions at Mwananchi Communication newspapers and are in charge of special pages, the political feature page and the gender feature page.

In the survey, 74.6% of the respondents said that the capacity building programs have been effective, but virtually all said that the training or exchange programs were truly effective only if this was combined with the hard work and initiative of the individuals. Some 18.6% said that education was the key factor, 16.9% personal hard work, 28.8% personal initiative in taking advantage of opportunities, and 18.6% said long service got them to higher positions. Most women emphasized that they have to work twice as hard as men to get advancement.

Many women find marriage and family responsibilities a challenge to a career in the media. Management does not think that women are ready for the mobility that journalism requires and the dangers that it often involves. In the sample of TAMWA members, 60% are married but 60% have only one or two children. Most of the unmarried are young persons just out of professional school. Asked how they balance their family responsibilities with career demands, 39% said that they share responsibilities with their husband, 12% said that a house girl takes many responsibilities, and 20% said that in-laws are helping. But 30% said that they have no help, and some indicated that this is a problem for them.

Virtually all members of TAMWA were strongly convinced that being a member of TAMWA helped them develop their careers. Respondents highlighted the following activities of TAMWA as especially important:

- The exchange programs and training programs.
- The workshops and opportunities for contact with other similar media women's organizations internationally, in Africa and especially in East Africa.
- Being defended in moments of discrimination, helping them become aware of their rights and the positive image of TAMWA in Tanzania.
- Involvement in the advocacy programs of TAMWA.

In spite of the success, virtually all those interviewed in the survey noted that advancement in one's career is still very difficult for women in Tanzania because management decisions are made largely by men who tend to support each other through informal contacts in social gatherings.

(2) Exchange programs for higher-level training

One of the top priority programs of TAMWA to provide training for moving to higher level editing and program director positions are exchange internships. The guiding principle is that on-the-job training is the best method for developing practical skills in editing and program production. This develops problem-solving abilities, management skills, practical skills needed in newspapers or in broadcasting, and cooperation with other women colleagues.

One of the most successful projects for TAMWA has been the exchange program partnership of Fredskorpset (FK), a Norwegian Government Development Agency. The program offers members of TAMWA an opportunity to live in Norway or other parts of Africa and to work in media houses for one year. The South-South exchange program, initiated in 2002, enabled 16 Tanzanian women working in media to get on-the-job training in media management in cooperation with the media women's associations in Kenya, Uganda, Zambia and Ethiopia. The north-south exchange program began in June 2004 in cooperation with the Gimlekollen School of Journalism and Communication of Norway. Among those who have participated are TV camera expert, Razian Mwanwanga, the senior reporters with Radio

Tanzania, Dorothy Mmari, Flora Nzema and Fatuma Matulanga (Lema, 2008, pp. 80-81).

The training program has enabled four members to obtain MA degrees in communication abroad in the UK through scholarships offered by the International Labor Organizations (ILO), Norwegian Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Swedish Development Cooperation (SIDA). In addition many members have taken short courses overseas at the Turin Training Centre, Emory University, and other major training sites. In 2005 TAMWA established its own scholarship fund of 31 million shillings to provide partial or full support of women in BA and MA programs in Tanzania (Lema, 2008, pp. 79-81).

TAMWA members consider training to be a key factor in advancement in media organizations. In the survey 43 % said that the level of education and skills gained in training were the key factors in promotion, while 28.8% said that their hard work was the key factor. Another 15.3% said that taking advantage of special assignments in media organizations proved their capacities. In most of the personal interviews most admitted that their advancement was due to a combination of all of these factors. Most of the respondents in the survey say that after their studies sponsored by TAMWA they managed to move from junior positions to more senior editorial or management positions. For example, one member stated that on the basis of her BA in political science sponsored by TAMWA, she was appointed to a senior journalist position responsible for political features. She also works as a sub-editor and correspondent for Deutch Welle. Another member, currently working with the BBC in London, says that the exchange program in Nairobi helped her to get her present position.

Virtually all of those who were involved in MA or exchange programs have now moved to more senior positions. Jacqueline Liana was appointed Deputy Managing Editor of Uhuru Publications Limited in 2007. Assumpta Massoi was appointed Chief editor for the newly established Tanzania Broadcasting Services (TBC1). Beatrice Bandawe was promoted from chief reporter to News Editor of Nipashe Newspaper. Rose Japhet was appointed Head of the Features Department of Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC1). Some have moved into senior management positions in different media organizations. Ichikael Maro, for example, as chief director of Tanzania Standard Newspaper (TSN) was able to introduce a women's magazine section which provides space for women's issues.

The training of many TAMWA members, on the basis of their experience in media management, has helped them to move to leadership positions in various public and private institutions. In 2003 Halima Sharriff was appointed Country Director of the Tanzania Youth Alliance. In 2006, Fatma Mwassa was appointed assistant to the President of the Republic for Social Affairs.

Some have moved into important political positions. Betty Mkaswa, who gained training with CNN, obtained an appointment as District Commissioner of Korogwe in the Tanga Region. Sara Dumba was appointed District Commissioner of Kilindi. Mahfoudha Hamid, beneficiary of a TAMWA scholarship, served as Tanzania Member of the East African Parliament and in 2008 was appointed the Vice Chairperson of the Tanzanian Commission for Human Rights. Fatma Alloo, a founding member of TAMWA was appointed in 2007 to sit on the Commonwealth Civil Society Advisory Board for three years. In 2007 Ichikael Maro, the Chairperson TMWA and Rose Haji, a founding member of TAMWA, were appointed to the TACAIDS Advisory Board responsible for the Directorate of Communications and Information.

Some TAMWA members, on the basis of scholarships have moved into academic positions. Matilda Kasanga, after obtaining the MA in communication studies at the University of Leeds in the UK became a lecturer at the same university. Imane Due, a TAMWA activist, has become Head of the Department of Communication at St. Augustine University of Tanzania. Fatma Alloo gave the plenary address at the Conference of the International Association of Media and Communication Research in Cairo in 2007.

Other TAMWA members have used their education to become leaders in media advocacy organizations. Rose Haji is the past Director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa – Tanzania and Shifaa Said, after serving as the coordinator of TRAMWA programs in Zanzibar is now the program director of the Media Council of Tanzania.

(3) Advocacy journalism in favor of women and other human rights issues

At present TAMWA has the reputation of being one of the strongest voices of the civil society of Tanzania in the area of human rights, improving public services such as health and education, and promoter of important legislation which touches on human rights. Obviously, the advocacy is strongest in areas which touch on the rights and conditions of women. Typically, one will see a TAMWA advocacy article

in newspapers or notice a news on radio or on television every week or two. In general, the Tanzanian media are noteworthy for featuring advocacy journalism, led by young correspondents, but TAMWA sets the pace. The major objective of TAMWA is to set the agenda for public debate.

TAMWA has developed a journalistic approach which it calls "bang style journalism" (Nkya, 2008, pp 55-84). Bang style journalism involves the dissemination, at the same time, of strategically collected and written news items through several mass media channels including newspapers in both English and Swahili, as well as radio and television channels (Nkya, 2008, p. 56). These media campaigns are carefully planned beginning with a journalistic survey of a particular issue to gather the substantive data. The actual press conferences and news releases take advantage of a crisis situation, especially the protest of a civil rights group defending an affected part of the Tanzanian population. At times the members of TAMWA work through its journalistic networks to prepare more in-depth feature articles on issues. The advocacy releases of TAMWA are carefully planned for times when there is less likelihood of other major competing news and timing with events that are likely to catch the attention of editors as newsworthy. Releases to broadcast stations are timed with news releases by newspapers earlier in the day.

As Ananilea Nkya explains, TAMWA's advocacy "bang journalism" is a team effort and the "Bang style approach" has many advantages for media houses:

- It enables journalists to compare notes/facts/data, thus minimizing chances of reporting errors;
- Journalists can discuss news among themselves and how to present them before dissemination and thus ensure that the information disseminated achieves the desired positive impact;
- It enables the journalists to listen to the common people and therefore make them part of the news;
- Journalists can assess the situation and produce more analytical stories.

The adoption of this and other strategies enables TAMWA to reach the largest possible audience. For example, in 2003, using this careful

planning, TAMWA's press releases achieved more than 1,000 print and broadcast news items. Most of these releases were covered by five to eight newspapers. And as TAMWA has gained greater public support, the number of news channels taking TAMWA's releases has grown steadily.

(4) Getting women into positions of civic leadership

One of the major objectives of TAMWA is to get more women into important decision making positions in the country. TAMWA is encouraged by the success of African women in being recognized for their civic leadership, for example, becoming the recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize award. The primary objective is to encourage more competent women to be involved in politics and to become members of parliament.

In preparation for the 2005 elections in Tanzania (data is not yet available for preparations for the 2010 elections), TAMWA organized four different workshops for 80 journalists in different parts of the country to sensitize them on the importance of better coverage and more positive coverage of women candidates. Training for more than 150 women aspirants for political office in workshops between 2003-2005 focused on the following aspects of use of the media:

- How to prepare and disseminate information through press releases.
- How to prepare and give press conferences.
- How to handle interviews.
- How to get into the news, become sources of news and get the attention of media houses.
- How to present oneself so as to get positive coverage in the media.
- How to use the various media channels – TV, radio and print – to get the maximum coverage.

In addition, TAMWA distributed 60,000 posters promoting the accomplishments of women in public life and promoting the idea of women as protagonists of good governance in Tanzania. To ensure

positive visibility in the media, TAMWA organized 13 press releases and dozens of profile features on women candidates. This managed to get 20 headline stories in major newspapers in Tanzania.

The results were that 152 women contested for parliamentary seats and 17 won in contested elections. This combined with the number of women who obtained special seats and appointments by the President brought the total number of women in the Tanzanian parliament to 97 out of 324, approximately 30%, including the position of Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. The number of women ministers increased from 17% in 2000 to 20% in 2005, including the key posts of Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

(5) TAMWA'S advocacy campaigns in areas of major social problems and human rights

A major focus of TAMWA's activities are its advocacy campaigns which combine a targeted improvement of women's condition (or other social problem). Essential strategies are heavy use of the media, building coalitions with other advocacy groups, posters, use of the TAMWA's magazine *Sauti ya siti* (Voice of Women), putting pressure on government and other public agencies for action, and, in some cases, mounting a campaign for legislative action. Especially important is the cooperation of the Tanzanian Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) and Women Legal Aid Centre. In every one of these campaigns there is a special emphasis on the inefficiency and corruption in the public services.

One of the most typical of these advocacy campaigns was TAMWA's drive against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) from 2003 to 2007. The campaign began with the formation of a coalition involving a dozen major organizations and the backing of the major political leaders. The campaign reached all major regions of Tanzania. The campaign managed to get 685 published newspaper articles in all major newspapers. On radio, testimonies of mutilators who put down their tools were broadcast. An information kit was prepared and 14,725 sets distributed to journalists, media houses, and other allies in the campaign (Nkya, 2008, p. 140). More than 5,000 posters and some 20,000 copies of *Sauti ya siti* were distributed, reaching down to the level of rural villages. A signature campaign involving national leaders was carried out. All major religious groups backed the campaign publicly, especially the Catholic Bishops and the national Muslim

Council together with the Council of Muslim Scholars. The successes of the campaign were then publicized in the press and especially on regional radio stations. Another campaign was aimed at profiteering in the medical profession, private clinics, sales of pharmaceuticals especially in the cases of children and expecting mothers. Again, the campaign was launched with widespread newspaper coverage but especially through radio. The campaign was carried out with strong support by the Ministry of Health.

A major campaign using all of the usual publicity methods was carried out against violence toward women, especially sexual violence, which often resulted in HIV/AIDS infections. TAMWA maintains crisis centres in Dar es Salaam and other major cities. The campaign focused especially on training for the police and other security officials. Similar sorts of campaigns focused on the dilapidated conditions of primary schools, especially the lack of sanitary facilities in primary schools. A special focus has been on children's rights, especially child labor and sexual exploitation of children, and child marriage. TAMWA has also joined in with the campaign to protect Albinos and the campaign against HIV/AIDS.

(6) Campaigns for improved legislation concerning women

TAMWA's advocacy programs have led directly to campaigns for legislative reform to remove laws that are openly discriminating against women. Much of the legislation which violates the rights of women comes out of customs and customary law which are part of the traditional culture. To get these changes requires an enormous change of cultural values and change of social roles which have given older men arbitrary power over women, youth and children. Bringing about these changes has implied not only a media campaign but a cultural campaign that can be brought about only through coalitions with institutions which have influence over Tanzanian values.

One of the best examples of TAMWA's capacity for mobilization of support was the campaign for legislation to protect women against gender-based violence, especially sexual violence (Nkya, 2008, pp 69-77). Beyond the usual education of the public regarding the gravity of the issue through the media, TAMWA had to put enormous educational and social pressure on the members of parliament to introduce and approve the legislation. An example of this was the symposium for members of parliament involving major political, civic and religious leaders of all major religious groups, but also plays,

poems, posters and songs. The biggest impact came from the testimonies of women who suffered horrific sexual violence without any defense and without any legal protection. Hundreds of civil rights activists camped around the parliament in a demonstration. All this had its impact, and the legislation was passed unanimously by parliament in 1998. The coalition with the Women Lawyers Association was of crucial importance in drafting the law. The success of the campaign was demonstrated in the heavy sentences against perpetrators of rape, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women and a drop in the incidences of this kind of violence. After the passage of the legislation, TAMWA produced a booklet, posters, seminars, statements and other forms of publicizing the gravity of the violence against women and the legal penalties that could be applied.

TAMWA also was successful in getting the Law of Spinsters, Widows and Divorcees in Zanzibar changed so that a girl found guilty of becoming pregnant outside of wedlock would not be expelled from a school and imprisoned for two years (Nkya, 2008, pp. 122-125). The TAMWA investigation discovered that 47 cases of violation of the law had been filed in various courts in the isles between 2000 and 2003 and that most of those convicted were the women. Getting changed in 2004 this punishment against the poor girls, often forced into the relationship by men, required a publicity campaign, cooperation of the Women Lawyers Association and other civic organizations. TAMWA was able to get support from various international organizations in this case.

Following this campaign, TAMWA was able to get changed the Law of Marriage Act which permits child marriages in contravention of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Nkya, 2008 pp 125-132). TAMWA also battled against cultural practices such as forced marriages, polygamous marriages, wife inheritance, wife cleansing and marital rape. This was coupled with a campaign against the perpetrators making young girls pregnant and a campaign against bride price which some parents and guardians used to amass wealth.

TAMWA also promoted a campaign in 2002 against forced child labor in support of the ILO convention which attempted to prevent forced child labor in domestic work, in mines and in sex work (Nkya, 2008, pp 107-108). Again this campaign involved numerous press releases, press conferences, workshops involving journalists, song writers, and seminars for journalism students

(7) TAMWA's networking and coalition building

TAMWA is strongly convinced that the only way the majority of the objectives can be achieved is by coalition building, especially coalitions with other media organizations, women's organizations and civil rights groups (Mzuri Issa, 2008). A profile of the coalitions that TAMWA is involved with reveals that women's groups are often the backbone of the civil society not only in Tanzania but throughout Africa. Since TAMWA is so well connected with the media, TAMWA becomes the media link of all of these coalition members. TAMWA's networking and coalition with other advocacy groups includes the following:

- TAMWA is a founder member of Feminist Activist Coalition, which involves a number of women's and human rights groups providing media campaign support, policy formulation and political representation in connection with human rights violations, issues of bad governance and bad public services in areas of health, education and public security.
- Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP).
- Tanzania Law Society and Legal and Human Rights Centres
- National Anti-FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) coalition involving more than ten regional and national organizations.
- National Coalition on Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights. One of the main issues is stopping the forced marriage of girl children.

In the area of media advocacy, TAMWA is part of the coalition involving:

- The Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT)
- The Media Council of Tanzania
- The Media Institute of South Africa
- Journalists associations of Tanzania and Press Clubs of Tanzania

At the level of African regional media, women and human rights organizations, TAMWA is active in the following:

- Southern African Human Rights Network.
- The Eastern African sub-regional support initiative for the advancement of women.
- The African Women Development and Communication Network (FEMNET).
- The Eastern African Media Women's Associations involving groups in Ethiopia (EMWA), Uganda (UMWA), Kenya (AMWIK), and Zambia (ZAMWA).

Some of the successes that TAMWA leaders have had are the increase of government budget for maternal health services especially in rural health centres, the improvement of wages for women especially for domestic workers and those working in hotels and restaurants, the struggle against sex workers trafficking, the prevention of water privatization measures, the campaign against gender-based violence, the building of a network to prevent rural food shortages.

How successful has TAMWA been?

Clearly one of the great successes of TAMWA has been the visibility and power of the numerous media advocacy campaigns evidenced by the sheer number of articles published in newspapers and other publications as well as radio and television broadcasts. Some of these carry the name of TAMWA, but in many instances TAMWA is behind newspaper articles that are simply revelations of human rights violations or revelations of the wretched state of public services in hospitals or schools. Many civil society movements and organizations in Tanzania have run into intense opposition from powerful political and economic interests and have been virtually killed (Mongula, 2008). TAMWA, however, through its coalitions and careful rooting in human rights logic, has been able to grow from strength to strength.

The advocacy vision of TAMWA, in coalition with many other groups, has given to the media in Tanzania a moral vision that one does not often find in the media in other countries of Africa. Too often the major newspapers in countries such as Kenya have been taken hostage by the political, economic and ethnic interest that has made them tools of political-economic infighting (Ugangu, 2011). Many of the leading editors in the press and broadcasting in Tanzania who were initially skeptical about the aggressiveness of a group of women have come to

recognize that they are now in the forefront of opinion leadership in the country. Many of the best editors who are trying to contend with an aging, corrupt, inefficient political leadership in Tanzania now realize that TAMWA is one of their strongest, most united and journalistically clever allies. One of the major problems in most African countries is the lack of national unity and the ability to think as a nation. Tanzania has a stronger basis of national unity, but the focus of TAMWA on building coalitions among religious groups (Catholics, Protestants and Muslims), among regional interests, among contending sectors of the civil society and even among leading politicians fighting among themselves has reinforced a united national consciousness. One of the best evidences of this coalition-building tendency is the good representation in the leadership of TAMWA of all major religio-cultural groups, different regional representation and other potentially divisive interests. TAMWA has been important for getting the nation to focus on its basic human rights and other national issues rather than make infighting among regions or ethnic groups an issue.

Much of the success of TAMWA derives from offering to its most active members and its potential leadership educational opportunities, especially opportunities for contacts internationally and throughout Africa. This variety of experiences, and the sharing of experiences in its leadership, has given to TAMWA a powerful vision, an eloquence and agility which is not found in all the civil society organizations of the nation. More than other civil society groups, TAMWA has benefitted from its international linkages and its close linkages with other regions and countries of Africa. Not least of the benefit of these linkages is the funding which TAMWA has received to carry out its activities.

Some of the limitations of TAMWA

One of the major limitations of TAMWA is that the association is not successful in recruiting more women working in the media (Lweno, 2008, p. 208). For example, in Mwananchi Communications Ltd, one of the largest media houses in Tanzania, of the 17 women working there only 2 were members of TAMWA. The same limitation in recruitment is evident in other major media houses in Tanzania (Imane Duwe, 2010, p. 89).

Some of the younger members of the organization felt that while the older founding members benefitted from scholarships and exchange opportunities, these opportunities were not being made available to younger members. Some say that TAMWA suffers the

same problem that many civil society organizations in Africa have: the older members in leadership positions tend to form a kind of friendship clique that does not easily welcome younger members into their organization.

TAMWA needs to make more efforts to draw younger women, especially those coming out of the new degree programs in universities. The organization tends to be dominated by an older founding generation which interacts among themselves. Without doubt, TAMWA has the image of a militant, aggressive organization. This has stirred up opposition and even fear in newsrooms. Some young women are afraid of joining TAMWA because of fear that association with TAMWA may block their chances for advancement in the media houses (Maro, 2008, pp. 182-183).

Some respondents in the survey questioned the effectiveness of the training programs in terms of having an impact within media organizations. Many members moved out of the media after they have received the training, in part, because of the opposition to women in higher positions. As they demonstrated their leadership capacities, they have been drawn into advocacy organizations, political offices, academic teaching positions and other important positions. However, the movement of TAMWA's members into a position of civic leadership is a natural and positive result in that it gives women greater influence not only for the benefit of women but as advocates of many other civil rights and minority issues.

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