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Introduction

Why We Do Gender in Media Studies

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In putting together this special issue of *African Media Review,* I was compelled to do a little soul searching when I was asked why a special issue on gender and media was needed. The basis of the question was that the subject had been tackled in several books and journals and was hardly deserving of scholarly attention at the moment. My response was simple. The subject of gender in media has not been interrogated enough in Africa. Indeed, given the phenomenal changes taking place in gender relations, transformations in the media landscape resulting from re-democratisation and the spread of new information and communication technologies, gender has become an even more important unit of analysis in media scholarship than ever before. The relationship between media and gender is complex, paradoxical and constantly in flux, perhaps the reason why we must continually interrogate it.

We are two years shy of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the first World Conference on Women, organized by the United Nations in Mexico City in 1975, where the media was first mentioned as a tool that should be used in the pursuit of women's equality. It was not until the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing 20 years later, however, that the media became one of 12 critical areas of concern. Section J of the Beijing Platform for action noted the influence that communication and the media have on public policy as well as on private attitudes and behaviour, and called for improvements in media content as well as access for women (UN1995). Since Beijing, media and gender academics have intensified their interest in the media's complicity in our 'gendered lives' (Wood 1994). This has resulted in a corpus of insightful scholarly articles addressing questions of representational practices, production, careers, access and participation in the media in Africa.

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Beijing came at an opportune time when much of the continent was undergoing political and economic transformation. Many countries were not only adopting neo-liberal economic policies, but also constitutions and laws that protected and promoted both media and gender rights. Millions of African women and men now have better access to a plethora of traditional media and, to a lesser extent, Internet and social media.

Such developments provide plenty of stimulation for research, advocacy and action on both outstanding and new issues, part of the reason why CODESRIA's 2011 edition of its annual Gender Symposium was on "Gender and Media in Africa". Held in Cairo, Egypt, the idea was to renew reflection and interrogation on the media, using the gender paradigm. For this reason, the symposium put a series of questions on the table for discussion by participants who were mostly drawn from the academia and the four sub-regions of Africa – North, South, East and West.

Of concern was whether and how the media could go beyond reproducing stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity to deconstruct and disrupt gender power relations, and also to build the civic capacities of women. Also explored were questions relating to new media – the Web, the blogosphere, and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, etc. – and their ability to provide access and new spaces for women to express themselves. In light of how quickly media has proliferated on the continent in the last two decades, the symposium sought to discover the effect of media pluralism as well as and also the commodification of information on gender inequalities, and to query gender disparity in the media, especially at the level of decision-making.

The articles contained in this special issue build on the conversations initiated at the Cairo Symposium and try to make sense of the shifts and transformations in media and gender relations in Africa. Some bring new perspectives to bear on how traditional media (newspapers, magazines, radio and television) continue to be implicated in questions of gender, while others address new questions raised by new media forms and formats. Four articles (three in French and one in English) tackle the impact of ICTs and social media from different theoretical perspectives, locations and experiences (see Palmieri, Kane, Rouamba and Mbure). Three other articles examine the representational practices of newspapers and magazines in political and social discourses relating to gender (see Anate, Ossome and Eshiet). The contribution by Chiweshe and Bhatasara reflects on popular culture, specifically the construction of gender in music, while that of Yeboah and Thompson examine on the

outstanding qualities that enable three women to rise to decision-making positions in the public relations, advertising and broadcast industries in Ghana.

Collectively, these contributions provide us with sound empirical arguments, suggesting that while there have been some changes in the construction and manifestation of genderin the African media, questions persist on fundamentals such as definitions and values, representations and portrayals, access and exclusionas well as power and control.

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Introduction

Pourquoi le genre dans les études sur les médias

Audrey Gadzekpo*

En préparant ce numéro spécial de la *Revue Africaine des Médias*, j'ai été contrainte de faire un petit examen de conscience quand on m'a demandé pourquoi un numéro spécial sur genre et médias était nécessaire. Le fondement de la question était que le sujet avait été traité dans plusieurs livres et revues, et ne méritait guère l'attention des chercheurs en ce moment. Ma réponse fut simple. Le sujet du genre dans les médias n'a pas été suffisamment examiné en Afrique. En effet, compte tenu des changements phénoménaux qui surviennent dans les relations de genre, des transformations dans le paysage médiatique résultant de la re-démocratisation et de l'expansion des nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, le genre est devenu une unité d'analyse encore plus importante que jamais dans la recherche sur les médias. La relation entre les médias et le genre est complexe, paradoxale et en constante évolution, et c'est peut-être la raison pour laquelle nous devons l'examiner continuellement.

Nous sommes à deux ans de la célébrataion du 40e anniversaire de la première Conférence mondiale sur les femmes organisée par les Nations Unies à Mexico en 1975, au cours de la quelle les médias ont été mentionnés pour la première fois comme un outil qu'il faut utiliser dans la recherche de l'égalité des femmes. Cependant, il a fallu attendre la Quatrième Conférence mondiale sur les femmes qui s'est déroulée à Beijing 20 ans plus tard, pour que les médias deviennent l'un des 12 domaines majeurs de préoccupation. La Section J de la Plate-forme d'action de Beijing a relevé l'influence qu'ont la communication et les médias sur la politique publique ainsi que sur les attitudes et comportements privés, et a appelé à des

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améliorations du contenu des médias et de l'accès des femmes (UN 1995). Depuis Beijing, les théoriciens des médias et du genre se sont intéressés davantage à la complicité des médias dans nos « vies genrées » (Wood 1994). Il en a résulté un corpus d'articles savants perspicaces, traitant des questions de pratiques représentationnelles, de production, de carrières, d'accès et de participation aux médias en Afrique.

Beijing est arrivé en temps opportun, au moment où la majeur partie du continent subissait des transformations politiques et économiques. De nombreux pays adoptaient non seulement des politiques économiques néolibérales mais aussi des constitutions et des lois qui protégeaient et promouvaient les droits relatifs aux médias et à l'égalité des genres. Des millions d'africaines et d'africains ont à présent un meilleur accès à une pléthore de médias traditionnels et, dans une moindre mesure, à Internet et aux médias sociaux.

De tels développements sont très stimulants pour la recherche, le plaidoyer et l'action sur des questions en suspens ou nouvelles, ce qui explique en partie pourquoi l'édition 2011 du Symposium annuel sur le Genre du CODESRIA, qui s'est tenue au Caire, en Égypte, portait sur Genre et médias en Afrique. L'idée était de relancer la réflexion et l'interrogation sur les médias, en utilisant le paradigme genre. Pour cette raison, le symposium a mis sur la table une série de questions pour discussion par les participants, venus pour la plupart du milieu universitaire et des quatre sous-régions de l'Afrique – Nord, Sud, Est et Ouest.

L'on a cherché à savoir si et comment les médias pouvaient aller au-delà de la reproduction d'images stéréotypées de masculinité et de féminité, pour déconstruire et bouleverser les relations de pouvoir entre les sexes, et aussi pour renforcer les capacités civiques des femmes. Ont été également explorées des questions relatives aux nouveaux médias – le Web, la blogosphère et les réseaux sociaux comme Facebook, Twitter, etc. – et leur capacité à fournir aux femmes l'accès et de nouveaux espaces pour s'exprimer. À la lumière de la rapidité avec laquelle les médias ont proliféré sur le continent au cours des deux dernières décennies, le symposium a cherché à découvrir l'effet du pluralisme des médias et aussi de la marchandisation des informations sur les inégalités entre les sexes, et à s'interroger sur les inégalités des sexes dans les médias, en particulier au niveau de la prise de décisions.

Les articles contenus dans ce numéro spécial s'appuient sur les conversations entamées au Symposium du Caire et cherchent à donner un sens aux évolutions et aux transformations notées dans les relations entre

médias et genre en Afrique. Certains apportent de nouveaux éclairages sur la façon dont les médias traditionnels (journaux, magazines, radio et télévision) continuent d'être impliqués dans les questions de genre, tandis que d'autres traitent de nouvelles questions posées par les nouvelles formes et nouveaux formats de médias. Quatre articles (trois en français et un en anglais) abordent l'impact des TIC et des médias sociaux à partir de différentes perspectives théoriques, localisations et expériences (voir Palmieri, Kane, Rouamba et Mbure). Trois autres articles examinent les pratiques représentationnelles des journaux et magazines dans les discours politiques et sociaux sur le genre (voir Anate, Ossome et Eshiet). La contribution de Chiweshe et Bhatasara réfléchit sur la culture populaire, et plus spécifiquement, la construction du genre dans la musique, tandis que celle de Yeboah et Thompson présente les qualités qui ont avantagé trois femmes pour qu'elles accèdent à des postes décisionnels dans les relations publiques et les industries de la publicité et de la diffusion au Ghana.

Collectivement, ces contributions nous offrent de solides arguments empiriques qui laissent supposer que s'il y a eu quelques changements dans la construction et la manifestation du genre dans les médias en Afrique, des questions subsistent sur les fondamentaux tels que les définitions et les valeurs, les représentations et les portraits, l'accès et l'exclusion, ainsi que le pouvoir et le contrôle.

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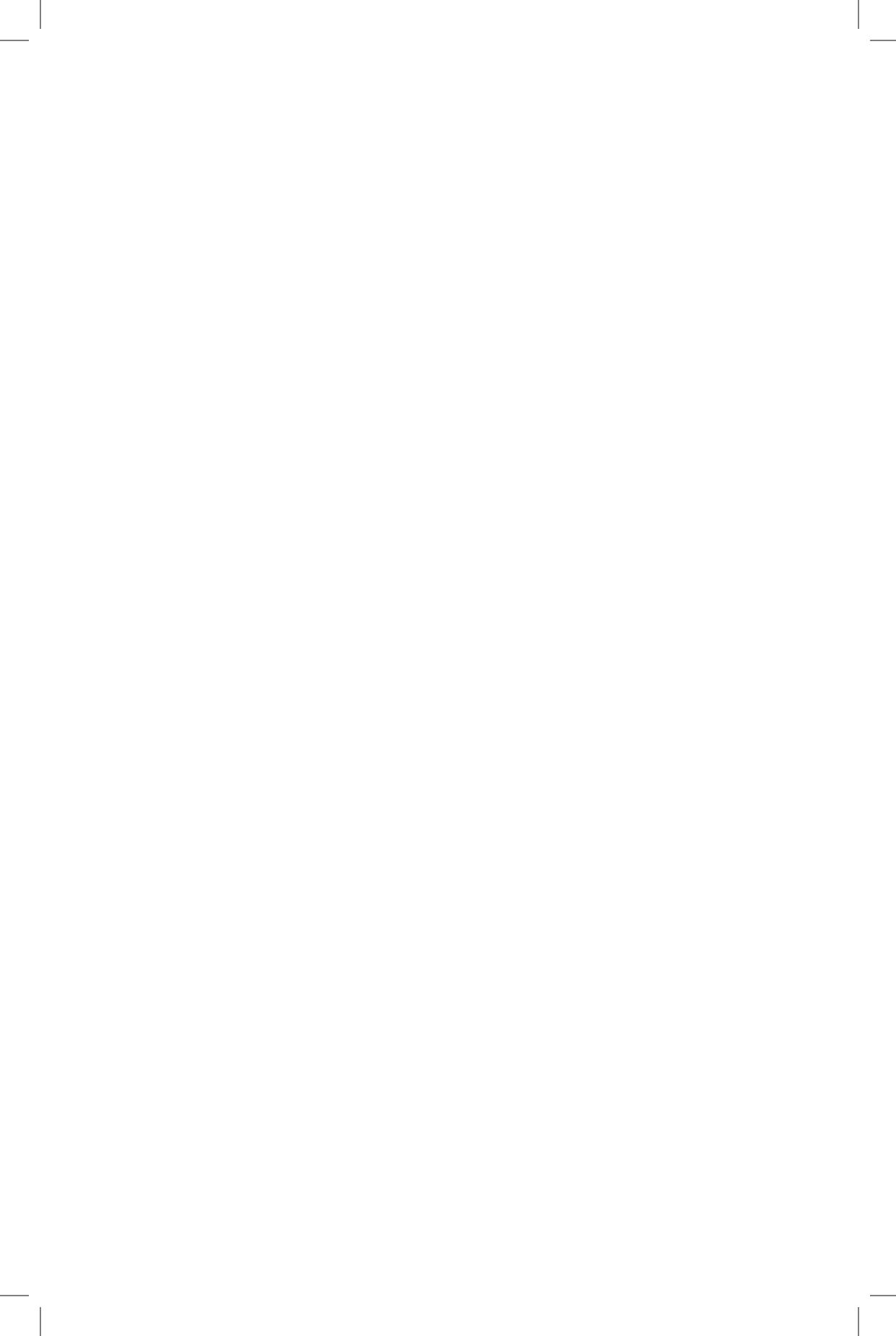
TIC et genre : domination ou innovation ?

Joëlle Palmieri*

Résumé

Les TIC, et aujourd'hui le Web 2.0, forment une large famille d'outils, équipements, logiciels et infrastructures, qui permettent les production, transport, archivage, publication et récupération de tout type de données. Elles ne sont pas simplement des médias où les stéréotypes classiques de genre se reproduisent et où les répartitions des rôles dans la décision relative à l'information sont inégalitaires en termes de genre. Ces technologies servent la société de l'information, à la fois productrice et produit d'une mondialisation où les rapports de domination et d'oppression sont exacerbés et les divisions de genre, de classe, de race, et générationnels renforcées. Dans ce contexte, les organisations de femmes ou féministes en Afrique vivent un paradoxe. D'un côté, elles utilisent l'Internet et le Web 2.0 comme un ensemble d'outils marketing au service de leur visibilité et parfois en réponse à la demande des bailleurs, tout en se retrouvant confrontées à une priorisation croissante, dans l'immédiateté, de la gestion de la vie quotidienne. De l'autre, elles inventent des modes de prise en main politique de l'information à des fins de transformation sociale en Afrique. Des pistes innovantes de détournement des TIC à des fins citoyennes ou féministes peuvent ainsi être identifiées.

Mots clés : genre, TIC, Internet, Web 2.0, Afrique, mondialisation, domination, média, savoir, innovation

Abstract

ICTs, and today's Web 2.0, form a large family of tools, equipment, software and infrastructure that make possible the production, transport, archiving, publication and retrieval of all types of data. They are not just media in which the classic gender stereotypes are reproduced and in which the distribution of roles in decision-making relating to information are unequal in terms of gender. These technologies serve the information

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society that is both a producer and a product of globalisation in which the relations of domination and oppression are exacerbated and the divisions based on gender, class, race and generation are strengthened. In this context, women's or feminist organisations in Africa are living a paradox. On the one hand, they use the Internet and Web 2.0 as a set of marketing tools in the service of their visibility and sometimes in response to donor request, while also facing an increasing prioritisation, in the immediate term, of the management of everyday life. On the other hand, they invent modes of political handling of information for social transformation in Africa. Thus, innovative ways to misuse ICTs for citizen or feminist purposes can be identified.

Key Words : gender, ICTs, Internet, Web 2.0, Africa, globalisation, domination, media, knowledge, innovation

Introduction

Dans un contexte de mondialisation croissante, l'usage courant et récurrent des technologies de l'information et de la communication, les TIC, aujourd'hui du Web 2.0, c'est-à-dire les réseaux sociaux numériques, blogs, flux RSS, chat, forums…, est présenté par la majorité des acteurs politiques nationaux ou internationaux et par les médias d'information comme le nouveau, l'incontournable, voire l'unique moyen de communication politique des populations, notamment d'Afrique.

Cette contribution propose de démontrer que les TIC forment un ensemble d'outils qui ne sont pas simplement des médias où les stéréotypes classiques de genre se reproduisent (Gallagher 1995) et où les répartitions des rôles dans la décision relative à l'information sont inégalitaires en termes de genre. Les TIC alimentent le paradoxe de la société de l'information qu'elles portent. Cette société, que nous qualifions de société numérique, est le résultat d'une mondialisation où se croisent hypermodernité – tout est exacerbé, poussé à l'excès, à l'outrance, à la surenchère – et nouvelle colonialité du pouvoir, à savoir l'ensemble des rapports de domination et d'oppression qui régissent les relations entre Etats et Etats et populations (Quijano 1994). Elle forme système et incarne les nouvelles modalités de divisions de genre, de classe, de race, générationnels.

Ce cadre posé, nous analysons en quoi la société de l'information offre des opportunités nouvelles, sources d'éventuelles richesses de genre, tout en rendant invisibles une série de savoirs collectifs et personnels, acquis dans la gestion du quotidien, de l'immédiateté, des conflits, des combats politiques par une majorité de femmes, socialement dédiées à cette gestion et se servant peu des TIC pour agir.

Ce constat interroge le contexte où les usages de TIC sont susceptibles de se produire, pourquoi et comment. La question essentielle est de définir ce qu'apporte ou empêche le fait d'être connecté pour les femmes africaines et leurs organisations. L'empêchement s'analyse entre autres à la lumière de la demande pressante et non financée par les bailleurs de fonds ou les institutions que les organisations de femmes aient un site Web institutionnel comme gage de crédibilité. L'apport peut en partie se mesurer à la visibilité, à la possibilité de diffuser des contenus, à travailler en réseau, à débattre, à échanger sur des pratiques, réflexions, personnelles ou collectives, dans une informalité assumée. Des exemples seront explicités en ce sens.

Cet article est le résultat d'une étude de la problématique « Genre et TIC » menée depuis un peu plus de dix ans au sein d'organisations féministes ou de femmes, notamment en Iran, en Europe de l'Est, de l'Ouest ou centrale et en Afrique, ou, plus globalement, à l'échelle internationale, au sein de réseaux militants ou d'organisations internationales s'intéressant aux domaines genre et développement ou au féminisme et à la communication. Plus récemment, c'est la réalité des impacts politiques des usages de l'Internet par des organisations de femmes ou féministes au Sénégal et en Afrique du Sud sur deux formes de domination respectivement identifiées comme masculine et colonialitaire, c'est-à-dire se rapportant à la colonialité du pouvoir, qui s'est avérée plus pertinente. Les conclusions développées ici émanent d'observations participantes réalisées en 2004 dans la province du Cap occidental en Afrique du Sud auprès de deux organisations de femmes et entre 2006 et 2008 à Dakar au Sénégal et à Ségou au Mali auprès de trois associations locales de jeunes. Elles découlent également d'entretiens menés en décembre 2008 et en janvier 2009 au Cap en Afrique du Sud et à Dakar au Sénégal auprès de 28 organisations de femmes ou féministes, d'instituts de recherche travaillant sur le genre, ayant accès à l'Internet, ayant ou non des supports d'information Internet, et d'organisations centrées sur la création numérique, le soutien aux droits des paysans ou à la trithérapie, mais ne travaillant pas dans une perspective de genre. Ces entretiens ont été complétés par une recherche documentaire fournie selon trois grands axes : la domination masculine, la société de l'information, la colonialité du pouvoir. L'enquête est le résultat du croisement de cette recherche documentaire, des observations participantes et de ces entretiens. Elle nourrit les analyses développées dans cet article.

Le Web 2.0 : des médias pas comme les autres

Nous émettons l'hypothèse que loin d'être simplement des médias d'information, les TIC, et en particulier l'Internet, et aujourd'hui le Web 2.0, servent des systèmes mondiaux d'informatisation aussi bien que de circulation d'informations de tout type. Cette proposition nous demande de produire une définition adaptée de ce qu'est un média d'information ou ce que sont des médias et en quoi elle s'applique ou non au Web 2.0. Les références aux sciences de la communication et de l'information nous mènent vers la définition retenue par Rémy Rieffel : « Toutes les techniques et tous les supports permettant aux hommes de communiquer entre eux, de transmettre des messages aux contenus les plus variés » (Rieffel 2005:4-5). Cette citation nous permet dans un premier temps d'interroger les points de vue et places différenciés des émetteurs des messages et de leurs récepteurs. Avec l'Internet, les premiers peuvent mieux cibler qu'avec les médias traditionnels (presse écrite, radio, télévision) les publics qu'ils visent, en adaptant les outils de l'Internet à ce qu'ils attendent de ceux à qui ils s'adressent. Par exemple, l'entreprise Facebook a créé un système d'échanges d'informations de tout type et tout médium (texte, audio, vidéo, photo) qui s'adresse plus précisément à des jeunes et tient compte de leurs habitudes comportementales et attend en retour des résultats quantitatifs d'utilisation du réseau numérique qui lui permettent notamment de vendre des services publicitaires ou de voir sa cote boursière augmenter. Les récepteurs, quant à eux, tout en ayant vécu une phase récente de « dénonciation des journalistes aux ordres », demeurent globalement des consommateurs (Benasayag & Aubenas 1999 : 14). Nous pouvons alors nous interroger sur l'interaction entre émetteur et récepteur que l'Internet privilégierait.

Dans un deuxième temps, la définition proposée nous impose de clarifier les termes messages, contenus et informations. L'Internet n'a pas pour objet de transmettre des informations, au sens messages ayant sens, même si cela se produit, mais des données, sous toutes leurs formes, du moment qu'elles sont informatisées. L'Internet est « plus hétérogène » (Guignard 2009) et moins linéaire (multimédia et hypertexte) que les médias d'information traditionnels. Le réseau numérique ne se restreint pas au secteur médiatique, fait davantage partie du secteur de la communication, plus large, aux ramifications variées : journaux en ligne, marché pornographique, marché boursier, gestion de bases de données numériques en ligne sous forme d'albums photos, de morceaux de musique, de données personnelles… En cela nous considérons que ce n'est pas uniquement un média. Le seul terme « information » est impropre à l'Internet. Il convient de lui associer le terme informatisation, une technique.

Information, technique : quels impacts de genre ?

La société numérique alimente un flou autour du mot information. Alors que les TIC recouvrent essentiellement des technicités et une économie de ces technicités et technologies, les protagonistes des politiques de TIC, en charge de la régulation des marchés et politiques relatives à ces technologies et à leurs usages, proposent une rhétorique de l'information ou de la connaissance. Nous émettons l'hypothèse qu'en termes de genre, ce flou entretient une confusion, elle-même alimentée notamment par les organisations de femmes ou féministes. Ces organisations méconnaissent dans leur ensemble la société de l'information, représentée comme « trop technique », sous-entendu réservée aux hommes qui savent. Pour autant, elles en ventent les mérites en termes de potentielle visibilité de leurs actions publiques. Cette impression est confirmée en Afrique et en particulier en Afrique du Sud et au Sénégal. Ce flou sémantique génère une première contradiction entre gestion des problèmes techniques et compétences requises afin de résoudre ces problèmes et besoin de diffuser des informations sur les actions ou les prises de position des organisations de femmes ou féministes.

Par son mode excessif, immédiat, la société numérique provoque des crises, autant financières, qu'économiques, démographiques, politiques et sociales. Elle aiguise les terrains où s'aggravent les écarts de richesse, se renforcent les situations de pauvreté, se rétrécit le marché du travail, se créent de nouveaux facteurs de violence. De surcroît, elle précipite la gestion de l'ensemble de ces problèmes tant au niveau temporel que géographique. Les problèmes se résolvent au coup par coup là où ils se présentent, c'est-à-dire le plus souvent au niveau local et dans l'immédiateté. Cette accélération installe un recentrage des actions politiques, qu'elles soient gouvernementales ou des populations, vers le niveau local plutôt qu'international, alors que les TIC qui portent cette société permettent par définition des échanges à l'échelle mondiale. Il existe donc ici une deuxième contradiction créée par cette société : le rapport distendu entre le local et le global.

L'ensemble des conséquences évoquées de l'accélération générée par la société numérique repousse également davantage les limites des actions des organisations et mouvements de femmes, formels et informels. En effet, compte tenu du rôle social qui est implicitement alloué aux femmes, à savoir le maintien de la paix sociale (qui inclut la gestion des violences exacerbées par ce système accéléré), les soins, l'éducation, la nutrition des ménages, l'ordre du jour des organisations se gère à la demande, selon la quantité et la fréquence des problèmes rencontrés par les femmes auxquelles ces

organisations s'adressent. L'heure est davantage à la défensive instantanée qu'à l'offensive. En particulier en Afrique, la mondialisation et ses dégâts économiques collatéraux imposent aux femmes et à leurs organisations la prise en charge de la gestion de la survie quotidienne. La société de l'information vient ajouter le caractère immédiat de cette prise en charge et son rythme plus accéléré qu'auparavant.

> Nous avons des difficultés d'accès aux ordinateurs, aux compétences, à l'électricité, au réseau sans fil, toutes ces choses techniques que le gouvernement a essayé d'implanter sous forme de centres de télécommunication en zones rurales, mais qui n'ont pas marché. Concernant les femmes, c'est bien pire car, dans les zones rurales, dans la plupart de nos townships, ce sont les jeunes femmes qui rentrent à la maison après l'école et qui doivent s'occuper de leurs frères et sœurs, nettoyer la maison, faire la cuisine, faire attention aux enfants, au point qu'elles n'ont pas de temps supplémentaire pour apprendre à utiliser un ordinateur. (Mercia Andrews, TCOE, Afrique du Sud).

Aussi, ayant moins le temps et l'espace de se consacrer à l'analyse et aux luttes contre les inégalités sociales et de genre qu'elles rencontrent tous les jours, ces organisations de femmes sont-elles amenées à gérer ces inégalités au plus vite, dans l'immédiateté plutôt qu'à pouvoir y réfléchir à long terme, selon une stratégie concertée. Ainsi, d'un point de vue épistémique, cette société tend à éloigner contre ou de leur gré certaines organisations de femmes ou féministes des savoirs qu'elles créent, du donner à penser qu'elles produisent, de la critique, de la déconstruction de la société dans laquelle elles agissent (Bennett 2008). La société numérique crée la violence épistémique (Spivak 1988). Elle alimente et perpétue les piliers d'une nouvelle colonialité du pouvoir, basée sur l'aggravation des rapports de domination (de classe, de race, de genre, générationnels) et de leurs croisements. Cette situation génère une troisième contradiction qui consiste à concilier la gestion dans l'immédiateté/urgence politique du contexte mondialisé dans laquelle cette société pousse les organisations de femmes ou féministes et revendications ou objets de mobilisation desdites organisations qui, dans le cas de l'Afrique, s'orientent principalement, de façon explicite ou implicite, vers la critique du libéralisme : lutte contre la pauvreté, demande d'annulation de la dette, lutte contre la privatisation des services publics…

Ajoutés à la première contradiction endogène de la société numérique qui consiste à faire cohabiter technique, information/communication et connaissance, ces deux autres contradictions (local/international et

mondialisation libérale/immédiateté) forment un triangle. La mise en exergue de ce triangle apporte un décryptage précis des rapports de domination dans les politiques de TIC et des effets politiques des usages des TIC par les organisations de femmes ou féministes sur ces rapports de domination.

Panorama des usages majoritaires des organisations de femmes africaines

Les organisations de femmes ou féministes interrogées dans le cadre de notre enquête au Sénégal et en Afrique du Sud se représentent globalement l'information et la communication comme des objets secondaires comparativement à leurs luttes principales : les violences, l'accès aux ressources, la santé, la participation aux prises de décision… Cette distanciation révèle en première observation une relation privilégiée à la conquête de droits ou de lois plutôt qu'au respect de libertés. Les obstacles rencontrés par lesdites organisations en termes d'information, notamment pour la mobilisation, sont nombreux et diversifiés. Ils appellent à des stratégies de contournement tout aussi multiples. Pourtant l'idée d'un support Internet dédié aux femmes rassemble la majorité des enthousiasmes, même si elle prête à discussion. Dans l'ensemble, les enjeux de la société de l'information sont peu ou mal cernés. Le terme « enjeux » lui-même fait débat. Entre opportunité de changement social et risques générés par cette société, les avis se font timides ou divergent.

La communication en elle-même n'est pas considérée comme une action prioritaire. Elle sert le plus souvent d'accompagnement aux autres actions jugées vertébrantes de l'organisation. De plus, les TIC sont considérées comme peu accessibles par les bénéficiaires des organisations et l'Internet encore moins, pour des raisons financières ou d'infrastructures. Même si cette représentation est discutable, elle induit un choix : celui d'être présente sur le réseau par l'unique intermédiaire d'un site Web au service d'une grande visibilité, jugée incontournable. L'action de communication est plus institutionnelle que politique. Au Sénégal, l'appréciation de son site Web par l'organisation se mesure davantage à la visibilité gagnée, à la différence de l'appréciation exprimée en Afrique du Sud plus en référence à son esthétique ou au moyen de créer des liens. Dans les deux pays, les réseaux sociaux numériques, forums, blogs et autres outils Internet sont peu connus, ne représentent rien de déterminant, le plus souvent par manque de connaissance adaptée. L'appropriation du Web et du Web 2.0 n'est pas le résultat d'une stratégie de communication réfléchie, concertée ou collective. Elle vise

à vendre les activités de l'organisation. Le site Web de l'organisation n'a généralement pas été créé en fonction d'objectifs, d'usages, de cibles et de messages prescrits. Nous pourrions affirmer qu'il fait désormais partie du décor organisationnel politique et n'a pas vocation à transformer socialement par la diffusion d'informations, contrairement aux objectifs des organisations. En cela il incarne davantage une vitrine à destination des bailleurs qu'un canal de diffusion d'informations sur les droits, les luttes...

La représentation de cet outil est davantage liée à une activité informatique qu'éditoriale, qui demande des aptitudes adaptées que les membres ou les permanents des organisations n'ont pas. Les contenus sont pour la plupart statiques, rendant compte des activités plus qu'appelant à réaction. Cette représentation est source d'obstacles, la majorité des organisations étant alors dépendantes de techniciens à rémunérer, en charge technique de mise en ligne desdits contenus. L'activité liée au site Web se révèle alors plus fastidieuse que source d'inspiration politique.

L'action de mobilisation autour du site Web est souvent associée à celle de propagande. Cette vision révèle une représentation globalement par le haut et à sens unique de l'activité d'information. Aussi la majorité des organisations accordent-elles peu d'importance à la quantité et à la qualité des retours de leurs lecteurs, dont il n'est pas attendu qu'ils influent sur les actions politiques desdites organisations. Par voie de conséquence, cette activité est peu capitalisée, car peu valorisée. De fait, ces sites Web s'adressant essentiellement aux bailleurs créent une division implicite entre bénéficiaires des actions de l'organisation et bénéficiaires des contenus publiés sur le Web, ce qui interroge l'exercice démocratique au sein de l'organisation.

Les sujets des contenus publiés sur les sites Web portent principalement sur les textes officiels, notamment législatifs, des travaux d'étudiants comme des mémoires ou des thèses, des recherches, des analyses des inégalités de richesse sur la vie des femmes, des violences, des droits…, des publications qui existent en version imprimée, ou les documents internes de l'organisation, comme les rapports d'activité annuels et les comptes rendus de réunions, des éléments de calendrier de rencontres locales ou des coordonnées. Des témoignages et analyses de femmes, militantes ou pas, des portraits sont très rares, avec quelques exceptions en Afrique du Sud où un travail de compilation de « récits » de femmes a débuté. Tous les contenus sont très majoritairement des textes en français pour le Sénégal et en anglais pour l'Afrique du Sud et ne prennent pas en compte les langues locales. Les contenus sont politiques au sens où ils reflètent les positions et

actions de l'organisation, mais restent en retrait par rapport à l'engagement porté par les autres activités de l'organisation. La publication telle qu'elle est pratiquée fait partie de l'action politique de l'organisation, mais s'avère statique au regard des initiatives et actions de la même organisation en termes de plaidoyer pour plus de droits, d'intervention publique en milieux urbain et rural, de création de services de proximité, etc. L'entreprise de publication n'ajoute pas à l'action politique.

Dans les deux pays, le choix des informations à diffuser est le plus souvent dicté par l'actualité institutionnelle de l'organisation et non par une politique éditoriale concertée – cette politique étant le plus souvent non conscientisée comme nécessaire – et est rarement collectif. Il est le fait d'une personne, la plupart du temps la coordinatrice de l'organisation, qui a implicitement la charge de maintenir le site Web de l'organisation. L'aspect éditorial du site Web est quasi inexistant. Deux pratiques se distinguent : les organisations qui considèrent que cette activité crée débat au sein de l'organisation et dynamise le collectif et celles qui envisagent l'activité comme simplement administrative. Cette divergence autour de l'éditorial révèle un questionnement autour du processus de publication comme outil politique.

Alors que la majorité des sites Web répondent peu à une stratégie concertée de communication, il est déconcertant de constater à quel point les organisations acceptent que leur site Web réponde aux stratégies des bailleurs. Cet engagement présente deux volets : les organisations de femmes se plient aux injonctions des bailleurs, car telles sont les conditionnalités qui leur sont imposées pour bénéficier de fonds sur projet de leurs autres activités et les bailleurs utilisent les organisations pour faire valoir tant leurs politiques de TIC que de genre, sans pour autant investir financièrement dans les moyens directs de cette propagande (les sites Web bénéficient rarement de lignes budgétaires spécifiques). Les sites Web des organisations sont alors autant de véhicules de communication non budgétisés et non pensés dans le sens d'une communication d'utilité générale pour les bénéficiaires des projets des organisations. Ils entérinent une vision institutionnelle de la communication et occultent la perspective d'autres modalités d'usages des TIC. Le coup pour les bailleurs est double comme le coût pour les organisations : en ne valorisant pas financièrement l'activité communicationnelle, par le site, les organisations de femmes perdent en efficacité politique institutionnelle et en autonomie économique. À l'inverse, les bailleurs alimentent les vecteurs de la colonialité du pouvoir tout en inscrivant le genre à leur ordre du jour institutionnel.

Ces trois volets financiers du paradoxe de la communication sur le genre – des sites Web pour la visibilité des politiques (genre et TIC) des bailleurs, la non budgétisation de l'action de communication et l'inhibition d'une économie autonome – représentent autant d'indicateurs afin de mesurer le danger auquel ces supports de communication font face.

Une communication citoyenne informelle

Malgré ce panorama pessimiste, nous pouvons attester qu'en Afrique il existe une vision holistique de la communication qui consisterait principalement à gagner en visibilité. Ce qui compte, sans que cela soit systématiquement prémédité ou que cela soit le résultat d'une intuition, est davantage de donner quelque chose à voir, simplement. Il s'agit d'être, d'exprimer son existence, au moment et là où on se trouve, dans la multiplicité et les différences, et sans objectifs spécifiques.

Les bases d'un nouveau mode de communication que l'on peut qualifier de citoyenne informelle peuvent alors se révéler, qui donne une visibilité des actions aux niveaux local et global, en ordre dispersé. Cette visibilité devient alors complètement externe aux organisations et à ses bénéficiaires. C'est en fait localement dans les villes ou ailleurs, en dehors du continent, qu'une grande proportion de personnes peut se connecter à l'Internet ou utiliser un téléphone mobile. Aussi, dans cette perspective, la communication des organisations de femmes ou féministes telle qu'elle vient d'être décrite prend-elle toute sa force dans son informalité, car elle ne s'inscrit pas dans des codes théoriques ou professionnels définis. Par exemple, nous avons pu observer en Afrique du Sud qu'en publiant des contenus anachroniques, comme des récits de vie quotidienne de femmes en milieu rural, cette communication peut libérer des espaces d'expression dont les responsables locaux peuvent prendre connaissance. Cette narration de la vie quotidienne, habituellement considérée comme des « affaires de femmes », peut alors influer sur les ordres du jour. Par le simple fait qu'elle transforme ce qui est entendu comme des « affaires de femmes » en question politique, cette informalité provoque changements social et épistémique et peut faire subversion. Elle forme les bases d'une nouvelle citoyenneté genrée ou féministe (McFadden 2005 : 1-18).

Par ailleurs, cette informalité ne s'arrête pas aux frontières de l'économie, comme elle est plus communément admise de surcroît quand il s'agit de femmes. Par ses fondements non codifiés ni régulés, non normatifs, non incontournables, non revendiqués, non institutionnalisés, cette informalité fait écho à la représentation de l'État et à ses dérégulations (Beall 2007) et sert de miroir inversé d'un système qui se veut et se

revendique hypermoderne sans pour autant avoir les moyens de faire face aux effets néfastes de cette hypermodernité. Cette informalité permet la transgression, au moment où elle se présente, car elle crée des opportunités d'entrave à la formalisation. Elle démystifie les rôles et responsabilités traditionnellement assignés de l'État et des populations. Elle renvoie l'image de ce qui est laissé à escient par l'État à la marge, à la périphérie, pour mieux alimenter ses systèmes d'inclusion et d'exclusion et asseoir son autorité (*ibid*). En se mettant à jour, cette informalité déconstruit les « frontières » de l'État et par voie de conséquence, remet en cause la consolidation de l'État. Elle rejoint alors la notion de subalternité qui crée des espaces de différence (Spivak 1988). Elle ouvre un champ d'investigation théorique et empirique à construire sur les influences croisées du virtuel et du réel sur l'action politique. Cette communication citoyenne informelle vient ouvrir un nouvel axe transversal des études postcoloniales ou subalternes et des études de genre.

Les TIC pour le genre : rendre visibles des savoirs enfouis

Dans les deux pays de notre recherche, l'innovation par les TIC s'exprime le plus souvent par le besoin de diffuser des contenus africains de femmes ou de genre. Les deux exemples que nous allons présenter se situent en Afrique de l'Ouest dans le cadre d'un projet de recherche, et en Afrique du Sud, dans le cadre d'opérations concertées de revalorisation de la parole des femmes.

Le premier exemple met en exergue l'efficacité et la pertinence de l'approche citoyenne de l'utilisation des TIC par les jeunes (garçons et filles) pour promouvoir l'abandon de la pratique des mutilations génitales féminines (MGF). Mené par l'équipe genre de l'ONG Enda Tiers-Monde, ce projet s'est déroulé de 2007 à 2009 au Mali, au Burkina Faso et au Sénégal. Les principaux résultats de recherche révèlent la pertinence d'une démarche transdisciplinaire, si possible réflexive, créant les moyens d'une expression directe et de production de contenus des jeunes générations, « comme source d'enrichissement de la recherche en développement humain durable au stade de la société numérique globale » (Mottin-Sylla et Palmieri 2009). Les jeunes (à parité garçons et filles) qui ont participé à ce projet ont abordé les concepts questionnés par la recherche – genre, citoyenneté, TIC, jeunesse, MGF –, selon différents formats, parmi lesquels l'expression théâtrale, les usages multimédia (prise de vue fixe et animée, prise de son, écriture et mise en ligne), l'interactivité – plusieurs listes de discussion électroniques ont été ouvertes pour que chacun puisse s'exprimer librement tout au cours des différentes

phases de la recherche –, des jeux de rôles, la création de blogs… Une partie des jeunes, au même niveau que les chercheur(e)s), ont participé à l'évaluation de la recherche, ce qui a amené l'équipe de recherche à mettre en œuvre des modalités d'auto-apprentissage, d'auto-évaluation, et de formation de formateurs-trices. Le défi des méthodologies utilisées a consisté à associer les jeunes générations au débat sur des concepts savants, concepts qu'ils ont eux-mêmes reconstruits.

L'ouvrage dédié à cette recherche conclut : « Il s'agit moins de voir "à quoi les TIC pourraient servir" que de voir "ce que les TIC apportent de nouveau, changent, et politisent" ». L'accent est mis sur l'importance de ne plus compartimenter les concepts – genre, citoyenneté, jeunesse, TIC, violences… – et de cesser de travailler sur les zones d'intersection (par exemple entre jeunesse et TIC, développement et TIC, genre et développement…) au risque de maintenir dans l'invisible des pans entiers de la construction sociétale dont les rapports de pouvoir, les inégalités de classe, race, genre, sont partie intégrante.

Le deuxième exemple reprend l'hypothèse selon laquelle les personnes victimes des discriminations ou en situation de discrimination sont les réelles expertes des sujets de ces discriminations. Elles ne sont en revanche pas nécessairement des expertes des TIC. Ainsi en Afrique du Sud, et depuis une dizaine d'années, des récits individuels ou collectifs de femmes, pour leur grande majorité, noires, séropositives ou pauvres, sont collectés par des organisations de femmes, selon une démarche initiale de revalorisation de la mémoire. L'objectif de ces organisations est de diffuser, notamment par les TIC, mais aussi sur tout autre support de communication[1] susceptible d'être repris sur la toile par qui le souhaite, des savoirs invisibles de femmes.

Au sein de ces organisations, deux expériences ont été observées. L'organisation *Southern Cape Land Committee* (SCLC) facilite, depuis environ dix ans, et en dehors de ses domaines d'intervention classiques largement liés aux questions de réforme agraire et de propriété foncière, l'écriture et la publication d'histoires de Sud-Africaines, sous le vocable *women's stories*. Le premier livre publié, intitulé *La mémoire des femmes*, a été lancé en novembre 1999 et révèle les histoires personnelles de six femmes de différentes communautés de la région du Cap occidental. En 2002, SCLC a réitéré la démarche en lançant un deuxième livre écrit par seize femmes dans leur propre langue, habitant la commune de Nelspoort. Ces femmes, dont les dates de naissance s'étendent du début des années 1920 aux années 1980, ont écrit leur vision de l'histoire de cette ville. Les protagonistes de SCLC que nous avons interrogées disent que cette

démarche « a révélé une dynamique de changement et d'*empowerment* à la fois pour les participantes et pour les animatrices elles-mêmes ». Par cette initiative jusqu'alors inédite, ces femmes rurales ont bénéficié du temps et de l'espace pour se poser, faire part publiquement de leur réflexion sur leurs vies et partager leurs expériences avec d'autres. Aujourd'hui, ces livres sont disponibles dans les écoles, les bibliothèques, sur le Web et ce modèle d'initiatives est reproduit dans d'autres langues dans tout le pays.

À l'hôpital *Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital à* Soweto, au sein de Johannesbourg, l'ONG *Aids Counselling Care and Training* (ACCT), créée en 1992, offre soutiens psychologiques et soins à des personnes affectées par le virus du sida. Les patient-es sont essentiellement des femmes qui, selon les protagonistes de ACCT, « doivent se réapproprier leur identité […] et sortir de la domination masculine ». Les organisatrices entendent ainsi expliquer que les femmes séropositives sont le plus souvent victimes de violences sexuelles, dans une situation de pauvreté accrue, et assurent leur rôle socialement dévolu de reproduction (éducation, santé, nutrition, soin de la famille). Les séances de soutien psychologique accueillent pendant environ une heure des femmes et ont vocation à les faire parler de leur maladie, jusqu'à découvrir l'intime, voire la sexualité. Comme elles en témoignent facilement, les malades se sentent personnalisées, existantes, deux états dont il est difficile d'imaginer l'importance dans un pays où, pendant de nombreuses années, les séropositif-ves ont été ignoré-es par leur gouvernement[2]. Certaines femmes participent à des ateliers d'écriture, où elles couchent sur papier leur vie quotidienne, leurs relations sexuelles, évoquent leur grossesse, leurs relations avec leurs nourrissons, dans la perspective que l'enfant qui va grandir ait accès à l'histoire de sa mère et à la sienne. Chaque histoire personnelle est ensuite mise en commun, discutée, explicitement archivée et devient alors un bien collectif. Toutes les femmes peuvent consulter ces récits, au rythme où elles le souhaitent ; elles gèrent elles-mêmes la pièce, le lieu où ces récits sont entreposés.

Dans ces deux exemples sud-africains, les femmes qui se racontent sont majoritairement noires, pauvres, vivant dans les townships ou en milieu rural. Elles ne cherchent pas à rédiger leur autobiographie. Elles ne suivent pas systématiquement une ligne historique partant de leur naissance, décryptant pas à pas leur vie, avant, pendant et après l'apartheid. Les récits peuvent se révéler beaucoup plus « anarchiques » au sens où ils peuvent être fragmentés, partiels, décousus. Les récits ne sont pas spécialement structurés et holistiques. Ils ne sont pas plus individuels, puisque le dispositif de recueil n'a en rien vocation à porter

assistance, à victimiser la personne qui parle ou écrit, ou à la renvoyer à sa seule introspection. Il favorise davantage l'expression collective, mais aussi l'élaboration d'un possible futur commun. En soi, ce dispositif esquisse des stratégies de démocratie directe, permettant au « témoin » d'exprimer un point de vue sur l'environnement dans lequel elle vit, de l'analyser et de poser les termes de revendications ou d'alternatives.

Dans les deux expériences, ouest-africaine et sud-africaine, la diffusion des savoirs des femmes ou des jeunes sur le genre, par l'intermédiaire direct ou indirect des TIC est centrale. C'est le caractère périphérique, subalterne et non savant de ces savoirs qui en fait leur valeur, et met leurs auteur(e)s en situation d'acteurs-trices et non de victimes. Ce positionnement renverse la place des auteur(e)s comme des sujets de ces savoirs. Il inverse le sens de là où le savoir est visible. Il s'agit moins d'envisager de donner la parole à ceux qui sont sans voix que de laisser les sans-voix la prendre, là où ils entendent le faire. Cette volonté de renversement remet à elle seule en cause la construction des systèmes de division de classe, de race, de genre, générationnels, puisqu'elle met la supposée victime en position d'émetteur-trice d'informations, ce qui rompt avec l'évidence qu'elle accepte définitivement sa position de victime.

Ces résultats alimentent un modèle d'appropriation des TIC qui n'a ni vocation à visibilité institutionnelle, ni ambition économique ou d'intégration des femmes dans un ensemble universel préconstruit. Ce modèle vise plutôt l'émergence de contenus invisibles, qui, une fois publiés et diffusés par les TIC, établit le lien entre virtuel et réel. Il reste à confronter aux pratiques actuelles par les organisations institutionnelles des *Digital Story Tellings* dont les principaux résultats se mesurent aujourd'hui davantage à l'image victimaire des femmes africaines qu'à celle d'expertes du quotidien réel.

Conclusion

Par cette étude, nous pouvons conclure que l'appropriation des TIC par les femmes africaines telle qu'elle est prescrite par les protagonistes des politiques des TIC pour lutter contre la fracture numérique de genre n'a plus lieu d'être. Celle-ci répond davantage à des injonctions économiques et épistémiques qu'à une volonté politique de transmission de savoirs, invisibles, intemporels, multiples, révélateurs du réel. En Afrique, ce qui semble innovant tout en étant paradoxal se mesure davantage au type de production de communication utilisée par certaines organisations de femmes ou féministes, qui n'a pas d'objectifs précis, même pas celui

d'informer. Le principal objectif est d'alimenter la toile de savoirs provenant de populations invisibles, notamment des femmes et des jeunes, de façon informelle. Et c'est cette informalité, non économique, qui permet aux organisations de femmes ou féministes africaines de déconstruire la colonialité du pouvoir qui traverse l'interaction entre le virtuel et le réel. Ces organisations créent ainsi les bases d'une réflexion épistémique moderne sur la nécessaire relation entre action politique et communication.

Notes

1. Reportages audio, documentaires vidéo sur DVD, textes…
2. Thabo Mbeki, président en exercice de 1999 à 2008, a refusé la prise en charge de traitements antirétroviraux, considérant qu'ils étaient « aussi dangereux que le sida », source Agence France-Presse – 24 octobre 2001.

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Les TIC ont-elles un sexe ? Les perspectives africaines en TIC et genre à la lumière des approches théoriques en communication

Oumar Kane*

Résumé

Dans la présente contribution, nous passerons en revue les enjeux théoriques reliés à la thématique genre et TIC à la lumière des positions développées par la recherche féministe. Un état des lieux de la recherche en sciences de la communication introduira la question en mettant l'accent sur des considérations méthodologiques et épistémologiques.

Dans un premier temps, les approches *universaliste et différentialiste* seront évoquées et les enjeux relatifs aux prises de position de leurs tenants sur la question de la technologie et des technologies d'information et de communication (TIC) éclairée. Dans un deuxième moment, la voie ultérieurement empruntée par l'approche *constructiviste* permettra de montrer en quoi la *réouverture* des catégories de genre et de technologie permet de réinterroger de manière fructueuse les deux approches précédentes. Les modalités du réajustement théorique et méthodologique qui a suivi seront mises au jour. Dans un troisième moment, la problématique TIC et genre sera analysée à l'aune de ses liens avec le développement, c'est-à-dire dans des contextes dits de *rareté des ressources* qui se trouvent être situés dans les pays dits en développement dont les liens avec la recherche féministe occidentale s'inscrivent dans une temporalité déjà ancienne.

Nous montrerons que la catégorie TIC est trop large pour servir de manière opératoire à l'analyse et qu'il est plutôt nécessaire de procéder de la manière suivante : d'abord distinguer les TIC en fonction des habiletés techniques qu'elles supposent de la part de l'usager ; ensuite considérer que pour permettre d'analyser correctement les effets pratiques de la problématisation, il est nécessaire de tenir compte des différentes formes d'accesibilité (économique et géographique notamment) ; enfin que ce n'est

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que dans un troisième et ultime moment que l'analyse des usages/non usages pourra permettre de penser l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes.

Dans la partie conclusive, nous montrerons que la manière dont elle est problématisée rend la thématique TIC, genre et développement solidaire de l'approche universaliste malgré certaines divergences théoriques et stratégiques. Une ouverture critique permettra de proposer les jalons d'un agenda alternatif de la recherche qui demeure attentive à la résorption des inégalités et à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes et, plus largement, des usagers des TIC dans les pays en développement.

Mots clés : communication et genre, genre et TIC, sexe des TIC, femmes et développement.

Abstract

In this contribution, we will review gender- and ICT-related theoretical issues in the light of the positions developed by feminist research. An inventory of research in communication science will introduce the issue, laying emphasis on methodological and epistemological considerations.

First, the *universalist* and *differentialist* approaches will be addressed and light will be shed on issues relating to their proponents' positions on the issue of technology and information and communication technologies (ICTs). Second, the path taken subsequently by the *constructivist* approach will show how the *reopening* of the gender and technology categories is used to reconsider fruitfully the two previous approaches. The methods of the subsequent theoretical and methodological readjustment will be brought to light. Third, the ICTs and gender issue will be analysed in terms of its relationship to development, i.e., in so-called contexts of *resource scarcity* that happen to be located in so-called developing countries whose relationship to Western feminist research are already longstanding.

We will show that the ICTs category is too wide to be used efficiently for the analysis, and that instead, we need to proceed as follows: first, distinguish ICTs according to the technical skills they require on the part of the user; next, consider that, in order to be able to analyse properly the practical effects of the problematisation, we need to take into account the various forms of accessibility (economic and geographic in particular); and last, that it is only in a third and final stage that the analysis of uses/non-uses will make it possible to think the improvement of women's living conditions.

In the concluding section, we will show that the way in which the issue of ICTs, gender and development is problematised makes the

themes supportive of the universalist approach, despite some theoretical and strategic differences. A critical openness will enable us to lay the groundwork for an alternative research agenda that remains sensitive to the reduction of inequalities and the improvement of the living conditions of women and, more generally, of ICTs users in developing countries.

Key Words: communication and gender, gender and ICTs, the gender of ICTs, women and development.

Considérations méthodologiques introductives

L'influence des rapports de sexe sur les représentations individuelles et collectives et, par ricochet et en retour, sur les interactions sociales est susceptible d'avoir une analyse sociologique à travers leur prise en compte dans la dynamique du changement des rapports de genre. En d'autres termes, l'analyse des interactions humaines (interpersonnelles ou médiatisées technologiquement) nécessite une prise en compte de facteurs liés aux statuts des acteurs (dont le genre n'est pas le moindre), au cadre d'interaction et au contexte sociétal global. C'est la condition nécessaire pour éviter une forme de déterminisme ou d'essentialisation récurrente dans nombre de recherches sociologiques et communicationnelles.

Les choses ne sont cependant pas simples puisque certaines difficultés se font jour au niveau méthodologique dès qu'on essaie d'opérationnaliser le questionnement :

> … quand on tente de rendre compte des régularités de comportement qui, à première vue, peuvent être liées à la différence sexuelle. Comment en effet poser correctement la question de l'impact du genre sur la fréquence d'un usage, sur les modalités d'une pratique, sur la structuration d'une interaction ou sur le déroulement d'une conversation ? L'un des problèmes est d'éviter de réifier l'appartenance sexuelle et d'attribuer au genre, en tant que variable générale et indépendante de tout contexte, un pouvoir causal de détermination des conduites (Quéré et Smoreda 2000:3).

Ce questionnement est central puisqu'il pose le problème du sens de la corrélation entre le genre et les conduites et comportements sociaux. Une approche, largement dominante dans la recherche, est de partir du genre comme donnée initiale et de discriminer les conduites en fonction de ce facteur (approche explicative). Une approche alternative consiste à renoncer à faire du genre une variable explicative systématique et de partir des conduites en vue de reconstruire à travers les interactions la manière dont le genre est produit (West et Zimmerman 1987). Cette dernière

approche, qui se veut plus interprétative et compréhensive, ambitionne d'interroger la production du genre et son incidence sur les conduites sociales.

En sus des deux grandes approches qui viennent d'être évoquées, on retrouve dans la littérature une approche constructiviste/explicative. Elle privilégie une lecture qui ne donne le primat ni au genre ni à la technologie, mais s'inscrit plutôt dans le cadre d'une analyse où les deux éléments se co-construisent et où la dynamique peut changer à la faveur d'une renégociation des relations de genre ou à l'opposé des modalités de consommation des TIC au sein du couple. Cette perspective, processuelle, est largement mobilisée en sciences de la communication et en *gender studies*.

Dans les prochains paragraphes, nous tenterons de proposer une cartographie théorique assez large des recherches consacrées à la relation technique/technologies et genre. Nous identifierons les grandes lignes de force et les points de rupture de l'analyse de cette question par la recherche féministe. Nous terminerons en nous concentrant sur les expériences africaines que nous regrouperons à des fins heuristiques sous la thématique TIC, genre et développement.

Pour ce faire, nous nous basons sur une revue de la littérature. Le corpus est composé de rapports de recherche, d'articles, de monographies, de sites web et de rapports d'institutions diverses. Ce matériau a fait l'objet d'une analyse de contenu en vue de répondre à notre objectif qui est de dresser une carte, certes parcellaire de la littérature pertinente, et de positionner sur cette base les expériences et les recherches africaines récentes.

Technologie et genre : un essai de cartographie

> L'analyse de la sexuation des formes de communication, des façons de s'exprimer et d'intervenir, autant d'objets déjà fortement investis par les linguistes ou les psychosociologues, est ainsi conduite de nouveau à propos des TIC. C'est généralement dans ces contextes théoriques préalables que s'insèrent la plupart des études sur la communication médiée par l'ordinateur et intéressées à évaluer les différences de sexe dans ce domaine (Gardey 2003:99).

Les recherches qui recourent à la construction de variables de type quantitatif (âge, sexe, revenus, habitation, etc.) pour saisir la consommation des technologies de communication s'inscrivent dans le projet de dresser une cartographie des inégalités de consommation et de pratiques médiatiques.

La mesure de la possession, de l'accès ou de l'usage/jouissance des biens de consommation sert d'arrière-plan et il est fréquent que dans ces études, le genre ne soit qu'une variable explicative parmi d'autres. A l'opposé, les analyses qui cherchent à identifier un *gender gap* sont davantage soucieuses de donner une spécificité à la variable genre dans la construction du dispositif méthodologique (Gardey 2003:93).

Il importe par ailleurs de relever que souvent, la question des médias est habituellement construite en contrepoint de celle de la technologie puisque les médias sont le lieu du plaidoyer (notamment féministe), tandis que les technologies (notamment les TIC) sont classiquement considérées comme les objets du plaidoyer. Bien entendu, la perspective peut évoluer, et elle évolue effectivement lorsque, d'une part, le fonctionnement des médias est questionné, devenant de ce fait l'objet critique d'une lutte, et, d'autre part, que les technologies elles-mêmes deviennent le lieu d'un investissement en vue d'initier des pratiques alternatives. C'est donc que les catégories ne sont pas figées et que les stratégies mises en avant peuvent articuler l'*objet* de la critique et l'espace de la *contestation* en subvertissant les catégories classiques des médias comme contenu et de la technologie comme support.

Les sous-champs de la thématique « communication et genre » sont extrêmement divers. *TIC et genre* ou *médias et genre* n'en sont que deux espaces qui se recoupent parfois. Nous allons évoquer brièvement quelques questionnements qui ont fécondé cette thématique en vue de montrer en quoi les problématisations migrent à partir d'un univers de préoccupations vers les autres. La question centrale du langage a en effet fait l'objet de développements importants au sein de la théorie féministe. Deux positions opposées sur la question, celles de Monique Wittig et de Luce Irigaray, coexistent à propos du rapport genre et misogynie :

> Pour Wittig, le langage est un instrument ou un outil dont les structures ne sont en elles-mêmes pas misogynes, mais qui peuvent le devenir si l'on en fait des usages misogynes. Pour Irigaray, seul un autre langage ou une autre économie de la signification offrirait la possibilité d'échapper à la « marque » du genre, une marque qui, pour le féminin, n'implique rien de moins que l'effacement phallogocentrique du sexe féminin. Irigaray cherche à dévoiler que le rapport apparemment « binaire » entre les sexes est une ruse masculiniste qui exclut purement et simplement le féminin (Butler 2005:98).

Wittig conçoit le langage comme neutre, ce contre quoi s'insurge Irigaray dans Parler n'est jamais neutre. Ces prises de positions différenciées sur

le médium de communication[1] par excellence qu'est le langage humain sont homologues de celles qui ressurgiront à propos de la technologie et des médias dans les théories féministes.

La contribution des études féministes en *sciences et techniques* est déjà conséquente, particulièrement quand elles ont rencontré les *Cultural Studies* sur ce terrain qui a permis de féconder, à l'aune de la question genre, des problématiques telles que la sociologie de l'éducation, les usages de l'internet et des TIC ou l'accès différencié des élèves à l'outil informatique (Gardey 2003). L'analyse des impacts des techniques sur les relations de genre est une avenue de recherche amplement documentée. L'apparition de l'ordinateur personnel, puis de l'internet, a induit un repli de la recherche féministe relative à la technologie dans l'espace privé. Il ne faut cependant pas oublier pour autant un important courant de recherches dédié à l'étude des communautés en ligne, à l'organisation et à la coordination des mouvements féministes qui a pris de l'ampleur à partir de la fin des années 1990. Certaines recherches, davantage centrées sur l'*empowerment*, connaissent une popularité plus grande dans les pays dits « en développement » où les préoccupations collectives sont omniprésentes dans la littérature consacrée à ces questions.

Dans le même prolongement, un certain nombre de caractéristiques de la recherche relative aux inégalités basées sur le sexe sont importantes à rappeler. Le fait, par exemple, que le terme *genre* soit devenu quasi synonyme de féminin en est un exemple qui est probablement à l'origine d'une indistinction dans l'esprit de beaucoup entre *études féministes* et *gender studies*. Pour ce qui est de la question, éminemment communicationnelle, des interactions humaines médiatisées technologiquement, de nombreuses études analysent les interactions dans le cadre domestique ou professionnel avec, selon les recherches, une analyse de la technologie comme moyen d'émancipation ou instrument de domination. Ce *grand partage* n'est cependant pas unanime puisque « Tout comme le genre, les technologies de communication sont des constructions sociales dynamiques qui ne sont pas stabilisées… On peut donc poser l'hypothèse que cette évolution sera un ferment de l'acculturation des femmes à ces technologies devenues banalisées comme équipements culturels et non informatiques » (Jouët 2003:82).

En effet, et selon la même logique, les positions des féministes sur la technologie ont grandement divergé selon une ligne de fracture qui oppose les féministes universalistes aux féministes différentialistes. Pour les premières, la technologie est vue comme le lieu d'un accomplissement de soi des femmes qui disposeraient des mêmes capacités que les hommes. Pour les différentialistes, à l'opposé, la technologie est le lieu d'investissement des

valeurs machistes et constitue par excellence un lieu d'aliénation des femmes. Dès lors, la césure philosophique recoupe une opposition entre féministes universalistes (technophiles) et féministes différentialistes (technophobes). Cette opposition est elle-même homologue des prises de position féministes sur la question du langage (Butler 2005).

Comme en nombre d'autres domaines, ce débat, à plusieurs égards stérile, entre universalistes et différentialistes trouve une voie médiane avec l'investissement du débat par les féministes constructivistes qui font de la technologie un construit social, c'est-à-dire un lieu susceptible d'être investi par les luttes féministes progressistes. Il est intéressant de noter que dans cette mise en relation entre le genre et la technologie, certains courants se distribueront malgré tout selon la ligne de partage antérieure. En effet, trois cas de figure sont identifiables à cet égard :

- le genre est un construit social et la technologie est essentialisée ;
- le genre est un essentialisé et la technologie est un construit social ;
- le genre est, à l'instar de la technologie, un construit social.

Cette évolution recoupe l'état théorique des rapports de force entre les différentes écoles qui occupent le champ de la recherche. Dans le dernier cas de figure, on assiste à un constructivisme réciproque de la technologie et du genre qui rend possible la reconfiguration de l'existant en vue de la réalisation des objectifs féministes.

Le premier cas est symptomatique d'une approche qui tient sur la technologie et le genre des considérations relevant de deux univers épistémologiques distincts. Nous allons en préciser les contours dans les prochains paragraphes.

Le sexe de la technologie

> La prime éducation encourage très inégalement les garçons et les filles à s'engager dans ces jeux [sociaux favorables à la virilité] et favorise davantage chez les garçons les différentes formes de la *libido dominandi* qui peuvent trouver des expressions sublimées dans le formes les plus « pures » de la libido sociale, comme la *libido sciendi* (Bourdieu 1998:62-63).

En partie dans le prolongement des analyses de Bourdieu qui faisait de la vocation scientifique un *appel* déterminé par des habitus spécifiques dans lesquels le genre joue un certain rôle, la sociologie des usages a cherché à analyser les usages comme un « construit social qui met en jeu des phénomènes d'appropriation, d'identité, de lien social et de rapports sociaux où se repèrent à chaque fois les marquages du genre » (Jouët 2003:59).

Dans le prolongement de ces considérations, de nombreuses controverses ont eu lieu sur le « sexe de la technique » (sexe du téléphone, sexe du langage, sexe de l'internet, etc.). Ainsi l'internet, du fait de ses origines guerrières et masculines, serait un univers substantiellement masculin dont les femmes seraient symboliquement et effectivement exclues. A cette lecture s'oppose, notamment suite au développement important de l'investissement féminin de l'internet, la thèse selon laquelle l'internet serait féminine, car elle permettrait de manière intuitive la communication étendue et la réalisation d'un idéal de partage congruent avec les valeurs féminines. Ces analyses, quel que soit le sexe conféré à l'internet, s'inscrivent assurément dans la veine universaliste de l'analyse féministe en attribuant une essence à la technologie ou au réseau des réseaux.

A rebours de cette essentialisation de la technique selon des catégories genrées, la recherche portant sur les relations entre le genre et la technologie a ainsi permis d'identifier une double relation. D'abord en montrant que le design des technologies est genré (les technologies ont un sexe) :

> La technologie en soi n'a certes pas de sexe, mais les nombreuses recherches entreprises par des historiennes ou des sociologues des sciences et des techniques ont bien démontré que sa construction sociale était éminemment masculine (Jouët 2003:60).

Ensuite, en soutenant que les usages de la technologie sont orientés par certains construits sociaux, et notamment par les relations de genre. A cet égard, Kelan (2007) soutient que les hommes utilisent la technologie comme un jouet, tandis que les femmes la mobilisent comme un outil, ce qui renforce l'aspect instrumental du rapport féminin à la technologie récurrent dans la littérature. Cela aboutirait à établir et à renforcer un « fossé de genre » *(gender gap)* qui permet de rendre théoriquement compte du différentiel d'accessibilité aux TIC selon le genre.

Ladite accessibilité, qui se laisse assez bien saisir par les approches quantitatives, est parfois complétée par des études qualitatives davantage centrées sur les usages des technologies qui ont pu identifier une césure en matière de patterns d'utilisation :

> Les femmes téléphonent plus que les hommes – plus souvent, plus longtemps – et elles se servent du téléphone autrement que les hommes et pour faire autre chose. Ainsi pourrait-on résumer en une phrase le constat établi par beaucoup de recherches sur les caractéristiques sexuelles des usages et des pratiques du téléphone (Quéré et Smoreda 2000:9).

A rebours de l'approche essentialiste de la technique (le sexe de la technique), l'approche socioconstructiviste envisage le rapport différencié à technologie comme permettant de *performer* le genre *(doing gender)*. Du fait que les technologies sont perçues comme masculines, le fait pour les femmes d'avoir un rapport distancié aux technologies leur permettrait de performer leur féminité, mobilisant de ce fait une approche ouverte et processuelle :

> So research has sought to show not how we are men and women, but how we become men and women through interaction. If gender and technology are seen as socially constructed, it is not surprising that technologies and gender are co-constructed. This means that gender influences technology, and technology influences gender (Kelan 2007:360).

Pour rendre compte des relations complexes de co-construction entre genre et technologie, Kelan (2007) propose de distinguer le genre *dans* la technologie du genre de la technologie. L'expression genre *dans* la technologie se rapporte à la manière dont la conception même de la technologie prescrit une offre d'usage et des scripts d'utilisation qui prennent pour modèle un utilisateur masculin. L'expression genre *de* la technologie réfère d'un autre côté à la symbolique du fait qu'elle cristallise dans un artefact l'imaginaire masculin qui tient à distance les femmes et leur renvoie une image de non adéquation à l'univers technique.

De cette manière, l'argument récurrent avancé par la recherche féministe dédiée à la technique est que la culture technique est fortement teintée de valeurs masculines et la symbolique sociale redouble l'effet d'exclusion des femmes en décourageant les ambitions féminines dans les disciplines scientifiques ou techniques socialement rattachées à un univers masculin. L'informatique et les télécommunications[2] en sont deux exemples souvent cités :

> [la recherche] vise à documenter la différence constatée parmi les adolescents du secondaire dans l'utilisation de l'outil informatique. L'un de ses objets est ainsi de chercher à évaluer en quoi la désaffection des filles vis-à-vis des mathématiques joue vis-à-vis de l'ordinateur (Gardey 2003:92).

Il semblerait que les usages féminins des technologies ont tendance à être utilitaires et fonctionnels (Mardsen 1987 ; Bourdieu 1998 ; Quéré et Smoreda 2000 ; Jouët 2003). C'est peut-être l'une des raisons pour lesquelles dans leurs usages des TIC, les femmes ont moins tendance à les voir comme des technologies que comme des supports d'activités, c'est-

à-dire à considérer les TIC comme des outils au service d'activités et de relations sociales extérieures aux technologies elles-mêmes (Kelan 2007).

La thèse de la désaffection des technologies par les femmes nécessite cependant d'être grandement relativisée si l'on jette le regard sur les usages privilégiés par les femmes et sur leurs artefacts de prédilection[3]. En effet, certaines technologies sont considérées comme « asexuées » du fait que leur usage ne montre pas de discrimination particulière en termes de genre. Historiquement, ce fut le cas dans les pays industrialisés pour ce qui est de la radio, de la télévision et du téléphone. Cette donnée est-elle aujourd'hui valable pour les pays africains ? Même si ça ne résout pas la question de l'accessibilité, on peut répondre en partie par l'affirmative, pour des raisons qui tiennent pour l'essentiel à la variable orale et au fait que ces technologies ne nécessitent pas, pour être consommées, un niveau élevé d'alphabétisation[4]. Ce facteur, de manière négative, parvient à uniformiser l'espace des usages dans les pays en développement sans montrer de discrimination particulière selon le facteur genre.

Le cas largement documenté du téléphone (Jouët 2003) est intéressant à rapprocher du fait que les femmes ont en charge la gestion du capital social de la famille (Fischer 1988 ; Bourdieu 1998) et mobilisent le téléphone en vue d'entretenir les liens avec le réseau familial et amical :

> En règle générale, les femmes ont donc davantage de contacts que les hommes avec la famille et avec le voisinage tandis que ceux-là s'orientent vers les contextes sociaux plus larges et plus hétérogènes de la vie professionnelle (Quéré et Smoreda 2000:11).

Ces considérations, qui peuvent sembler transculturelles, n'en recouvrent pas moins une différence importante dans la manière de penser les relations entre les TIC et le genre dans la recherche africaine et occidentale. Si certaines théorisations (le *cyborg* par exemple) peuvent sembler résulter de préoccupations locales spécifiques aux préoccupations des théoriciennes occidentales (Haraway 1991), d'autres questionnements semblent transversaux aux contextes sociétaux et aux cadres culturels. Pour exemple, les questionnements avancés par Jouët :

> Quelle a été et quelle est aujourd'hui la place du genre dans la conception et la diffusion des technologies de communication ? L'acculturation et l'appropriation des technologies de communication sont-elles genrées ? Quelle médiation jouent les TIC dans les rapports sociaux de sexe et dans la communication entre les hommes et les femmes en réseau ? (Jouët 2003:55)

A quoi il faudrait ajouter la question qui émerge clairement à l'issue d'une revue de la littérature dédiée à la thématique TIC, genre et développement : *De quelles manières les TIC sont-elles supposées contribuer à l'amélioration des conditions de vie des femmes africaines ?*

Nous allons tenter d'identifier les grandes lignes de cette thématique dans les prochains paragraphes.

TIC, genre et développement : spécificités de l'approche en contexte africain

Par certains aspects, la situation des femmes par rapport aux hommes à l'égard de la technologie dans les pays industrialisés semble homologue à celle de l'ensemble des usagers situés en Afrique par rapport à ceux résidant dans les pays développés : ce sont des utilisateurs et non des producteurs de technologie (Kane 2010). La manière dont la question TIC et genre est problématisée est assez différente au Nord et au Sud, essentiellement parce que la question centrale de l'égalité d'accès répond à des contraintes spécifiques dans les deux environnements.

L'une des différences les plus importantes concerne l'intégration de la question TIC et genre dans les préoccupations liées au développement sur le continent africain. Il s'agit de penser les technologies comme moyens de réduire les inégalités socioéconomiques pour reconfiguer les rapports sociaux de genre en vue d'atteindre plus d'égalité.

Pour exemple, la manière dont la question du genre a été problématisée lors du Sommet mondial sur la société de l'information (SMSI) est intéressante à plusieurs égards. Lors de la conférence régionale préparatoire africaine au SMSI qui s'est tenue en octobre 2005 à Accra au Ghana, le *Caucus genre du SMSI* a tenu à aligner ses recommandations sur les *Objectifs du millénaire pour le développement* (OMD) et a recommandé de « traiter comme une question fondamentale l'intégration de l'égalité de genre et les droits des femmes dans les TIC et la société de l'information et du savoir » (Caucus genre du SMSI, 2005). Lors de cette réunion préparatoire, le *Caucus genre* a identifié cinq secteurs prioritaires où il proposait d'investir les efforts et les ressources en vue du plaidoyer :

1. le financement : est notamment sollicitée la mise à contribution du *Fonds de solidarité numérique* (FSN) et des banques de développement ainsi que la mobilisation de leviers de financement spécifiquement dédiés aux projets avec une composante genre importante ;

2. la mesure statistique : est recommandée la création d'indicateurs sexospécifiques de manière à rendre compte avec précision du degré d'inclusion/exclusion des femmes dans la société de l'information et du savoir ;

3. les TIC et le développement : est mise en avant la contribution « immense » des TIC au développement socioéconomique qui est appelée à être reliée à une analyse en termes de genre ;

4. l'accessibilité : la mise à disposition des infrastructures dans un rayon raisonnable pour tous (accès universel) en zone rurale et urbaine. L'inclusion de la téléphonie mobile, de l'internet, des logiciels et des contenus sont considérés comme essentiels ;

5. l'industrialisation : l'importance des industries des TIC (y compris l'industrie de recyclage des ordinateurs) est évoquée et il est demandé que les femmes y soient impliquées à tous les niveaux ;

6. la gouvernance de l'internet : il s'agit à cet égard de favoriser une inclusion plus importante des femmes dans les instances mondiales qui ont en charge la gouvernance de l'internet.

On voit à l'œuvre, dans la problématique TIC, genre et développement, des recoupements entre la préoccupation relativement récente pour les TIC et la société de l'information et un combat plus ancien autour de la question « Femmes et développement[5] » (Touré s.d.). Il en résulte une perspective davantage instrumentale que critique sur le statut de la technique, tandis que le volet critique de la recherche réside dans l'approche genre dont c'est le fondement épistémologique.

Dès lors, les TIC sont considérées comme étant au *cœur* du processus d'inclusion sociale et la notion de « connectivité » devient essentielle pour analyser les processus d'exclusion pensés sur des modalités conjointement sociales et numériques. On voit donc que la thématique TIC et genre en Afrique est à plusieurs égards éloignée de la recherche féministe britannique ou américaine sur la technique et le genre. En revanche elle est, s'agissant de ses thématiques, plus proche des préoccupations occidentales relatives à l'accessibilité des minorités et des communautés désavantagées :

> Regarding minority communities, the literature argues that ICTs do provide a new focus for understanding bridging and bonding forms of social capital and thus for fostering connectivity *within* and *between* minority communities. Thus it supports the importance of examining the role of ICTs in strengthening minority communities, enhancing their

> *within* and *between* 'connectedness' and responding to their perceived problems of social exclusion and limited social or community cohesion. At the same time, evidence points to a series of economic, educational/skills, psychological, cultural and political barriers which prevent minority communities from fully appropriating ICTs (Tsatsou et al. 2011).

Pour ce qui est des stratégies, il est question, pour certaines des organisations de femmes actives dans le domaine des TIC, de promouvoir l'inclusion par le plaidoyer et le lobbying. Par exemple, le *Réseau genre et TIC* a produit en 2004 un manuel intitulé « Citoyennes africaines dans la société de l'information » destiné à traiter : « … du point de vue des femmes, des enjeux liés à l'entrée des pays africains dans la société de l'information. Il [le manuel] présente, à l'intention des décideurs et acteurs publics, civils et privés, un plaidoyer sur la prise en compte du genre dans les politiques de TIC pour une société africaine de l'information juste, plurielle et inclusive » (Réseau genre et TIC, 2004). Il s'agit, pour l'essentiel, de réduire la fracture numérique de genre (*gender gap*) qui est considérée comme le danger majeur susceptible de renforcer considérablement la marginalisation dont les femmes font l'objet sur le continent africain.

Pour nombre de ces organisations actives sur la thématique TIC, genre et développement, les changements des relations de genre sont lents, mais s'accélèrent dans des périodes de transition comme celle de la révolution technologique actuelle. L'avènement de la société de l'information est considéré comme une période de transition majeure qui va « nécessairement » changer la donne des relations de genre.

C'est en ce sens que la « société de l'information » sert de levier argumentatif pour promouvoir (sous le registre discursif de l'*intégration*) la cause des femmes dans une conjoncture historique et technologique considérée comme exceptionnellement favorable aux desseins féministes.

C'est notamment le cas *du Panafrican Association of Women in Telecommunications and Information Communication Technologies* (PAWOTI) qui est une association ayant pour objectif la prise en compte des questions de genre relativement aux TIC en Afrique. Les objectifs de PAWOTI tels qu'ils ressortent de sa constitution sont : le plaidoyer, la gouvernance, la formation, l'évaluation à travers un observatoire et des initiatives de terrain en vue de changer l'état de l'existant. L'objectif affiché est de favoriser l'intégration des femmes africaines dans la société de l'information considérée comme le train à destination du développement à ne surtout pas rater. Pour y arriver, un certain nombre d'obstacles doivent être surmontés, comme celui de l'accès aux TIC qui

est initialement conditionné de manière importante par le revenu. Une deuxième barrière est celle du niveau d'instruction. A l'aune de ces deux facteurs, on n'a pas de mal à imaginer que la situation des femmes n'est pas la meilleure possible sur le continent africain. Cette situation relative aux TIC est cependant loin d'être uniforme sur l'ensemble du continent et il faut noter que dans certains pays et en certains domaines, les femmes sont mieux loties que les hommes. C'est le cas au Mozambique où les femmes détiennent plus de téléphones mobiles que les hommes et au Cameroun où leur maîtrise de l'internet est plus élevée (Gillwald et al. 2010). Sans remettre aucunement en cause le diagnostic global d'une inéquité d'accès et d'usage, cela montre cependant que l'inégalité n'est pas un destin et que lorsque les conditions sont requises, le handicap féminin peut être surmonté sur tous les terrains.

Pour ce qui est plus spécifiquement des usages des TIC, deux caractéristiques importantes peuvent être identifiées en Afrique. D'abord, la mutualisation des ressources communicationnelles dans des contextes de rareté, ensuite l'émergence d'une forme inventive de débrouillardise. L'emprunt du téléphone des voisins, le fait d'appeler brièvement pour que la personne appelée, mieux nantie, retourne l'appel manqué, le fait de détenir une puce téléphonique qu'on insère dans le téléphone des connaissances au gré des occasions, la possibilité de recevoir ses appels dans les télécentres, etc. sont des stratégies largement répandues chez les hommes et les femmes et qui sont des formes de débrouillardise et de détournements d'usage permettant de minimiser le coût relié à l'utilisation des TIC (Kane 2010).

Ces formes de *braconnage* ne sauraient cependant suffire à changer l'état d'inéquité qui caractérise l'économie politique des TIC en Afrique. C'est pourquoi la lutte contre la pauvreté, pour le développement durable et pour la démocratie est considérée comme inséparable de la prise en considération de la dimension genre dans les politiques publiques en matière de développement. Il ne faudrait par conséquent pas restreindre le plaidoyer au seul champ des TIC, comme c'est souvent le cas :

Ainsi, les TIC peuvent être une bénédiction pour les femmes africaines, en leur permettant de s'alphabétiser, y compris dans leurs langues nationales et locales. Elles permettent de moins souffrir de la mortalité maternelle et infantile, de trouver d'autres débouchés, plus rémunérateurs, pour leurs activités génératrices de revenus, d'améliorer leur statut social en faisant davantage respecter leurs droits et leur dignité, et en étant moins victimes de violence, d'assumer leurs devoirs en tant que citoyennes de leur pays, de leur continent et du monde (Réseau genre et TIC 2004:39).

Ce statut quasi révolutionnaire attribué à la technologie considérée comme un catalyseur de développement fait des TIC un outil fondamental en vue de l'intégration dans la société de l'information, comme la *Déclaration de principes* du Sommet Mondial sur la Société de l'Information de 2007 l'a énoncé dans les termes suivants : « Nous affirmons que le développement des TIC est porteur de multiples opportunités pour les femmes, qui devraient faire partie intégrante de la société de l'information et en être des acteurs clefs».

Ce surinvestissement de la technologie comme facteur-clé pour changer les rapports de genre et permettre un *empowerment* des femmes n'est cependant pas partagé par tous malgré sa grande popularité dans les discours. Les politiques et les stratégies en matière de TIC ne suffiront pas à régler le problème et il faut une vision plus large et intégrée qui prenne notamment en compte les enjeux liés à l'éducation qui recoupent en maints points ceux de la thématique TIC, genre et développement.

Conclusion

Comme remarque conclusive, il faut d'abord noter que très souvent, la recherche consacrée aux TIC réduit lesdites technologies à l'internet. Cette particularité tient, d'une part, au fait que l'internet est un *méta médium* qui intègre les autres médias (convergence technologique), et, d'autre part, au statut peu délimité des TIC par rapport aux médias dits classiques (d'où la nécessité de spécifier en utilisant le vocable Nouvelles TIC). Outre cette réduction, on remarque également une ambivalence des effets (théorie de l'impact) que la recherche attribue soit aux TIC soit au genre. Cette ambivalence n'est pas surprenante puisqu'elle est congruente avec la diversité des représentations, des analyses et des discours sur la technique. Woolgar (2000) en appelle à une *technographie* qui permettrait d'interroger les possibles sociétaux sous-jacents aux discours tenus sur la technologies afin de distinguer les véritables alternatives des propositions conservatrices des rapports de force existants.

Étant donné les relations fortes qui existent entre les *gender studies* et la problématique TIC et genre, on pourrait être tenté de soutenir que :

> … la sociologie du genre s'étant développée majoritairement comme sociologie critique, la variable sexuelle a été souvent thématisée dans une problématique de la domination masculine et de la distribution inégale du pouvoir et des ressources (Quéré et Smoreda 2000:10).

Ce serait cependant une erreur de partir de cette prémisse pour postuler un potentiel critique systématique des études menées autour de la problématique « TIC, genre et développement ». En effet, celle-ci se ressource souvent à l'aune de l'approche universaliste. Cela permet certes de favoriser stratégiquement l'atteinte de l'objectif d'accès et l'appropriation par les femmes des TIC dans une perspective de développement. Ce n'est pas pour autant que les rapports de genre seront renouvelés du fait des vertus inhérentes aux TIC. Pour renverser la vapeur et conserver le potentiel critique au cœur du projet féministe dans l'analyse des liens entre TIC et genre, il faut non pas instrumentaliser la critique féministe et la mettre au service des TIC, mais plutôt faire passer la technologie par le crible de l'analyse féministe. Ce n'est pas une mince affaire, mais c'est l'un des chantiers théoriques les plus pressants.

Notes

1. Même s'il est loin d'être réductible à la seule transmission du sens.
2. A l'opposé de la bureautique ou de la sténographie, qui ont certes été initialement investies massivement et quasi exclusivement par les femmes, mais dans le cadre d'une pratique professionnelle répétitive et peu gratifiante. Il faut donc nuancer l'affirmation selon laquelle la technique est un univers monopolisé par les hommes. Elle l'est parfois par les femmes, mais selon un schéma qui montre historiquement une forme de péjoration des pratiques considérées (Bourdieu 1998 ; Jouët 2003).
3. Dans certains cas, la structure des *patterns* genrés d'usage des technologies dans l'espace domestique contribue à construire/reproduire les rapports au sein du couple. Les quatre modèles dégagés par Van Zoonen (citée par Jouët 2003:74) sont à cet égard pertinents. Ce sont les modèles : 1) traditionnel : le modèle classique de domination masculine prévaut pour ce qui est des usages des TIC au sein du couple, c'est-à-dire que les usages sont essentiellement masculins ; 2) négocié : les TIC font l'objet d'une utilisation négociée et partagée ; 3) individualisé : le multi-équipement permet un rapport personnel de chaque membre du couple à la technologie ; 4) inversé : le modèle classique de domination est retourné au profit de la femme.
4. Cette analyse est elle-même tempérée par l'étude menée par Gillwald *et al.* (2010) dans dix-sept pays africains et qui montre qu'en cas de possession d'un seul poste de radio dans la maison, les femmes y ont moins accès que les hommes, même à niveau équivalent d'éducation et de revenus.
5. Les approches sur cette question sont nombreuses *(Femmes et Développement, Intégration des Femmes au Développement, Genre et Développement*, etc.) et renvoient aux débats qui ont animé la théorie féministe et qui ont vu

paradigmatiquement s'opposer une conception libérale soucieuse de réformer l'état des rapports sociaux et une approche marxiste résolue à reconstruire une architecture sociale sur des bases différentes.

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Le capital technologique et accès aux métiers techniques des technologies de l'information et de la communication (TIC) au Burkina Faso

Mahamadi Rouamba*

Résumé

Il y a peu de femmes dans les métiers techniques des technologies de l'information et de la communication au Burkina Faso. Pour comprendre et expliquer ce phénomène qui a cours dans le milieu professionnel, il nous a semblé judicieux de nous poser la question de savoir quelle est la représentativité des femmes dans les filières qui mènent aux métiers technologiques. Là également le constat est le même : il y a peu de filles. Le ménage et les autres sphères de socialisation des jeunes filles et des jeunes garçons deviennent alors les terrains propices pour identifier les facteurs qui influencent leur choix de filière d'étude, notamment celle des TIC. L'acquisition du capital technologique est en cause selon les résultats de notre étude. Il est détenu de manière inéquitable selon le genre et les garçons en sont les mieux dotés.

Mots clés : capital technologique, genre, technologie, TIC, socialisation

Abstract

There are few women in the technical occupations of Information and Communication Technologies in Burkina Faso. To understand and explain this phenomenon, which occurs in the professional environment, we thought it advisable to ask what women's representation in the fields of study leading to technological occupations is. Here too, it is the same story: there are few girls. The household and other spheres of socialisation of young girls and boys then become the breeding grounds for identifying the factors that influence their choices in terms of fields of study, in particular that of ICTs. Our study findings show that the acquisition of technological capital is to blame. It is unequally held depending on gender, and boys are best equipped with it.

Key Words: technological capital, gender, technology, ICTs, socialisation

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Entre les filles et les garçons, les aptitudes en matière de technologie sont inéquitablement réparties. Voici un des résultats de l'étude portant sur l'analyse sociologique de la faible présence des femmes dans les filières d'études et les métiers techniques des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication (TIC) au Burkina Faso. En effet, aussi utilisatrices que leurs homologues masculins, les femmes restent largement minoritaires dans les filières d'études et les métiers liés à la conception, à la maintenance et au développement des produits et services liés aux TIC. Un tel constat couplé des données provenant de l'étude menée sur la Fracture Numérique de Genre (FNG) en 2005[1] confirme le fait que la fracture numérique de genre ne se situe plus dans l'utilisation des TIC, mais surtout au niveau de leur appropriation technique en tant que technologie. Notre préoccupation s'inscrit alors dans une perspective de compréhension de ce *gender gap* dans les métiers techniques des TIC. Dans le présent article, nous allons nous attarder sur la première hypothèse de l'étude qui est la suivante: le faible capital technologique acquis par les filles influence leur choix de filière d'étude en défaveur des filières techniques des technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Préalables théoriques

Socialisation différenciée des filles et des garçons à la technique

La sous-représentation des femmes dans les métiers techniques des TIC serait due à plusieurs facteurs dits précoces tels que l'influence parentale et familiale. Ces facteurs agissent comme autant de marques dont les effets se répercutent sur le long terme pour éventuellement contribuer à creuser davantage entre filles et garçons les écarts dans les milieux techniques de la technologie. Ainsi, cette littérature soutient qu'il faut reconsidérer beaucoup plus en détail ce que l'on a nommé globalement la socialisation différenciée selon le sexe, afin de dégager ce qui, dans le noyau familial d'origine, peut surdéterminer pour une petite fille ses chances d'accès aux métiers techniques des TIC ou son aversion pour ces métiers. L'analyse de cette problématique nous conduit à examiner la culture de la science, de la technique et de la technologie, largement empruntée à tous les travaux portant sur la diffusion, dans le corps social, des nouvelles technologies et de l'informatique en particulier.

À la suite de Sartre (1960) et de Ferrarotti (1983), les chercheurs pensent que c'est d'abord dans la famille, à travers les contradictions particulières à chaque famille, qu'un enfant fait l'apprentissage de ce qui sera plus tard son identité de sexe, de classe, de race, d'ethnie, etc. Ce qui apparaît plus

intéressant, c'est qu'il est peut-être possible de dégager à travers certaines formes de récurrence, de façon parfois assez nette, une cohérence propre à chacun des sexes. Pour le cas des filières scientifiques et technologiques, Lasvergnas (1988:32) constate que l'origine sociale peut se présenter comme un argument, mais qu'il « serait insuffisant de rechercher des explications du seul côté des conditions économiques familiales», et que « l'influence des parents est un élément intéressant à prendre en compte dans la tentative d'explication du goût ou de la désaffection des filles pour ces filières ». En effet, les filles et les garçons font des choix de filières qui sont congruents avec les projets que forment leurs parents quant à leur avenir. Le discours des parents sur l'égalité entre sexes en matière de formation et d'ambition professionnelle, selon Duru-Bellat (1994:131), « s'inscrit dans le cadre d'une division des rôles dans la famille qui, elle, n'est que très rarement remise en cause, et dont les parents eux-mêmes sont des modèles ». En plus des attentes des parents, la composition de la fratrie est un critère important et De la Haye (1986) remarque qu'elle affecte la socialisation sexuée des enfants, les stéréotypes de sexe étant plus prégnants dans les fratries mixtes, ce qui n'est pas sans incidences sur les choix scolaires et professionnels. Ainsi, les filles choisissent d'autant moins souvent des options scientifiques et technologiques qu'elles ont de frères (Lawrie et Brown1992) ; à l'inverse, les filles qui choisissent des formations « masculines » appartiennent plus souvent à des fratries unisexes, où les stéréotypes de sexes pèsent moins fort, et où elles ont parfois joué un rôle de « garçon de substitution » (Daune-Richard et Marry 1990 ; Lasvergnas 1988).

Pour expliquer la faible participation des filles à la socialisation des TIC présentes dans le ménage, la littérature recourt à trois principes explicatifs. Le premier invoque l'inégalité d'accès à l'ordinateur familial, les garçons apparaissant comme des utilisateurs prioritaires sinon exclusifs de cette machine (Oechtering et Behnke 1995 ; Schinzel 1997). Ce point de vue est dépassé par Guéguen et Tobin (1998) qui s'appuient plutôt sur les dynamiques d'apprentissages pour montrer la mise à l'écart des filles dans la socialisation intra et extra-familiale aux ordinateurs, et l'expliquent par le rôle central joué dans l'apprentissage par les réseaux d'initiateurs. Selon ces deux auteurs cités ci-dessus, l'apprentissage informatique suppose une capacité à mobiliser un réseau de « *mentors* », or, les « *mentors* » sont quasi exclusivement masculins (alors qu'à l'inverse, les « *régulateurs* » de la pratique sont quasi exclusivement des femmes, le plus souvent la mère ; Buckingham 1998:81). Les frères Diberder (1998) évoquent le caractère « *genré* » du contenu culturel des artefacts pour expliquer leur désaffection par les filles. Ils montrent comment la présence de nombreux stéréotypes sexuels dans les jeux vidéo, d'arcade,

de console produisent l'éviction du public fille : les personnages féminins, quand ils sont représentés, sont dessinés comme des objets sexuels, dans des postures de soumission, avec un physique de *Lolita* et un regard candide. A ces représentations caricaturales s'ajoute la présence du « *contretype* » de la femme fatale, dompteuse, parée d'objets oblongs et pointus (épées, fusils), suscitant peurs et angoisses, qui sont la contrepartie de l'exaltation des valeurs masculines.

Ces constructions intrafamiliales entraînent une construction de l'identité subjective des filles et des garçons face à la technique et à la technologie. Les filles sont évincées de ces milieux dès leur jeune âge : «…maternité, travail domestique et coquetterie pour les filles ; bricolage, voitures et combats guerriers pour les garçons ». Elles refuseront donc tout ce qui pourrait être provocateur d'angoisse pour se protéger de ce qu'elles ne connaissent pas et qui risquerait de remettre en cause tout l'édifice construit depuis la naissance et garant de la bonne entente avec ses semblables, condition elle-même de la survie physique et mentale de l'individu (Petrovic 2004).

La socialisation différentielle des filles et des garçons se poursuit dans une autre institution sociale qu'est le milieu scolaire. A l'école, les acteurs participant à la socialisation sont certes différents de ceux du ménage, mais la même dynamique de différenciation des sexes persiste dans la transmission des savoirs et le choix de la filière d'études.

La socialisation à la technologie

La « socialisation à la technologie » est un concept opératoire isolé que nous avons tenté de « construire empiriquement à partir d'observations directes [et] d'informations rassemblées par d'autres » (Quivy et Campenhoudt 2003:122).

Nous partons du postulat que chaque individu est inséré dès son plus jeune âge dans une dynamique consistant à apprendre et à intérioriser le masculin ou le féminin, que cette socialisation différenciée passe aussi par un rapport différentiel avec le support technologique de son environnement social. Le rapport de chaque individu aux objets technologiques peut illustrer une mise en scène des comportements sexués spécifiques qui sont produits par les « autruis significatifs » et les « autruis généralisés» du même sexe biologique que lui, dans le milieu familial, scolaire, professionnel et véhiculés par les médias et par la publicité. Par la médiation sociale, un enfant peut, donc selon son sexe, apprendre comment interagir avec la technologie, d'où l'intérêt de développer le concept de socialisation à la technologie. Le concept de socialisation à la technologie doit être

appréhendé en tant qu'une dimension non-autonome d'un système plus vaste qu'est la socialisation. Elle est le processus par lequel la société en général et les groupes d'appartenance en particulier transmettent à l'individu le « capital technologique » dont il a besoin dans son interaction avec la technologie. Nous considérons que le « capital technologique » est une composante du « capital culturel » transmis à l'individu socialisé. De ce fait, pour le rendre opérationnel, nous utiliserons le cadre déjà formalisé du « capital culturel » développé par le sociologue français Pierre Bourdieu. La plupart des analyses de Bourdieu se construisent autour des trois notions-clés : l'habitus, le champ et le capital.

Selon Bourdieu, il n'existe pas une seule sorte de capital comme chez Marx et les « marxistes » (le capital économique), mais une pluralité de capitaux, dont on peut distinguer quatre sortes principales.

Le capital économique fait référence à la richesse matérielle : patrimoine, revenus, etc. Il est le plus proche de la notion habituelle de capital, bien que Bourdieu y inclue les revenus.

Le capital social est lié au réseau de relations de l'individu.

Le capital culturel est initialement forgé par Bourdieu[2] pour rendre compte des inégalités de réussite à l'école des enfants de classes sociales différentes.

Enfin, le capital symbolique peut désigner chacune des trois autres formes de capital, dès lors que son autorité, sa légitimité, son pouvoir symbolique sont reconnus par les autres acteurs du champ.

L'utilisation du concept « capital technologique » découle d'abord d'une tentative de compréhension de la répartition inégale des performances technologiques entre des individus de groupes d'appartenance différents, notamment entre les femmes et les hommes dans le cas qui nous intéresse. Ensuite, d'une envie de rompre avec les présupposés « naturels » des différences d'aptitudes ou d'attitudes entre les femmes et les hommes en matière de technologie, précisément de TIC. Enfin, du fait que nous appréhendons les rapports sociaux de sexe comme des rapports antagoniques. Antagoniques, parce que selon Hirata et coll. (2000:39) « Le rapport social est, au départ, une tension qui traverse le champ social. […] Cette tension érige certains phénomènes sociaux en enjeux autour desquels se constituent des groupes aux intérêts antagoniques. En l'occurrence, il s'agit ici du groupe social hommes et du groupe social femmes. […] Ces groupes sont donc en tension permanente autour d'un enjeu…» qui pourrait se résumer dans le cadre de notre étude à la maîtrise sociale des Technologies de l'Information et de la Communication.

Les technologies de l'information et de la communication, comme le soutient Douarin (2007), ne sont, en effet, pas des appareils ménagers comme les autres ; ce sont des objets chargés de symboles qui se prêtent à des enjeux de pouvoir et qui sont le support d'interactions entre les deux sexes. Les TIC ne sont jamais des instruments purs. Elles sont aussi autre chose ; elles véhiculent du sens. Cela permet alors de comprendre que :

> derrière les aspects les plus concrets de l'usage de l'ordinateur, est perceptible en filigrane, sa face cachée, c'est-à-dire le système des normes et de valeurs, qui est la source des pratiques, des représentations sociales et des opinions(Julien et Rosselin 2005:66).

Leur omniprésence dans la société de l'information, couplée à la constante vérification de la loi de Moore[3], entraîne l'émergence d'une culture technologique qui place l'individu contemporain dans une étreinte technologique permanente. Dès lors, l'acquisition de la culture technologique devient essentielle pour s'adapter aux composantes technologiques de la société contemporaine. Ce besoin qui devient presque fondamental pour l'homme actuel est décrit par Deforge (1993:47) en ces termes : « La technologie est maintenant un élément indispensable de culture et tout citoyen doit, sans contrainte, bénéficier de toutes les chances possibles d'éveil de ses sensibilités générales à cette dimension humaine ». Cette culture est tout à fait acceptable en toute rigueur quand on la compare à la « culture littéraire » ou à la « culture artistique ».

Méthodologie

Cette étude est une recherche qualitative qui s'inscrit dans une posture compréhensive, dite aussi interprétative ou holistique, la présente recherche qualitative conçoit son objet d'étude – doubler la faible présence des femmes dans les métiers techniques des TIC à Ouagadougou – en termes de construction sociale qui a principalement cours dans trois microcosmes sociaux, à savoir le ménage, l'établissement d'enseignement technique des technologies de l'information et de la communication et la structure pourvoyeuse d'emplois techniques des technologies de l'information et de la communication.

Présentation des catégories de personnes enquêtées

Pour l'échantillon de cette étude, parler de représentativité signifie simplement que nous nous sommes efforcé de réunir des personnes présentant toutes les caractéristiques pouvant engendrer des différences à l'égard des

représentations étudiées, compte non tenu de leur nombre relatif dans la population d'origine. La recherche des multiples perceptions de notre objet d'étude est fondamentale parce que :

> la perception qu'un acteur élabore d'une situation donnée constitue pour lui « la » réalité de cette situation ; et c'est en fonction de cette perception, et non de la réalité objective que cherche à connaître le sociologue, que l'acteur social sera amené à agir (Bertaux 2005:28).

C'est en fonction de ce phénomène de variété des positions et des points de vue que nous sommes amené à construire progressivement un échantillon, en faisant le tour des différentes catégories d'agents/acteurs qui paraissent pertinentes. C'est pourquoi, comme Michelat (1975) et Simonot (1979), nous préfèrerons parler de « principe de diversification » dans l'échantillon de cette étude.

Notre échantillon était ainsi constitué :

Population cible	
Statut	Nombre
Informaticiennes	5
Groupe témoin	
Statut	Nombre
Informaticiens	2
Informaticiennes en formation	2
Informaticien en formation	1
Chefs de ménage	2
Fille non informaticienne	1
Garçon non informaticien	1
Responsables d'entreprise informatique	4
Enseignant en informatique	1
Enseignante en informatique	1
Nombre total de personnes enquêtées	20

Techniques, outil de collecte et traitement des données

Nous avons eu recours à l'entretien semi-dirigé. L'outil qui a été utilisé dans le cadre de cette technique de collecte de données a été le guide d'entretien. A chaque catégorie de l'échantillon d'étude a correspondu un guide d'entretien. Les thèmes abordés lors des entretiens ont été, entre autres, la présence des filles dans les filières d'études technologiques, l'occupation des postes techniques dans le domaine technologique par

les femmes et l'attitude des filles et des garçons face aux technologies de l'information et de la communication. Le traitement manuel et l'analyse des données ont suivi aussitôt l'étape de la collecte. Tous les entretiens précédemment enregistrés à l'aide d'un dictaphone ont fait l'objet d'une transcription, nous permettant d'avoir des données textuelles à analyser. Ces documents textuels ont constitué la base de notre analyse thématique.

Modèle d'analyse

Variables expliquées	Variables explicatives	Indicateurs des variables explicatives
Présence des filles et des garçons dans les filières d'enseignement technique des technologies de l'information et de la communication	Capital technologique	
	Capital technologique incorporé	- Savoir et savoir-faire sur le plan technologique - Goût et disposition en matière de technologie - Compétences et styles linguistiques sur les TIC
	Capital technologique objectivé	- Possession de matériel technologique - Utilisation et présence sur Internet - Possession d'application ou de logiciel
	Capital technologique institutionnalisé	- Nombre de filles dans les filières technologiques - Nombre de filles diplômées dans les études TIC - Nombre de filles primées dans le domaine des TIC
	Réseau de socialisation à la technologie	- Acquisition du capital technologique grâce aux parents - Acquisition du capital technologique grâce aux paires de même sexe - Acquisition du capital technologique grâce aux paires de l'autre sexe

Ce tableau donne une représentation de la relation entre le concept de capital technologique, ses variables et les indicateurs.

Résultats

La socialisation à faible « capital technologique » des filles

Nous postulons que le « capital technologique » est une variante du capital culturel possédé par un individu ou par un groupe, et comme ce dernier, le capital technologique peut exister sous trois formes : à « l'état incorporé », « c'est-à-dire sous la forme de dispositions durables de l'organisme » (Bourdieu 1979:3); à « l'état objectivé », sous la forme de biens technologiques; et enfin à « l'état institutionnalisé » sous la forme de titres institutionnels acquis sur le plan technologique (diplômes scolaires et universitaires, titres académiques...), ce dernier état du capital technologique ne sera pas développé ci-dessous parce qu'il a une étroite relation avec le nombre de filles et de garçons dans le milieu éducatif technique des TIC. Le nombre de femmes dépassant rarement le nombre d'hommes dans ces filières d'études, il leur sera donc difficile d'accumuler plus de capital technologique institutionnalisé que les hommes. Mais, par rapport aux autres états du capital technologique, tout n'est pas si évident.

Faible capital technologique incorporé des filles

Selon Benston, cité par Jouët,

> la technologie elle-même peut être appréhendée comme un langage pour l'action et l'expression de soi, avec des différences de genre importantes dans la capacité à utiliser ce langage (Jouët 2003:62).

En cela, le capital technologique incorporé peut être appréhendé en termes de pratiques, de connaissances et de compétences technologiques liées au groupe d'appartenance, intériorisées sous forme d'habitus par l'individu grâce à un travail d'inculcation et d'assimilation. Le capital technologique incorporé se manifeste par des savoirs et savoir-faire, des dispositions et des goûts technologiques, des compétences et des styles linguistiques en matière de technologie.

Les discours tenus par deux de nos informateurs extérieurs au champ technique des TIC et autodidactes de l'utilisation de l'ordinateur donnent une idée de ce qu'est le capital technologique incorporé et de son inégale répartition entre les groupes de sexes. Alain, élève en classe de 3ème et Françoise, étudiante en 3ème année de pharmacie ont bien voulu nous décrire les équipements technologiques dont chacun d'eux dispose, notamment leur téléphone portable et leur ordinateur portable. Notons

que durant l'entretien, aucun d'entre eux n'avait ses équipements à sa portée. A la lecture des extraits de discours de Françoise et d'Alain, nous pouvons constater que nos deux informateurs présentent des capitaux technologiques incorporés différents. La plus flagrante de ces différences est l'aptitude et le style linguistique en matière de technologie. La description de Françoise, si elle n'est pas erronée, manque de précision. L'extrait se rapportant à son discours est parsemé de «Je ne sais pas» et de « je ne sais plus », faisant apparaître un manque de vocabulaire en matière de technologie et une ignorance des unités de mesure en informatique. Aussi ses tentatives de précision sont-elles entachées d'erreurs. A titre d'exemple : elle dit avoir 3 Ram sur son ordinateur ; après vérification, sa machine possède 2 Ram mémoire, une de 1 Gigaoctet[4] et une autre de 2 Gigaoctet, ce qui lui donne 3 Gigaoctet au lieu de 3 Ram. Elle affirme avoir un ordinateur « Hard Core » au lieu du modèle Dual Core[5] dont elle dispose vraiment. Sur ces mêmes points, notre informateur de sexe masculin nous dit ceci sans hésiter: « En termes de capacité [de son ordinateur], le processeur est de 1,5 Gigahertz, avec une Ram de 1 Giga, une carte graphique de 128 Méga … ». Il utilise volontiers la troncation des échelles de mesure pour signifier qu'il est un initié de la chose informatique, au lieu de Mégaoctet et de Gigaoctet il dit « Méga » et « *Giga* ». Il fait aussi preuve de précision en mentionnant la distinction des unités de mesure de la puissance du processeur en *Hertz*, et la taille de l'écran en *Pouce*. Au moment de la description des fonctionnalités multimédias de leurs téléphones portables respectifs, la différence de style utilisé par nos deux enquêtés dénote encore une différence d'aptitude. Pendant que Françoise affirme qu'elle peut écouter de la musique, suivre des clips vidéo, prendre des photos avec son téléphone portable, Alain affirme que le sien est équipé d'un lecteur MP3, MP4 et d'un appareil photo de 2 Méga Pixels, ce qui est encore une précision de taille.

A cette différence d'aptitude et de style linguistique s'ajoute celle des compétences et des goûts technologiques. En effet, contrairement à Alain, Françoise n'installe pas les logiciels de son ordinateur elle-même : elle a recours soit à son frère, soit à son petit ami, cette manière de procéder pourrait trouver une explication dans l'absence de compréhension du principe de fonctionnement de la machine. A titre d'exemple, Alain dit avoir installé lui-même le système d'exploitation actuelle de sa machine, alors que Françoise peine à trouver ce que représente «Vista» pour son ordinateur : « *Vista, c'est quoi…? Le programme de… Je ne sais plus* », c'est tout simplement le système d'exploitation[6]. En matière de goût technologique, nous constatons que Françoise et Alain n'ont pas

les mêmes affinités. En désirant avoir un ordinateur avec écran tactile, notre informatrice s'attarde sur l'accessibilité du matériel technologique, précisément sur la facilité d'utilisation, alors que notre informateur, lui, s'attarde sur les capacités et la puissance des machines.

Françoise et Alain ne comptent pas suivre des études dans une filière technologique. Alain pense avoir une idée sur ce qu'on fait dans ces filières, mais il trouve que les études y sont compliquées et difficiles. Quant à Françoise, elle avoue ne pas savoir ce qu'on y étudie, ce qui fait que ces filières ne se sont pas présentées à elle comme une option après son BEPC, ni après son BAC.

L'analyse du discours de certaines de nos techniciennes actuellement en poste nous a révélé qu'avant de s'orienter dans une filière technologique, elles présentaient le même état de capital technologique incorporé que Françoise. C'est le cas de Fatoumata. Le choix de la filière de spécialisation d'Isabelle, actuellement enseignante en administration et sécurité en système et réseau informatique et de Aïcha, responsable d'une structure publique intervenant dans les TIC, a suivi à peu près la même logique que celui de Fatoumata, mais à quelques exceptions près. Isabelle s'explique en ces termes :

> « pour vous dire la vérité, je ne voulais pas faire réseau informatique. Je voulais faire un DESS en économie, mais le délai des inscriptions a expiré sans que je ne m'en rende compte parce que je venais juste d'accoucher. Après je me suis renseignée… En fait il y avait un ami qui m'a convaincu que c'était bien de faire une spécialisation en conception et administration des réseaux informatiques; sinon ce n'était pas ma volonté de faire ça, d'ailleurs je ne connaissais rien en cela. »

Quant à Aicha, c'est par pur hasard si elle travaille actuellement dans le domaine technique de l'informatique : « *C'est vraiment par accident !* ».

Le discours des techniciens de notre échantillon diffère radicalement de celui des techniciennes sus-mentionnées. Sans exception, ils ont tous voulu suivre des études en informatique avant de s'orienter dans les filières correspondantes. Les propos de Maurice (26 ans), ingénieur en travaux informatiques dans l'administration publique, représente l'idéal type du discours des techniciens que nous avons interviewés. Maurice n'est pas le seul technicien à produire un discours qui tranche avec ce que nos techniciennes avancent comme raison d'inscription dans une filière technologique, en l'occurrence l'informatique. Aristide s'est retrouvé en réseau informatique et télécommunication de la manière suivante, dit-il :

> « Après l'obtention de mon Baccalauréat série D, mes parents m'ont juste dit de choisir la filière d'études que je voulais, qu'ils allaient faire tout leur possible pour m'inscrire. Je leur ai dit que je voulais faire l'informatique, puisque c'est un domaine qui est étendu, qui me plait et je voulais en apprendre davantage. C'est ainsi que je me suis inscrit et suis actuellement à ma troisième année d'étude en informatique. »

Les deux groupes de sexe de notre échantillon, par les analyses qui viennent d'être faites, présentent des capitaux technologiques incorporés différents. Du style linguistique aux savoirs, en passant par les goûts en matière de TIC, nous avons constaté qu'à chaque groupe de sexe correspond un état de capital technologique incorporé. Qu'en est-il de la répartition de la deuxième composante du capital technologique : le capital technologique objectivé ou matérialisé ?

Faible capital technologique objectivé des filles

Le capital technologique objectivé est la constituante matérielle du capital technologique. Dans la présente étude, cet état du capital technologique est constitutif des biens technologiques du groupe de sexe d'appartenance. Concrètement, il va s'agir de l'équipement matériel, de l'équipement logiciel et de la présence sur Internet des deux groupes de sexe concernés.

Evaluons le capital technologique matérialisé de nos deux enquêtés qui appartiennent à des groupes de sexe différents. Cela va consister en une comparaison des équipements matériels, logiciels et en la présence de Françoise et d'Alain sur Internet. En ce qui concerne la possession de matériel, Alain semble posséder un nombre supérieur de matériel par rapport à Françoise. Attardons-nous sur les deux consoles de jeux électroniques d'Alain, que ne possède pas Françoise. Nous avons alors essayé d'appréhender les éléments explicatifs de cette différence par rapport à Françoise. Celle-ci nous a fait savoir que cette différence est loin d'être d'origine économique mais symbolique, puisque, dit-elle :

> « Je ne pense pas que ces appareils coûtent plus cher qu'un ordinateur mais, c'est tout simplement que je vois mal une fille demander à ses parents de lui acheter une console de jeux. Les filles aussi aiment jouer à des jeux vidéo, mais c'est des petits jeux, comme sur les téléphones portables. Personnellement je me vois mal en train de jouer avec une PlayStation, peut-être une fois en passant… mais pour te dire la vérité, ce ne sont pas des jeux pour des filles. Sérieusement, as-tu vu les jeux qu'il y a là-dedans (rire) ? Ce ne sont pas des jeux de filles. »

La conception que Françoise a des jeux électroniques rejoint les analyses faites par Orr Vered (1998) et par Diberder (1998) qui sont en rapport avec le contenu culturel « genré » de ces artefacts. Ils soutiennent qu'en exprimant des marques d'agressivité – tirer, tuer, combattre, la plupart des jeux vidéo prescrivent le sexe de leur usager, masculin dans la presque totalité des jeux.

Le capital technologique objectivé détient un certain nombre de propriétés qui ne se définissent que dans sa relation avec le capital technologique incorporé. Comme pour les biens culturels, les biens technologiques peuvent faire aussi l'objet d'une appropriation symbolique, qui suppose le capital technologique incorporé. A titre d'exemple, les manières d'appréhender l'ordinateur, les logiciels, les jeux vidéo et autres applications influencent les autres composantes du capital technologique objectivé de nos deux enquêtés. Pour Françoise, le fait de s'écarter d'un pan entier des équipements technologiques matériels va avoir un impact sur son niveau d'équipement en logiciels et sur le temps qu'elle passe sur Internet.

Remarquez qu'en ce qui concerne les logiciels, Alain dit utiliser *Winrar* pour la compression et la décompression des fichiers et qu'il utilise *Power Iso* comme manager de disque virtuel. Ces deux applications, qui sont loin d'être des logiciels de base, lui permettent de jouer aux jeux de sa PlayStation sur son ordinateur. Françoise, pour qui ces jeux électroniques ne sont pas faits pour les filles, n'a pas ces applications sur son ordinateur. Mais elle compense ce déséquilibre en mentionnant qu'elle a des logiciels en rapport avec sa formation. Ces derniers ne sont là rien que pour remplacer les « *gros livres* », dit-elle :

> « leur utilisation est facile, il suffit de mettre le mot ou l'expression recherché dans la partie recherche et en une fraction de seconde vous avez le résultat. N'importe qui peut utiliser ces logiciels, il suffit de savoir seulement ce que l'on cherche. »

A travers ces extraits, deux types d'utilisations de l'ordinateur peuvent être mis en évidence. Ces utilisations concordent en tout point avec les conclusions de l'étude menée par Karsenti :

> « Les garçons ont plus tendance à jouer à des jeux et à percevoir l'ordinateur comme un objet de loisir et de divertissement. Les filles, pour leur part, semblent surtout, quoique non exclusivement, considérer l'ordinateur comme un outil de travail ou d'apprentissage (Karsenti 2003:28). »

Chacune des perceptions a un impact sur le temps d'utilisation d'Internet et les activités que les intéressés y mènent. Chez Françoise, deux types d'activités occupent ses 60 minutes de connexion par jour. Via

son téléphone portable et son ordinateur portable, c'est la recherche d'information d'ordre académique et l'utilisation du réseau social numérique Facebook qui l'occupe sur Internet. Alain, qui dit dépenser plus de 6 heures de son temps journalier sur Internet via aussi son téléphone portable et son ordinateur portable, mène comme première activité le téléchargement de logiciel, de jeux électroniques, de musique, la deuxième est identique à celle de Françoise, à savoir l'utilisation du réseau social numérique Facebook. Il a aussi créé un Blog[7] qu'il n'a pas mis à jour par paresse et non par manque de compétences. Au final, Françoise estime avoir de « *brèves connexion à internet* » tandis qu'Alain se dit « 100 pour cent toujours connecté ».

La situation peinte ci-dessus montre que Françoise est dotée d'un faible capital technologique objectivé par rapport à Alain, même si celui-ci est son cadet de 6 ans. Mais qu'en est-il si les enfants sont du même ménage ? Maurice témoigne sur une de ses expériences :

> « lors de mon dernier voyage, un de mes oncles m'a demandé d'acheter des appareils électroniques pour ses enfants. Il m'a alors demandé d'acheter une PSP (PlayStation portable) pour son fils et un baladeur numérique MP3 pour sa fille qui est l'aînée. Déjà vous remarquez que sur la PSP il y a plus d'options que sur un baladeur MP3, aussi le garçon va découvrir très vite l'internet mobile, il va être habitué à la configuration et au paramétrage. En termes de possibilités techniques, la PSP est plus ouverte qu'un simple baladeur MP3. D'ailleurs, la fille va passer son temps à écouter la musique pendant que son petit frère explore le monde des nouvelles technologies. »

Cette inégalité n'intervient pas seulement dans les équipements, elle a aussi cours dans la présence sur Internet des garçons et des filles, comme en témoigne Isabelle :

> « Je connais une dame, elle interdit à sa fille, qui est la copine de la mienne, d'ouvrir une boîte mail et une page Facebook, sinon elle va recevoir des bêtises dans sa boîte. Alors qu'elle ne le fait pas pour son garçon qui est moins âgé que la fille. C'est un vrai blocage pour la fille, ça l'éloigne d'Internet et de tout ce qui est nouvelle technologie. »

Il ressort de ces deux témoignages et du cas d'Alain et de Françoise que les garçons présentent en général un capital technologique supérieur à celui des filles. Dans un ménage, le cadet de sexe masculin a plus de chance d'avoir plus de capital technologique incorporé et objectivé que son aînée de sexe féminin. L'inexistence, l'existence ou l'accroissement de ce capital chez les filles et les garçons dépendent d'un paramètre

essentiel à prendre en compte dans l'évaluation du capital technologique des groupes de sexe : la socialisation.

Faible socialisation intra et extra-familiale des filles à la technologie

Il ressort de l'analyse de nos entretiens que les filles sont sujettes à une mise à l'écart dans le processus d'initiation à la technologie dans leur socialisation intrafamiliale. Il ressort aussi que les éléments matériels et symboliques échangés entre les filles dans leurs réseaux de socialisation extra-familiale sont loin d'être technologiques, toutes choses qui jouent sur leur capital technologique incorporé et objectivé.

Les parents, en tant qu'agents de socialisation, participent à l'accumulation du capital technologique des garçons au détriment des filles. Pour étayer cet argument, reconsidérons les deux extraits de la page précédente. Maurice affirmait que lors de son dernier voyage, son oncle lui avait demandé de ramener des appareils pour ses enfants, une PlayStation portable pour son fils et un Baladeur MP3 pour sa fille qui est l'aînée. Isabelle, elle, donnait l'exemple d'une fille à qui sa maman a interdit la création d'une boîte e-mail et d'un compte sur un réseau social numérique, notamment Facebook, alors que son petit frère en possède. Dans ces deux situations, on remarquera aisément que les parents apparaissent comme des agents régulateurs dans la dotation de l'équipement technologique de leurs enfants et de leur utilisation. Les garçons sont ainsi mieux équipés et le plus tôt possible, au détriment de leurs sœurs. Cette manière de procéder est à la base de l'éveil des sensibilités des garçons à la culture technologique et à l'acculturation technologique des filles. En témoigne la suite des extraits de discours de Maurice :

> « […] Déjà vous remarquez que sur la PSP il y a plus d'options que sur un baladeur MP3, aussi le garçon va découvrir très vite l'internet mobile, il va être habitué à la configuration et au paramétrage. En termes de possibilités techniques, la PSP est plus ouverte qu'un simple baladeur MP3. D'ailleurs, la fille va passer son temps à écouter de la musique pendant que son petit frère explore le monde des nouvelles technologies » et d'Isabelle : « […] C'est un vrai blocage pour la fille, ça l'éloigne d'Internet et de tout ce qui est nouvelle technologie. »

Dans les réseaux de socialisation extra-familiale unisexués, le discours de nos enquêtés fait ressortir que les filles échangent très peu d'éléments matériels et symboliques d'ordre technologique entre elles par rapport aux garçons entre eux. Nos enquêtées reconnaissent tous que les groupes de filles ne sont guère des milieux où l'on échange du capital technologique, quel que soit son état : incorporé ou objectivé. Françoise, Aïcha, Hélène, Fatoumata et toutes les

autres femmes de notre échantillon reconnaissent que la technologie, même nouvelle, est loin d'être le sujet de discussion des filles quand elles sont en groupe. Françoise, tout en remuant la tête nous dit :

> « non, non ; c'est rare même que les filles parlent de technologie. Quand nous sommes entre filles, l'informatique et les autres technologies sont loin d'être nos sujets de discussions. Il nous arrive quelquefois d'en parler, mais… ce n'est même pas technique. Si, lors de nos échanges, nous parlons d'ordinateur, c'est en rapport avec les tchat, Facebook ou Hi5, faire nos recherches sur Google ou saisir nos exposés. »

Contrairement aux filles, il arrive fréquemment aux garçons de parler des nouvelles technologies dans leur aspect technique, quand ils sont en groupe. Sans être des techniciens en TIC, nous avons constaté que les caractéristiques des appareils, des logiciels et même des sites web faisaient l'objet de vives discussions, compétitions et d'échanges entre eux. A ce propos, Alain raconte :

> « Les versions supérieures des logiciels et des jeux font l'objet d'échange entre les membres de notre groupe. Si nous apprenons qu'il y a une nouvelle version d'un logiciel ou d'un jeu qui vient de sortir, nous nous mettons tous à le télécharger. Le premier à finir le téléchargement de la nouvelle version et à y jouer a gagné. Aussi nous échangeons les noms des nouveaux sites et logiciels de téléchargement que nous découvrons. Du genre, si un de nous découvre un nouveau site de téléchargement gratuit ou un logiciel plus performant, il s'empresse de donner l'adresse internet aux autres pour qu'eux aussi le téléchargent. Mais ce n'est pas tous les jours que l'on partage !.»

Ce besoin de parler de technologie et de partager ce dont ils disposent en matière de technologie a cours aussi chez les garçons qui suivent une formation dans les filières techniques des TIC. Au point que Aïcha qualifie ce comportement de « manie » de garçons. Selon elle,

> « Si vous avez besoin d'un logiciel cracké[8], sur 100 filles 2 l'auront peut-être, alors que sur 10 garçons au moins 3 l'auront. C'est le passe-temps des garçons de télécharger ci, de cracker ça. C'est un phénomène qui est évident et c'est peut-être lié vraiment, vraiment, vraiment à leur sexe. Cela doit faire partie de leur personnalité, c'est une façon de frimer pour eux. Les filles ce n'est pas trop leur domaine, ça ne fait pas partie de leur ligne de mire. Pour les filles, cracker un logiciel ça ne donne pas de l'importance, s'acheter la nouvelle chaussure à la mode, oui ! Cela a de l'importance. »

Cette différence constatée intervient chez les jeunes, à en croire Aïcha. Selon elle, c'est lors de la formation, entre 18 et 22 ans, que les garçons et filles se comportent de cette manière. A la fin de leur formation, ils deviennent tous pareils : « [...] nous faisons tous de la recherche utilitaire dans le cadre du travail plus que de la recherche pour frimer ».

Toujours dans le registre de la socialisation, nous avons constaté que certaines de nos techniciennes se sont retrouvées dans des situations où le sexe masculin est devenu pour elles un modèle à suivre. De la situation familiale aux camarades de jeu en passant par le groupe d'études, nos techniciennes affirment s'être retrouvées dans des contextes sociaux à dominante masculine au point de ne plus aimer « *les trucs de filles* » quand elles étaient plus jeunes. Aïcha et Hélène utilisent leur nombre de frères et leur situation de fille unique pour expliquer leur choix d'étudier l'informatique. Aïcha aussi emprunte le même registre pour expliquer son choix de l'informatique, même si elle nous avait affirmé précédemment que ce fut par pur accident. Toutes nos techniciennes ne sont pas dans la même situation familiale qu'Hélène et Aïcha. Elles ne sont pas fille unique de leurs parents, mais reconnaissent unanimement que leurs groupes d'études depuis le secondaire étaient majoritairement constitués de garçons et que cela influence le choix de filières de celles qui y sont. « Ce n'est pas en étant tout le temps avec les filles que j'allais choisir l'informatique… Loin de là ! » C'est la manière d'Hélène de reconnaître implicitement l'influence des groupes de garçons sur les filles qui en font partie.

Nous pouvons conclure que le capital technologique est un élément qui influence le choix des filières d'études des garçons et des filles, et qu'il est plus présent chez les premiers que chez les secondes. Les garçons en sont mieux dotés grâce à leur socialisation intrafamiliale et à leur groupe de pairs. Chez les filles qui ont en général un faible capital technologique, le choix d'une filière d'études technologiques au secondaire ou au supérieur n'est pas évident. Mais nous constatons que, malgré ce faible capital technologique, des filles suivent aujourd'hui ces filières d'études et des femmes sont actuellement en poste dans les métiers correspondants, même si leur nombre est faible. Leur point commun, loin de résider dans leur choix hasardeux des études en informatique, réside dans le fait qu'elles ont à un moment de leur parcours appartenu à un groupe de garçons dans lequel la culture technique et technologique faisait l'objet d'échanges entre les membres du groupe.

Conclusion

Au terme de la présente recherche, le phénomène social qui soutient la formulation de notre thème de recherche se voit vérifié : il y a peu de femmes dans les métiers techniques à Ouagadougou. Après ce constat, nous nous sommes attelé, par une étude sociologique, à comprendre les déterminants sociaux et professionnels de ce phénomène social qui a cours dans la capitale du Burkina Faso.

Nous avons utilisé essentiellement le structuralisme génétique de Pierre Bourdieu. Il nous a permis d'isoler et d'analyser la répartition du capital technologique entre les sexes dans les trois microcosmes sociaux que nous avons retenus dans le macrocosme social où s'est déroulée notre étude.

Cette recherche qualitative révèle que lors de leur socialisation, les filles reçoivent moins de capital technologique que les garçons. En disséquant le capital technologique en trois composantes, la réalité reste toujours la même : qu'il soit à l'état incorporé, objectivé ou institutionnalisé, les filles en présentent peu par rapport aux garçons. Les derniers manifestent plus de savoirs et de savoir-faire que les premières. S'agissant des dispositions et des goûts technologiques, des compétences et des styles linguistiques en matière de technologie, l'ordre des sexes reste identique. Sur le plan des équipements technologiques, c'est-à-dire de la variante objectivée du capital technologique, l'ordre est toujours pareil. Pareil en ce qui concerne le dernier élément, le capital institutionnalisé. Nous avons inclus un autre paramètre dans l'analyse de la répartition du capital technologique des deux sexes : le réseau de socialisation à la technologie. Il est ressorti que les filles sont sujettes à une mise à l'écart dans le processus d'initiation à la technologie dans leur socialisation intrafamiliale et extrafamiliale, toutes choses qui jouent sur leur capital technologique incorporé et objectivé, et agissent comme un frein à leur orientation dans les filières technologiques. Malgré cette situation, certaines filles sont présentes dans ces filières. Notre étude a permis de mettre à jour quelques points communs de ces filles: ils résident notamment dans le fait qu'elles ont disposé du capital technologique à un moment de leur parcours, puisqu'elles ont toutes appartenu à un groupe de garçons dans lequel la culture technique et technologique faisait l'objet d'échanges entre les membres du groupe.

Notes

1. Cette recherche sur la fracture numérique de genre en Afrique francophone, réalisée par le Réseau genre et TIC, établit que, dans les six pays étudiés (Bénin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Mali, Mauritanie et Sénégal), les femmes ont globalement un tiers de chances en moins que les hommes de bénéficier des avantages de la société africaine de l'information et que les femmes sont peu présentes dans les métiers techniques liés aux TIC.

2. BOURDIEU, P., 1979, « Les trois états du capital culturel », in Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales, Vol. 30, p. 3-6.

3. Gordon Moore exprime en 1965 et réévalue, en 1975, sa loi portant le même nom « loi Moore ». Selon cette loi empirique, les prix des appareils électroniques baissent et leur puissance double tous les dix-huit mois.

4. L'octet est une unité de mesure en informatique mesurant la quantité de données. Un octet est lui-même composé de 8 bits, soit 8 chiffres binaires : http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octet (03-10-10).

5. Un processeur double cœur (dual core en anglais) est un processeur équipé de deux cœurs (ou unités de calcul) qui travaillent en parallèle. http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dual_Core (03-10-10).

6. Le système d'exploitation, abrégé SE (en anglais operating system, abrégé OS), est l'ensemble de programmes central d'un appareil informatique qui sert d'interface entre le matériel et les logiciels applicatifs ou applications. http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syst%C3%A8me_d%27exploitation (04-10-10)

7. Le blog est un site web constitué d'articles écrits par une personne physique en général, selon un rythme périodique (tous les jours, chaque semaine, au fil du temps…). http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blog

8. C'est un ensemble de pratique en informatique qui consiste au cassage des protections dites de sécurité des logiciels. http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cracker_%28informatique%29 (consulté le 08-10-10).

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Busted Cultural Myths and *Nairobi Nights*: A Critical Analysis of Gendered Social Media Spaces in Kenya

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Abstract

This article explores how Ciku Muiruri, a prominent radio personality, and Sue Maisha, a Nairobi-based prostitute utilize new media in the form of blogs, Facebook groups, and traditional media outlets to express alternative versions of female sexuality contra to existing narratives in Kenya's cultural and media landscape. Further, an overview of audience perceptions was conducted. The critical analysis reveals that while new media forms provide new spaces for self-expression, Ciku and Sue also confront issues of agency and authenticity online. Overall, audience reception of Ciku and Sue celebrates their courageous mediated self-disclosure. Taken together, they offer a refreshing and yet cautionary insight into the workings of love and religion in urban Kenya.

Key Words: Kenya, blogging, Facebook, sexuality, social media, Web 2.0

Résumé

Le présent article explore comment Ciku Muiruri, une éminente personnalité de la radio, et Sue Maisha, une prostituée de Nairobi, utilisent les nouveaux médias sous forme de blogs et de groupes Facebook, ainsi que les médias traditionnels, pour exprimer d'autres versions de la sexualité féminine contraires aux récits existants dans le paysage culturel et médiatique kenyan. En outre, un aperçu général des perceptions du public a été réalisé. L'analyse critique révèle que si les nouvelles formes de médias offrent de nouveaux espaces d'expression personnelle, Ciku et Sue sont également confrontés à des problèmes d'agentivité et d'authenticité en ligne. Dans l'ensemble, l'accueil par le public de Ciku et Sue célèbre leur courageux dévoilement

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de soi à travers les médias. Ensemble, ils offrent un aperçu original, et cependant prudent, de la façon dont l'amour et la religion sont vécus en milieu urbain kenyan.

Mots clés : Kenya, blogging, Facebook, sexualité, médis sociaux, Web 2.0

Introduction

Issues of African women's voices and agency have long been at the forefront of efforts to locate appropriate theoretical approaches to the study of gender in Africa (D'Almeida 1994; Kolawole 2004; Ogundipe-Leslie 1994, and many more). Efforts to uncover unexplored sites of African women's self-expression such as proverbs and folktales now also include popular forms of expression such as African hip-hop (Mwangi and Mbure 2009). This article advances this charge to explore how two female players propel women's voices in the Kenyan media landscape.

The study explores how Ciku Muiruri, a prominent radio personality, and Sue Maisha, a Nairobi-based prostitute, create gendered media spaces in contemporary urban Kenya. These spaces are identified as the radio segment *Busted* and its related Facebook groups, alongside the blog *Ciku's Diary* (2008)and Sue's blog *Nairobi Nights* (2011-2012). Three goals guide this essay: (a) How do Ciku and Sue construct authenticity in their chosen medium? (b) How do readers, listeners, and fans make sense of these gendered media products? and (c) What do Ciku and Sue tell us about love in the post-colonial urban context?

I aim to demonstrate the rhetorical strategies deployed in *Busted* and *Nairobi Nights* to form an authentic account of female sexuality. Further, I aim to highlight the diverse opportunities new and social media such as blogs and Facebook promise (yet do not always deliver) for the historically marginalised female voice, especially as it pertains to sexuality. Lastly, I argue that gendered spaces such as those occupied by Ciku and Sue create new audience communities and are an opportune site to interrogate conformist, deviant, and emancipatory narratives of urban love in contemporary Africa. The findings reported in this essay are based on three primary sources of data: first, a textual analysis of blog entries, Facebook user comments on Busted groups and *Classic FM's*Facebookfan page: second, six in-depth interviews conducted with three female and three male fans of *Busted* and another five male fans of *Nairobi Nights*: and lastly, this study presents descriptive results of an online survey of 35 Busted fans.

The State of Web 2.0 in Kenya

Kenya has been experiencing steady gains in Internet usage and penetration over the last decade. Data from 2011, released by the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK), estimates that there are currently 14.3 million Internet users, a 14 per cent increase from the previous year. Regular Internet access (subscriptions) is estimated at 5.42 million or 13.2 percent of the population. This figure is exponentially higher than the 3.2 rate reported five years ago (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008). However, despite the rapid growth in digital connectivity, gender differences in media use and retrogressive attitudes about female participation prevail.

The National Council for Science and Technology (NCST), a government body, is charged with ensuring equal access to technology and science. However, retrogressive cultural attitudes to female competence in science and technology still exist. As Orchardson-Mazrui (2006:157) aptly notes, many Kenyans believe that 'girls by their very nature do not have an aptitude for the sciences'. It is little wonder therefore that the role of women in technology (as inventors, users, or content producers) is rarely recognised or highlighted in the media or in national ICT debates. In addition to anti-social attitudes towards women's participation in science and technology,findings of digital media use in Kenya suggest that gender gaps are present. For example, a 2009 national survey of 2000 Kenyan adults by *AudienceScapes* indicated that women are less likely than men to report having used the Internet or mobile phones. The survey asked respondents to indicate which media source they had used in the past week. The results indicated that 17 per cent of men had accessed the Internet, compared to only 8 per cent of women. Moreover, 26 per cent of men were more likely to have used Short Messaging Service (SMS) compared to 19 per cent of women. This trend was also noted for other mainstream media such as radio, television and newspapers, with women reporting less usage than men across board.

A benefit offered by new media platforms is their potential to dissolve previously centralized power centres as the monopoly of news media sources (Chaffe and Metzger 2001). One way in which new media may shift power from mainstream media is in the alternative avenues for self-expression they offer. Chaffe and Metzger (2001) also note that on the digital platform, users are motivated by self-actualisation, often seeking networks to sustain relationships with individuals with whom they share interests. Self-representation, however, becomes a complicated affair online. For example,when we consider Kenya's digital presence, Mäkinen

and Kuira (2008) note that the online presence is strongly influenced by Kenyan citizens living overseas. Ciku and Sue are in many ways symbols of gendered and local attempts at self-representation.

Sociability, or the ability to connect with others, is one of Web 2.0's most recognised features. The by-products of this feature include social media forms such as the micro-blogging network Twitter, the photo stream service Flickr, and social networking site Facebook. Han (2011) has pointed out that perhaps the most enduring and pervasive product of Web 2.0 is blogging. A blog is defined as 'a frequently updated Web-based chronological publication, a log of personal thoughts and Web links, a mixture of what is happening on the Web and the world out there' (Lovink 2007:3). Regardless of subject, matter, blogs often offer a combination of personal entries and pictures, producing an endless supply of feel-good writing (Parthasarathy 2009). The beginning of the 21st century appears to mark the rise of blogging in Kenya[1], with the debut in 2004 of Begins at Home (http://beginsathome.com), Mshairi (http://www.mshairi.com/)and Kenya Pundit (www.kenyanpundit. com) in 2005, and Bankelele (http://www.bankelele.co.ke/) in 2006. One of the most powerful aspects of blogs is their ability to harness single-issue audiences, and the Kenyan Blogs Webring (KBW) which came into being in 2004, allowed early Kenyan blogs to form an online collective, potentially consolidating like-minded readers. More recently, the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) has extended KBW's early efforts by offering syndication and legal representation services to bloggers and by creating the BAKE Awards in 2012 to celebrate blogging by individuals of Kenyan origin and those based in Kenya. In the next section, I explore the nature of both *Busted* and *Nairobi Nights,* introduce Ciku and Sue and review the meanings members of the Kenyan audience discove in them.

Radio and the Rise of Sex on the Airwaves

Radio in Africa has long been upheld as the ideal medium for the advance-ment of the development agenda, as it reaches more masses than any other medium, transcending both the rural and the urban divide (Gumucio-Dagrón 2001). The liberalisation of the airwaves in the 1990s led to not only an increase in the number of private radio and television stations but also increased competition among stations for listeners (Odhiambo 2002). Scholars have also argued that the media in Kenya has long had an urban bias (Frederiksen 1991), speaking to the needs of the urban population and ignoring the voices of rural inhabitants. This comes as no surprise if one considers that the introduction of radio introduction in the colonial era was informed by a development agenda rooted in modernisation theory (Boyd 1984).

In a modern-day battle for listeners, urban radio stations have found innovative ways to draw in a loyal listenership. Call-ins have become a staple of Kenyan radio stations but in the past decade decreased rates for cellular talk and short messaging have also led to increased listener participation. In addition to encouraging listeners to call in with requests, radio stations invented a diverse range of contests with giveaways, ranging from gift hampers to hard cash. *Busted* exists in the media landscape as a 'participatory' show in which listeners are invited to call in and comment on the bust of the day. To call *Busted* a radio show would be an exaggeration. The show is a short segment (usually no more than five minutes) embedded in Ciku's rush-hour show *Drive Time*. Although the segment lasts only a few minutes on air, the bust of the day is replayed during *Classic FM's* morning talk show hosted by Maina Kageni, arguably Kenya's most prominent male radio personality. It is also repeated throughout the day, thereby ensuring the shockwaves it emits radiate throughout the day. Select Busted audio clips continue their perpetual existence online through sites like *YouTube*. I now turn to a brief introduction of the show's charismatic host, Ciku.

Ciku's Journey to the Studio

Wanjiku Muiruri, or Ciku as she is popularly known, is a *Classic FM* radio personality. She also authors a feature magazine column in Kenya's most read newspaper, *The Daily Nation Saturday,* often based on the *Busted* program segment. Ciku also maintains a blog (http://cikusdiary.blogspot.com/) although the blog has not been active since 15 December 2008. Ciku, like many other Kenyan media personalities, has worked at several radio stations starting out on *Capital FM*. She had a short stint at *Easy FM* and currently hosts *Drive Time*, a rush hour show on *Classic FM*. She was also a co-host of *Big Four Fans*, a show on the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). In her blog, Ciku tells the reader that the last real man left standing is her dad:

> I will search till the ends of the earth to find a man who is half the man my father was. If I find him, I will consider myself well and truly blessed, for such men, are precious stones. Rare and priceless (August 2008, About Me).

Ciku's favourite movies are trilogies: *The Godfather, The Lord of The Rings and Pirates of the Caribbean*. Ciku's musical taste is eccentric, from Prince, Bob Marley, Linkin Park, Luther Vandross and Otis Reading, to Anita Baker and Tupac Shakur. On her favourite books, Ciku tells us

she has had a love affair with Shakespeare for many years. Ciku would be considered an upper-class Third World Woman struggling to make an on-air connection with the masses. A dropout of Oxford Business College in the United Kingdom, Ciku's life took a downward turn when her father died and her elder brother absconded with the family wealth, hence denying her the chance to complete her education.

Survey results of *Busted* fans revealed that 54 per cent (n = 18) of individuals listened to *Busted* at least one day a week, 37 per cent (n = 12) listened to *Busted* at least 2-4 times a week and 14 per cent (n = 5) listened to *Busted* for 5-8 days a week. The majority of listeners (71%, n = 25) tuned in to the show in a *Matatu* (public service vehicle) or other place during the live airing. Others listened to the show on YouTube (23%, n = 29). The majority of fans (60%, n = 21) were most likely to talk about Busted with their friends; some fans were most likely to do nothing (26%, n = 10); or talk to work colleagues (25%, n = 9). Fans were least likely to post a Facebook status on *Busted* (n = 2) after listening to the show. In examining the convergence between Facebook and *Busted*, 54 per cent (n = 19) participants indicated that they comment on Classic FM's Facebook page 1-3 days per week. Fans were equally likely to share links related to *Busted* (51%, n = 18) and visit *Classic FM's* Facebook page (49%, n = 19). Of those surveyed, 49 percent (*n* = 17) were, 29 per cent (n = 10) were male and 23 per cent (n = 8) did not indicate their gender. Overall, the survey findings provide a glimpse into the demographic make-up of a portion of the readers. Although convergence of radio and Facebook is apparent, this small sample is more descriptive than definitive of expected patterns in the *Busted* audience base. I now turn to a discussion of *Nairobi Nights* and it's narrator, Sue Maisha.

Nairobi Nights as a Confessional on Nairobi's Prostitution Industry

The debut blog entry titled 'I can't feel your thing' (3 January 2011) stirs the reader's appetite for juicy and explosive details of sex work in the infamous alleys of Nairobi's Koinange Street. Yet, Sue Maisha's blog *Nairobi Nights* offers much more. In sixty-two episodic chunks written over a period of 15 months, Sue, without restraint, invites us to take a glimpse into a complex, contradictory, heartbreaking, and uplifting experience of a sex worker in post-colonial urban Africa. The stories are both political and indifferent, conforming and deviant. Sue manages to chronicle the naughty, dark side of urban love with wit, tenacity and uncensored sentiment all culminating in her last blog entry on Tuesday,

27 March 2012, in which she declares, 'I am out of there completely.' The blog (http://www.nairobinights.info/) has over 430 followers and the average number of comments per blog entry exceeds 15. The blog features a total of 91 blog entries. Of these, 68 per cent (n = 62) are what Sue names 'episodes' or autobiographical accounts of sexual encounters, self-reflexive musings, and charged responses to readers comments. The rest of the entries feature excerpts of columns written by Sue on other media platforms, most prominently *UP Magazine*, and excerpts and promotions for *A Few Things I Know About Sex*, Sue's 'blook' or a book derived from blog content (Attwood 2009). As Kreutz (2009:29) points out, blogs often link to each other to form 'new networks and information pathways'. Sue anchors her blog to the Kenyan Blogs Webring (KBW).

Audience Perceptions of *Nairobi Nights*

Five in-depth interviews were conducted with fans of *Nairobi Nights*. Participants were recruited through Sue's Facebook fan page and the actual blog site (www.nairobinights.com). All fans were male, and four of them resided in Nairobi. One of the participants resided in the coastal city of Mombasa. The male fans were all between the ages of 25-35. Phone interviews lasted between 20-45 minutes and transcripts yielded a total of ten single-spaced pages. Participants were asked to share their opinions about *Nairobi Nights,* Sue and blogging. Participants were also asked to share whether or not they felt the blog had a positive or negative influence on *Nairobi Nights* and Kenyans. Overall, the participants had a favourable reception of the blog. The blog was primarily favoured because of the insight it offered on prostitution:

> The life of prostitution, it's something that I have always thought of. I have never got a prostitute but I have always been interested about being with a prostitute, so it gives me the feel of coming across one or being with one. Furthermore, it is not easy to get a prostitute who is educated, eloquent and intelligent. That made it more interesting and for me to read about it (Simon, 33, Mombasa).

Even though the participants had a positive reception of the blog, at least two participants said that they doubted whether or not a prostitute had actually authored the entries on the blog. Specifically, they pointed out that Sue's eloquence and writing was outstanding. Simon from Mombasa for example, pointed out, 'I do not know if she is a prostitute or a very good writer'. However, their doubts on her identity did not hinder their enjoyment of the blog.

Fans of Nairobi Nights described Sue as a courageous and honest individual, as illustrated below:

> I think she (Sue) is very honest about what she does. I think she is very confident in what she does. I think she is a good person. She is courageous, talking about what many people would consider not so good (James, 32, Nairobi).

> I think she (Sue) is quite courageous, and I think she is proud of what she does because according to her, I think she has no regrets about the job (Tony, 25, Nairobi).

Fans of *Nairobi Nights* highlighted the slow pace of adoption of blogging among Kenyans. All five participants read more than two Kenyan blogs on a regular basis. When asked about how they felt about Kenyan blogs, there were mixed appraisals. The blogs were viewed as an alternative to mainstream media sources:

> I think (blogging) is a practice that is gaining popularity by the day. It highlights issues that may not be reflected in the mass media. Issues that are not given priority and maybe they are issues that need to be addressed (Tony, 25, Nairobi).

> I think (blogging) is necessary because it gives us information. It is not like the main Kenyan media houses, they do not disseminate information we need to know. I think blogs are more frank (John, 28, Nairobi).

Some participants viewed Kenyan blogs as being less professional than blogs from outside of Kenya (primarily American and British):

> Kenyan bloggers are not usually well informed. Some of them write heresy and at least they should substantiate their claims (James, 32, Nairobi).

> I think Kenyan blogs are not so professional in the way they are done. They don't countercheck some of their stories. Also, some Kenyan blogs recycle information from other blogs (John, 28, Nairobi).

Blogging in Kenya was also seen as an avenue for local expression:

> Kenyan blogs express the feelings of the people. If anyone wants to know what is going on in the minds of the people, it is a good place to start. The local blog is about a humble person trying to make it through life… I can solve this for you, everyday things. The Kenyan blogs are more about the everyday, what is happening *hapamtaani* (on the ground) (Simon, 33, Mombasa).

Participants were asked if there were any differences between Kenyan male and female bloggers. Overall, individuals indicated that determining the gender of the blogger was often difficult and they could not therefore point out any gender differences. However, two participants pointed out that reading Kenyan blogs written by females was more enjoyable, compared to those written by males:

> I would say I enjoy blogs written by females like Sue because they are better written are more realistic and more truthful (Chris, 25, Nairobi).

> Kenyan female bloggers are more passionate in their blogging. You can actually feel what they are writing from the ones I have read. The male guys, maybe it is how we are made, but it's like the guy was just typing it on his way somewhere on his phone (laughs) (Simon, 33, Mombasa).

When asked if they felt *Nairobi Nights* had a positive or a negative effect on society, individuals had mixed reactions. Three participants said that determining the impact of the blog would be difficult because of the highly individualised consumption of blogs. Two participants described the blog as having a positive effect on society. This positive effect was seen in the blog's ability to provide an intimate insight into the life of prostitutes. However, the insights in their honest depiction of criminal acts (e.g. stealing from and drugging clients) were also seen as having the potential to produce a negative perception of prostitutes:

> I think the blog has a positive effect on to the people who read it because it gives them an insight into prostitution. Sometimes the blog talks about Sue, and how sometimes they (prostitutes) steal from clients and I think the blog might give a negative perception of prostitutes (James, 32, Nairobi).

In summary, male fans of *Nairobi Nights* had a positive reception to the blog and viewed the blogging culture as a growing area of self-expression in the Kenyan society. The absence of female fans may suggest that the blog has few female followers, or women do not have as easy access to the blog as men do.

Themes in *Nairobi Nights* and *Ciku's Diary*

Emergent themes in *Nairobi Nights* were explored through a discourse analysis of 28 random entries (40 single-spaced pages) with each of the 15 months represented by at least one entry and a maximum of three entries. The analysis of *Busted* is based on listener comments on *Classic FM's* Facebook from July October 2010, Ciku's blog entries in *Ciku's*

Diary (http://cikusdiary.blogspot.com/) and selected transcripts from the show. To discover dominant themes, Owen's (1984) threefold criteria of identification of themes: recurrence, repetition and forcefulness were utilised. Repetition refers to the extent to which different concepts are found in one or more portions of the story but are used to refer to the same concept, or process. Forcefulness refers to the extent to which the teller emphasises a specific concept through inflection, volume increase or dramatic pauses. In the case of written content, forcefulness may be observed by, among others, the use of uppercase, or exclamation marks. The last criterion refers to the extent to which key phrases, identities and ideas re-emerge through the telling.

Authenticity and Promiscuous Subjectivity

The 'problem of representation' has long been at the foreground of critical issues among so-called Third World feminists (I prefer the term post-colonial feminists). Among the key thinkers is Narayan (1997), who posits that many Western imaginations of women, and other aspects of life in the global South, are colonialist. That is, Western representations often provide ahistorical accounts, imbued with cultural forces, which are deemed static and therefore primordial. Beoku-Betts and Njambi (2005:114)) more specifically summarise the stereotypical images of African women 'as ignorant, exotic, and highly sexualised'. One response to the issue of representation is to advocate opportunities for self-representation. The rise of grant-funded soap operas, radio stations, and even newspapers can be linked to the recognition that media liberalisation has also provided (especially at the beginning of the 21st century), an opportunity for women in Africa to develop social change programming as part of a larger effort to improve their subordinate social position. The digital age, however, has provided an infrastructure for limitless self-representation outside of the social change communication framework. Such opportunities escape the often costly and formulaic entertainment education media product. From music studios set up in slum areas, garage-type rap/hip-hop groups and bands, to blogs, the Internet has transformed and increased the range of previously marginalised narratives and voices. The 'dark continent' is continually proving to be not so digitally in the dark through a large social networking presence (mostly accessed on mobiles), numerous blogging Africans and technological innovations and apps such as *M-Pesa* and *Ushahidi*. Although a cause to celebrate, these contributions should not obscure the stark reality that most individuals in Africa remain on the dusty sidelines of the information superhighway.

Ciku and Sue's self-representational efforts are examined against a background of historically marginalised women's mediated narration almost always embroiled in a long struggle for legitimacy. Both women attend to the issue of authenticity in their respective gendered spaces. Attempts at authenticity and accounts of subjectivity are explored in the subsequent section.

Language and/as Authenticity: Ciku's Tweng

Despite the fact that she hails from a well-off background, Ciku seems to make a concerted effort to reduce the real or imagined distance between her and her listeners. A common rhetorical tool amongst female bloggers is the use of second-person address, deliberately, to 'assume a sympathetic community' (Handyside 2012:47). If there is a sympathetic community to Ciku, her blog entries suggest she is implicating a female audience. In Ciku's discussion of infidelity on her blog, there appears to be a deliberate effort not only to encourage women to voice their frustrations in interpersonal relationships but also to acknowledge their own role in the cheating game. The choice to address both genders can be seen as an example of African womanism which shies away from the 'us versus them' mentality, recognising that power does not only function from a patriarchal lens and that both women and men fall victim of globalisation (Busheikin1997). Ciku does not acknowledge her privileged class position, and tackles both male and female cheats on her show and blog.

Another rhetorical strategy used by Ciku is to appeal to the least common denominator of infidelity and the demographics of the individuals she has 'busted'. She acknowledges intersectionality of her victims to suggest that infidelity, especially in Kenya, transcends class, education, and economic background. In fact, in one of her blog entries, one of her victims is the wife of a prominent lecturer at a local university.

In a very similar fashion, Sue makes connections with her audience by asserting that there is a common denominator to all women. 'We all have P' she states. The repeated use of the collectives 'we' and 'us' are commonplace on the blog entries, almost always used to refer to the group identity of the prostitute community.

Despite Ciku's prominent position as a radio personality, some listeners question her authenticity, redirecting her attention to the marker of Western influence – her accent. On one Facebook 'hater' page, a listener criticises her Kenyan-British accent; 'we don't need your *tweg* in the morning'. Foreign accents are highly favoured by many radio

personalities who want to sound like their Western counterparts or have, in fact spent a substantial amount of time abroad.

What is interesting about the question of accent as a marker of authenticity is that the success of *Busted* depends on Ciku's ability to deceive cheats with her voice. Ciku often adopts a common or *kawaida* Kenyan accent and sometimes pretends to speak like a rural Kenyan woman to deceive her victims. When asked what he thought of Ciku, one interviewee made reference to her voice:

> For me she is a winner, she has a gift. There are those who would leave *Classic FM* it would fail. Someone like Ciku, if she left, no one would continue her show. I think Ciku is a winner. That one is a gift. Because the way she changes her voice. For example, today she talks like a *kambibi* (wife). Tomorrow she talks like *amkamba*. That is a gift. It's very hard to figure out her voice (Kris, male, 26).

As suggested by the quotes below, listeners interpreted Ciku as a pleasant, courageous, and talented presenter:

> With Ciku, she does it (hosting) without fearing. She doesn't want to know the person she is dealing with. She just calls them and I think that she is courageous (Geraldine, female, 20).

> She is very good and nice at her job. She finds some very interesting ways of doing her job in order to bust people (Anne, female, 21).

> She is courageous; I mean she is able to command a person until *anaingia* box (gets trapped). Her voice, she has a way of using it until you find that you've been busted (Kim, male, 23).

One listener commented on Ciku's courage and related it to the potential danger she were may face if she was to meet one of those shamed on her show:

> Ciku is daring. Let's say, she is talking to a guy who finds that he has been busted. And these guys who have been busted can do anything to her and yet she keeps going (Adam, male, 21).

Ciku confronts issues of authenticity both on and off the air. In an interview with the Kenyan magazine *True Love*, Ciku talks about sometimes having regrets for giving her daughter a *mzungu* (white) name. She says, 'I should have given her a nice African name. But at least she has dreadlocks' (Mumo 2010). Ciku seems to deal with tensions similar to those articulated by Narayan (1997) of women in non-Western

contexts who, because of their contact with the West, may be considered betrayers of their own culture.

Spivak (1985) argues that, in the post-colonial context, the many forces of subordination include the ideological construction of gender burden – the Third World woman. The lack of agency is one of the many consequences of retrogressive gender norms. In her blog, however, Ciku appears to situate her position as one of great agency. It can be argued that Ciku invokes Campbell's (2005) definition of agency in its collective nature. Ciku acknowledges the need for Kenyan women to rise above the expectations and ideological shackles of bad marriages, extra-marital relationships, and a host of other oppressive forces:

> Now that we have understood who and what we are we should either embrace it fully (bring on the whips and the handcuffs!) or say enough already. Say enough of abusive relationships. Yes we can. Say enough of being trodden on. Yes we can. Say enough of being cheated on. Yes we can. Say enough of settling for second place and get your own man. Yes we can. Say enough of settling with a man who's not good enough for you. Yes we can. Say enough of always putting him first. Yes we can. Say enough of lousy sex. Yes we can. Alleluia to that one my sisters! (28November 2008 *Good Guys Finish Last*).

Authenticity and the 'Real' Experience in Nairobi Nights

Whereas Ciku relies on the collective 'we' to summon agency in her blog, Sue's attempts at agency in *Nairobi Nights* feature the repeated use of first-person narration. In her narration, the first person 'I' also signifies an attempt to underline her agency but also to contest oppositional representations of her subject position. Throughout the blog entries, there are multiple references to Sue's own subjectivity, and agency. In one entry, she outlines the days of her life when she fantasises and role-plays another self. She admits that on occasion, she pretends to be 'a successful young working woman' who visits 'classy, serene' uptown bars. Upon sharing her role-playing behaviour with her gynaecologist, the response she received could not be, in her opinion, any more bizarre:

> I mentioned it as a by-the-way. I was surprised by how shocked she was.
>
> She even suggested I should be seen by a psychiatrist friend of hers. I laughed.

> I have no mental problems. I know what I am doing and at no one time
> have I ever imagined it as bizarre. Yet, beyond the feeling of satisfaction,
> I have no logical explanation for my acting. But this could be one of the
> things that beat, logic. I am okay with the way I live presently. I don't
> really aspire to live the lives I act. It's not a fantasy but simply I am happy
> to experience the career life in my own way (Episode 21: Role Playing,
> April 2011).

In rejecting the doctor's reaction Sue is also legitimising her life choices
with the use of phrases such as 'I am okay' and 'I am happy'. In the
blog entries, there are references to moments of self-reflexivity most of
which reveal themselves in the use of phrases used to chronicle instances
of an examined existence. Throughout the entries, Sue sees herself as
engaging 'camouflage prostitution', 'veiled prostitution' or 'prostitution
proper', to when she eventually feels like a 'real prostitute'.

Attempts of authenticity by sex bloggers often exist in a 'self-defeating
dialectic' in which the claim to a real experience is accompanied by
'naming and defining oppressive others' (Handyside 2012:52). Handyside
notes that this is true for the sex narratives of Bridget Jones and Bitchy
Jones. In *Nairobi Nights*, Sue repeatedly makes reference to a collective
of oppressive forces in the 'Street ecosystem':

> The Street ecosystem looks more like a union of the low of society; low
> in terms of income, power and perceptions. There are the Street people
> and children. There are also the watchmen and late night hawkers. Then
> there are the clients and us. Others who form the ecosystem include the
> city council *askari* and police who we consider parasites (17 September
> 2011 *Episode 45: The Present Tension*).

From the initial reading, it would appear that Sue's oppressors include
the police and the city council officers. However, later in the same entry,
the oppressors become the saviours in a dialectic which extends beyond
that experienced by Bridget and Bitchy:

> A girl needs to feel protected even when on the Street. She also needs
> to be informed when she has dropped her guard and the police or city
> council *askari* are around. Also, once in a while, a man in a car or walking
> will come and try harassing a girl. Or a girl pinches the pocket of any of
> such during a promised cosy session in a dark alley or car. A man might
> discover and try to manhandle a girl. She only needs let out a cry and the
> man will not know what befell him. *Rungus*, fists and shoes will land
> on him. By agreeing to be at the bottom of the Street chain of command

> vis-a-vis the ecosystem, the girls are guaranteed of protection. Still, sometimes, a girl has to pay for the protection. The method of payment depends on a girl. Sometimes it's in cash or kind (17September 2011 *Episode 45: The Present Tension).*

Felski (1998:87-88) argues the 'authentic self' is itself very much a social product, and the attempt to assert its privileged autonomy can merely undermine its profound dependence upon the cultural and ideological systems through which it is constituted. Sue's entry however suggests that this dialectic is distinctively complicated in the post-colonial urban space. The city council officers, for example, offer protection, yet in another instance harass the girls. That this dialectic is self-defeating is in its ability to offer any neat explanation of the complex and contradictory existence of the girls on the street. The duality of roles in the African context, particularly as it relates to the interdependence of relationships between men and women has been highlighted elsewhere (Mama 1995; Mbire-Barungi 1999) and Sue's chronicle of life of the street suggests a similar duality.

Sue and Ciku make an attempt to authenticate their subjectivity and resist oppositional imaginings of their identity and, similarly, listeners often make an attempt to do the same. One female interviewer had this to say about Ciku:

> I can't stand her [Ciku] on the radio. Honestly, I feel like it is hard to think of her separate from the show. Yet, I feel like if it was Maina (another male host on Classic FM) who was hosting Busted I would probably dislike him too. I guess she is just doing her job (Flora, female, 31).

Blogging, Ray (2007:98) posits, can be on one hand a 'solitary pursuit' and on the other a sort of 'public confession'. In *Nairobi Nights*, we see many instances in which these dual goals emerge in Sue's candid introspection:

> Many times, when writing, I am in a soul scratching state; and when writing about why I became a prostitute, I find myself not able to relate to tales of misfortune and a poor background. It's not surprising then, a few sentences later, I realise I have no explanation that is *'acceptable'* or *'good'* (Episode 16: *Why I Become a Prostitute – An Attempt*, February 2011).

Sue is not only telling us about her own internal attempts to arrive at answers but she is also alluding to a 'state', perhaps both cognitive and emotional, which only delivers in flux.

Pederson (2005) has suggested that women are drawn to blogs because they offer a safer cyberspace compared to discussion boards or chat rooms. It can be argued that *Nairobi Nights* provides one such space in terms of offering physical safety. News videos of prostitutes being stoned as they have attempted to embarrass clients who have failed to pay at their place of work are not rare in Kenyan newspapers and television news broadcasts. The online prostitute narrative escapes, potentially only for the amount of time taken to type up entries, this harsh material reality. The blog also offers social safety by allowing Sue to speak back to 'societal expectations' or perceptions of prostitution. In this sense, *Nairobi Nights* is also a form of public confessional (Ray 2007). It allows Sue to tell us of the instance where she broke the 8th commandment and got away with it, or the time she deliberately used news bytes from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio to puncture a client's inflated ego. Confessions also include experimenting with sedatives; breaking her own rule, and bringing a client back to her home.

Ciku, perhaps due to the multiple avenues for self-expression (Facebook, *Busted,* and *Ciku's Diary*), is short-changed in the confessionals, compared to Sue. It may be that the 'public confessions' of those caught on *Busted* deflate from her own personal reflections, although in her early blog entries she confesses to having privileged knowledge of some of those she has busted.

Representing Sexuality

A key characteristic of women's sexual narratives in media is the 'claim to represent women's sexuality' (Attwood 2009:13). Attwood suggests that this is done either by referring to an essential female sexual identity, to contemporary urban life or to the *zeitgeist.* In *Nairobi Nights* there is a strong claim to represent not women's sexuality but men's.

Overall, the portrayal of African (and Kenyan) sexuality privileges male sexual assertiveness and female subordination (Kameri-Mbote 2002; Subbo 2002) and often hinges on discretion and silence (Arnfred 2004). This perception is often reinforced in cultural images, including mediated ones, of women in Kenya (Orchardson-Mazrui 2006). The gender inequality in issues of sexuality are manifest in the high prevalence of sexual violence against women and young girls in Kenya, in the problematic media coverage of women as 'victims' of sexual violence and the cultural stigma against women who report incidents of sexual violence (Orchardson-Mazrui 2006). Further, sexuality is often discussed in the context of HIV and AIDS. Orchardson-Mazrui (2006) notes that male control features prominently in

condom advertisements in the media in Kenya. The focus of male sexual prowess essentially shifts the power dynamic in the sexual relationship and inadvertently making the 'condom itself a weapon of male domination' (Orchardson-Mazrui 2006:157). In sum, the narrative of sexuality in Kenya is rarely celebratory of female sexuality, focusing instead on the male as the controlling and sexually assertive partner.

Sue and Ciku both make attempts to rewrite the narrative of African female sexuality in their semi-autobiographical blog entries. These entries sideline, as the central focus, male sexual prowess to bring to light intimate feelings and collective ululations of female sexual freedom. Sue tells us she is in it for the money and that she has reconciled the fact that her good education may not be enough to land her a good job and career. Attwood (2009:14) observes that the appeal of the call girl can be traced to their characterisation as the 'feisty, self-determining heroine' who may be facing economic hardship and yet also emerges as sexually insatiable. Sue's take on this insatiability is both contradictory and complex. In one blog entry she declares:

> A significant source of happiness in any career is in doing what one enjoys. I do enjoy what I do, but I have to admit not as immensely as I used to say a year ago. What has changed? … I may have reached some sort of plateau.

> The problem is this is a career, which has swallowed me; I don't feel like quitting until I am literally laid down. In light of this, I will acknowledge I am not as happy as I used to be. Although I still have lots of interesting and rather challenging mental games with men, I don't clap when I triumph, neither do I grieve unnecessarily when I fail. I mean I have lost most of the emotions, which come with winning and losing (July 2011 Episode 37:' *Unhappy? Maybe Yes'*).

In the episode 37 post, there is no outright admission of a female celebrating the moment and act of sex. Sue further separates herself from a sexually voracious working girl in the post below:

> I have previously said that I don't care much for sex, especially the fun part of it. But that does not mean I do not have urges. I do. My clients whether good or bad, help satisfy my sex urges, and I feel naturally whole again (19 October 2011, Episode 49: *'My Retirement Plan'*).

Ciku does not lay claim to represent urban love or sexuality in general. However, listeners take note of her role as, among others, a gatekeeper, home wrecker, and marriage expert. The segment initially only busted

men who were cheating on their wives and Ciku was often branded a 'man-hater' by one Facebook group that opposed her show. Listener comments included statements such as 'Ciku should let African men be African men' as they sympathised with the men who had been busted on the show. However, over the years, Ciku has also caught women on the show. She talks about several of her female victims on her blog and rationalises that it is the men who started it all and now women are aboard the cheating train.

Urban Religiosity and the Spiritual Role of a Prostitute

This article closes with a discussion of the place of religion in the on-going debate of the sexploration on the airwaves and online. In one of the most famous episodes of *Busted,* Ciku pretends to be a born-again rural Christian seeking to make peace with God since her HIV diagnosis *(Busted,*21 October 2010).

Ciku informs a woman that she has been praying about her husband's infidelity and just wanted to make things right. She tells the cheat that she has recently been tested for HIV and was found to be positive. The cheat who had previously denied having a sexual relationship with her boss suddenly changes her story. Ciku jumps in and asks if she has been using (condom) protection. The woman, caught in the moment, says no. At this point the woman's husband, whom Ciku introduces as her own doctor, interjects:

Ciku: "Am even here with my doctor, why don't u talk to him, he will give u more information"

Agnes' husband: "Hello"

Agnes: "Who am I speaking to?"

Agnes' husband: "Agnes...Agnes r u serious?"

Agnes: "Oh my God"

Agnes' husband: "What? Stop saying Oh my God. Are you serious?

Agnes: "It's not what you thinking"

Agnes' husband: "What do u mean? I've heard everything"

Agnes: "Oh my God..wh... am confused... whats going on?"

Agnes' husband: "Ok wait wait ... what?"

Agnes: "Oh my God" beep beep (disconnects phone).

On Classic FM's Facebook Page, fans pray for Agnes and ask other listeners not to be self-righteous in the biblical 'first to cast the stone'

sense. As Figure 1 shows, Ciku's own status update, following the Agnes episode, is critical of Agnes' use of religion as a refuge:

Figure 1: Ciku's Status Update after Agnes' Episode

Religion, as indicated in Ciku's status update, is mocked as a sorry excuse for one's behaviour. In a sort of public rebuke, callers call in with all sorts of comments. One caller says, "Shit! That woman is f@&*!d! She should just go kill herself because she's in so much s*@t!" Another caller says, "So what? Should we feel any different just because it was a woman who got busted?" Another caller says, "that justice served is justified." Other Facebook users join in the mockery, suggesting that Agnes, the busted wife, should have been calling out 'Oh My Satan'.

Religion also emerges in Sue's autobiographical entries. Sue identifies the 'spiritual' aspect of sex in contemporary Nairobi and sees herself as providing a spiritual service to men.

> Sex is getting to that special level. So the sex manual which is able to capture this higher level of present day sex will be the ultimate. And the woman who is able to get to the spiritual level sex will remain relevant (11 November 2011, Episode 52: A Sex Manual).

In this blog entry, Sue, in a prophetic voice, is alluding to imminent changes in the sexual skyline of urban Kenya. She often positions herself as an expert on urban sex, and in rare moments, urban marriages. This positioning is often subtle, but occasionally, becomes blatantly bold:

> Men come to us because they want to get something out of themselves. And not the product of their balls for if that was the case, they would fare better, saving time and money by playing with themselves. It's something

intangible, what the priests here call *pepo*, some sort of 'demon'. Men come to us possessed by stress, frustrations, mid-life crisis, career stagnation, work challenges and we exorcise them in a more pleasurable way, which doesn't involve sitting on a pew for hours listening to a man or woman blaming your spiritual afflictions on your refusal to give tithe (19 January 2011, Episode 10: The *Spiritual Role of a Prostitute*).

In *Nairobi Nights*, entries chronicle shifting economic and social structures and the role of sex in this intricate web of changes in Nairobi. Sue's online sexual narrative does not exist in a vacuum, and as Silberschmidt's (2004) work on sexuality in East Africa suggests, any attempt to understand changes in sexuality, masculinity and femininity in the East African context must confront changing social, political, and economic structures. Sue offers a prognosis of change in the urban man overworked, stressed, and seemingly consolable only by something other than a hot meal or care from a significant other. At this point, Sue makes the case as to why men set aside a few thousand shillings for this spiritual 'pleasure' experience with a prostitute:

But why a prostitute? Unfortunately it's because a prostitute is considered to be close to the dark of the earth; a somehow priest of darkness, but more formal and effective than witchdoctors. Men sex prostitute with some roughness, haste, urgency and complexity not shown anywhere else. I see the difference always when sleeping with a man who doesn't know I am a prostitute and one who knows. The face of a man after a session with a prostitute, is that of relieve and freshness, something which I can bet my money making organ can't be noted after a time with the kept woman. (19 January 2011, Episode 10: '*The Spiritual Role of a Prostitute*').

If there is a 'spiritual role' of a prostitute, Sue sees it like glue that holds intact a frail social fabric:

It might be a little hard to get all this, but like with all matters spiritual only those who honestly practise a faith understand it. Remove prostitutes and the productivity of the country would be affected; families would break up, and more people would end up in asylums. The call for the government to legalise our trade should not be because we are to pay taxes, but because we contribute to the well being of the nation, same as churches (19 January 2011, Episode 10: *The Spiritual Role of a Prostitute*).

At least two readers *of Nairobi Nights* reverberated Sue's sentiments about her integral role in society, describing prostitutes as 'needed' and 'very important' in our society. Sue's description of spiritualism and

prostitution suggests a new form of faith in post-colonial urban Africa. The kind that one of Sue's white clients thinks 'she needs more than he does' as he hands her a King James Bible at the end of a session; the kind that requires souls to be delivered, not in open-air sermons or in white-clad holy spaces but in alleys and rooms on dark *Nairobi Nights*. Religion is very much alive in the confessional gendered spaces offered by *Busted* and *Ciku*.

Conclusion

Busted and *Nairobi Nights* are gendered media spaces which offer previously marginalised narratives for new communities in the online and convergent media space. These media products exist as alternatives in a male-dominated media landscape, and have the potential to challenge dominant narratives and social norms of male sexual control. *Busted*, in its exploration of sex and infidelity, invades the 'private realm' to make promiscuity public in Nairobi. These spaces, especially *Nairobi Nights*, can be seen as an attempt to resist representations of African sexuality thatpivot on savagery, male assertiveness, and female subordination (Arnfred 2004; Haram 2004). The communities (both fans and opponents) engage the show and blog in similar and divergent ways. *Ciku* is seen by some as a 'home wrecker' yet celebrated by others as a 'genius'. Sue in *Nairobi Nights* uses blogging to provide a rare narrative of female sexuality through the lens of prostitution and its place in the urban space. Readers are mixed in their reception of this seminal story. Some fans celebrate, others rebuke her as a demon-possessed woman in need of Jesus, and yet others admire her intellect and her superior writing skills. With a loyal following of regulars, *Busted* and *Nairobi Nights* foster conversations, and provide a pretense-free new media environment where individuals can enter and leave at will without penalty (less so in Busted)and therefore provide a form of mediated '*third place*' between the real and the virtual (Oldenburg 1999).

One of the ways in which social networking technologies have changed social interactions is that they have allowed us to engage in voyeuristic pleasure (Bauman 2008). Bauman, for example, argues that Facebook users are motivated to use the site because it allows them to compare themselves to others and to do so at a distance in order to achieve social efficacy. Fan comments on Classic FM's Facebook page suggest that voyeurism is evident. In particular, users seem to espouse mediated voyeurism '...the consumption of revealing images of and information about others' apparently real and unguarded lives, often yet

not always for purposes of entertainment but frequently at the expense of privacy and discourse' (Calvert 2000:1). *Busted*, in particular, provides voyeuristic entertainment by undermining the privacy of those whose cell phone numbers are provided to Ciku by their suspecting spouses.

Further, *Busted* and *Nairobi Nights* can be said to produce a form of intertexuality whereby audiences and media products cross-reference each other (McQuail 2005). On two occasions, Sue mentions how radio stations in Kenya cover sex and prostitution. In the first instance, she responds to a radio story regarding a well-educated former University of Nairobi student now turned prostitute. In the second instance, she alludes to an important observation:

> ….BBC, the station I prefer listening to because most of the local stations will in one way or another end up reminding me of my work. And I don't want to be reminded so much of it (20 January 2012, Episode 57: January Mind Games).

Sue's experience with radio stations underscores the prevalence of sex on the airwaves, and the voyeuristic pleasures listeners are encouraged to derive from its presence.

Keen (2007:36), an ardent critic of the Internet, cautions that Web 2.0 'threatens to turn our intellectual traditions and institutions upside down'. *Nairobi Nights* offers an unapologetic chronicle of the life of prostitution in Nairobi and urban Kenya, and has, to a certain extent, succeeded in breaking cultural myths and norms of prostitution. Ciku's *Busted* and Sue's *Nairobi Nights* exist alongside such forums to offer a new form of symbolic expression that creates communal conversations about the intricacies of sex, love, politics and faith in contemporary African cities. These new and social media spaces have the potential to be the future sites of contest and public discourse of gender norms and sexual narratives in the digital era in urban Africa.

Notes

1. The blurring of clear claims to Kenyan authenticity, identity, and nation in the digital age makes it difficult to distinguish between Kenyan bloggers who are Kenyan-based and blogs about Kenya.

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Représentations de la féminité et de la masculinité dans la presse togolaise : étude de la caricature dans *Sika'a, Viva* et *Pipo magazine*

Kouméalo Anate*

Résumé

Cet article met en lumière les stéréotypes et les traits (physiques, moraux ou psychologiques) de la féminité et de la masculinité véhiculés par la caricature, dans trois magazines humoristiques togolais. Ainsi, l'article propose une étude des représentations récurrentes et significatives de l'homme et de la femme tout en insistant sur les mutations dans les perceptions qui circulent sur chaque genre : détournements et inversions stéréotypiques dans les rapports homme-femme. Il interroge également, à travers des entretiens, le regard que les journalistes portent sur leur société, mais aussi le but poursuivi par ces magazines (créés et dirigés essentiellement par des hommes) et l'imaginaire produit par le discours médiatique.

Mots clés : caricature, féminité, masculinité, rapport homme-femme, représentations, stéréotypes

Abstract

This article sheds light on the stereotypes and the physical, moral and psychological traits of the femininity and the masculinity as caricatured, in three Togolese humoristic magazines. Thus, the article aims to study the recurrent representations charged with meanings that can be associated with men and women. In the meantime, the article focuses on the perceptive mutations that permeate each genre: the deviations and the stereotypical inversions in male-female relationships. It points, not only, through interviews, to the journalists' appraisal of their society but also, to the objective of the magazines, created and managed mainly by men and the imaginary produced by the media discourse.

Key Words : caricature, femininity, male-female relations, masculinity, representations, stereotypes.

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Introduction

Depuis 2008, le paysage médiatique togolais s'est enrichi successivement de trois magazines satiriques et humoristiques[1]. Ceux-ci ont adopté un style résolument affranchi de tous les tabous pour dépeindre les vices et les travers de la société à travers l'image de l'homme et de la femme. Les caractérisations sétéréotypiques concernant les représentations des genres masculin et féminin qu'on y trouve reposent sur de nombreux clichés fonctionnant comme relais ou comme lieu d'élaboration d'un certain discours médiatique sur la femme et sur l'homme. En effet, à côté des stéréotypes portant sur le sexe, le pouvoir et l'argent, apparaissent ici des stéréotypes assez inattendus comme ceux liés à la domination ou à la tyrannie supposée de la femme et au caractère faible ou naïf de l'homme. La vision de la féminité qui en découle détermine ainsi une nouvelle place de la femme et assigne à l'homme une place corrélative dans des rapports où justement les rôles sont parfois inversés.

Notre hypothèse de travail stipule que la représentation de la féminité et de la masculinité dans les magazines humoristiques togolais reproduit l'imaginaire social, d'une part, mais s'enrichit aussi, d'autre part, d'un détournement de l'usage de certains stéréotypes, entraînant ainsi une inversion d'attributs féminins et masculins. L'objectif ici est de mettre en exergue les représentations dominantes de la féminité et de la masculinité à travers la caricature, dans *Sika'a, Viva* et *Pipo magazine* et d'étudier de plus près le phénomène d'inversion ou de détournement dans le traitement stéréotypique des genres.

Sur le plan méthodologique nous avons privilégié l'analyse de contenu qui permet de faire émerger l'explicite et l'implicite, le dénoté et le connoté. Il s'agit d'interroger les images elles-mêmes de manière à en tirer le plus d'informations possible non seulement à partir de ce qui est clairement exprimé, mais également en prenant en compte ce qui est suggéré et dont le sens peut être obtenu par déduction ou induction permettant de construire des catégories de stéréotypes. Afin de compléter notre analyse des représentations véhiculées par les caricatures, nous avons réalisé des entretiens semi-directifs avec les journalistes caricaturistes et les directeurs de ces magazines. Il est intéressant de comprendre les choix journalistiques (sources d'inspiration et d'information, perception de la société) qui déterminent le regard porté sur la femme et sur l'homme. Nous avons travaillé avec un échantillon de quarante-deux numéros, soit trente numéros du bimensuel *Sika'a* (à raison de six numéros par an sur

cinq années : 2008-2012), six premiers numéros du mensuel *Viva* (2011-2012) et six premiers du bimensuel *Pipo magazine* (2012). Le support d'étude ne concerne aucunement les articles de presse, mais plutôt la caricature. Après le dépouillement (manuel), les données recueillies ont été traitées à l'aide du Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 17.0 pour Windows). Il a servi à la création de base de données, à leur apurement et traitement. Les résultats sont ensuite exportés sous Excel, pour la construction des graphiques, le calcul des fréquences permettant d'établir la récurrence des images pour chaque genre.

Images récurrentes de l'homme et de la femme à travers la caricature

Les trois magazines de notre corpus véhiculent de nombreux stéréotypes qui sont le reflet de la perception de la femme et de l'homme dans la société togolaise. Les thèmes (fortement liés au sexe) et le ton osés qu'ils arborent ne laissent pas le lectorat indifférent. Ils amusent et dérangent à la fois selon le public. Les dessins d'humour dépeignent les péripéties de la vie quotidienne. En effet, les thèmes abordés sont divers et portent aussi bien sur le libertinage sexuel, les rivalités femme-femme ou homme-femme, l'amour, la domination, le matérialisme que sur la satire politique, etc.

En effet, l'analyse de contenu des trois magazines étudiés révèle des traits caractéristiques des genres féminin et masculin. Sans être exhaustive, cette analyse s'attèle à montrer les représentations les plus significatives. Bien qu'on puisse facilement observer une construction et un traitement quelque peu différenciés des représentations des deux genres d'un organe à l'autre, on relève toutefois une récurrence d'images communes véhiculées par ces magazines.

Représentations de la femme

Cette partie fait l'analyse des images dominantes et des traits de féminité accolés aux femmes, sur la base des résultats obtenus (au niveau du contenu explicite) après le dépouillement de l'échantillon retenu. Pour ce faire, le tableau de synthèse proposé dans le tableau 2 de l'annexe 1 nous a permis d'obtenir des graphiques de base qui alimenteront nos analyses et interprétations. Le graphique ci-dessous représente les images récurrentes associées aux femmes dans les trois magazines.

Graphique 1 : Représentations de la femme et de la féminité
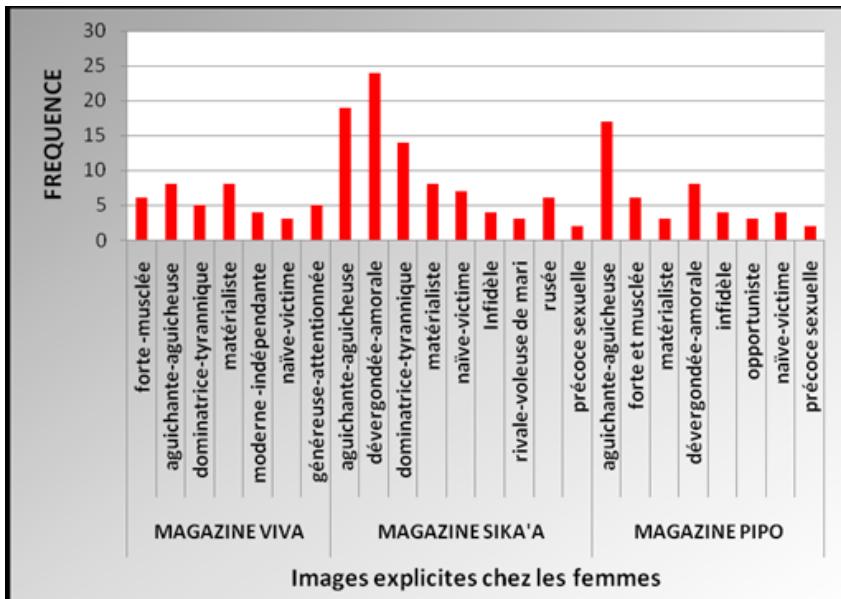
Source : Auteur, réalisé à partir de la synthèse du dépouillement des trois magazines

On observe que les images récurrentes dans les trois magazines sont très significatives et presque identiques, à quelques nuances près. La plupart des images qui décrivent la femme et sa féminité ont, dans leur majorité, une connotation très négative. Mais nous n'insisterons pas sur cette caractéristique dans la mesure où ce qui importe d'abord, c'est de déterminer les catégories de stéréotypes associés à la femme.

Celles qui sont dominantes, récurrentes et communes aux trois magazines décrivent la femme comme aguicheuse, dévergondée ou amorale, dominatrice ou tyrannique, matérialiste. Elle apparaît aussi comme très moderne et rusée ou traditionnelle et naïve, croyant encore à l'amour et refusant de suivre un homme pour de l'argent. Le sexe, omniprésent, est explicitement ou implicitement latent dans chaque trait qui dépeint la femme.

Nous avons remarqué que, curieusement, ces magazines ne font pas de différence entre la prostituée et la femme au foyer. Toutes semblent très libérées sexuellement et ont le même parler vulgaire et paillard, comme l'illustrent ces phrases prononcées par des femmes s'adressant à leurs partenaires masculins : « Bonne arrivée chéri ! J'ai préparé le lit, on va

faire la chose ! » (*Sika'a* 0067: 3) ; « …Moi Dominique, je ne nique pas avec les sans fric. » (*Pipo* 003:2) ; « Kodjo, on rentre sinon je vais te violer ici » *(Viva* 006:9). On pourrait parler d'une émancipation verbale chez la femme ou de l'appropriation totale d'un langage longtemps réservé aux hommes, du moins en Afrique où la pudeur la contraignait (surtout celle qui se respecte) à ne pas prononcer certains mots liés au sexe.

D'une part, la femme apparaît comme objet de désir sexuel mettant constamment ses atouts en valeur d'une manière ostentatoire, soit pour provoquer les hommes ou pour assouvir ses propres pulsions. Aussi les dessins montrent-elles les femmes toujours dans des tenues vestimentaires légères, ayant des comportements osés et aguichants, un parler franc et direct libéré de tous tabous. C'est ce que véhiculent les images récurrentes et dominantes. Leurs comportements et leurs propos révèlent des femmes s'assumant totalement comme sujet et objet de désir. Ce vécu les conduit parfois à l'infidélité, à « voler » les maris de leurs copines ou à vivre une sexualité précoce. Malgré cette vie dépravée, totalement amorale, on trouve encore dans ces caricatures des femmes généreuses et attentionnées, naïves et victimes (soit des viols, de la pédophilie, du mensonge ou de l'ingratitude des hommes).

D'autre part, la femme se sert du sexe pour atteindre ses objectifs : s'accomplir, s'enrichir, se positionner face à l'homme et, au besoin, par la force. Les femmes développent alors des stratégies de pouvoir et de séduction qui les font apparaître comme matérialistes, opportunistes, rusées.

Enfin, que ce soit par le sexe ou par son aspect physique, la caricature montre une femme forte qui a tendance à dominer et à terroriser son partenaire masculin, matérialisant ainsi un constat social expliqué par un dessinateur du magazine Viva : « la femme est certes considérée comme le sexe faible, mais elle n'est pas pour autant inoffensive. Elle compense sa faiblesse par rapport à l'homme en étant audacieuse et malicieuse. »[2].

Représentations de l'homme

Les représentations récurrentes et dominantes qui caractérisent l'homme et sa masculinité sont ici analysées à partir des résultats obtenus (dans le contenu explicite) après le dépouillement de l'échantillon retenu. Nous illustrons notre propos par le graphique ci-dessous réalisé sur la base du tableau de synthèse, proposé en annexe.

Graphique 2 : Représentations de l'homme et de la masculinité
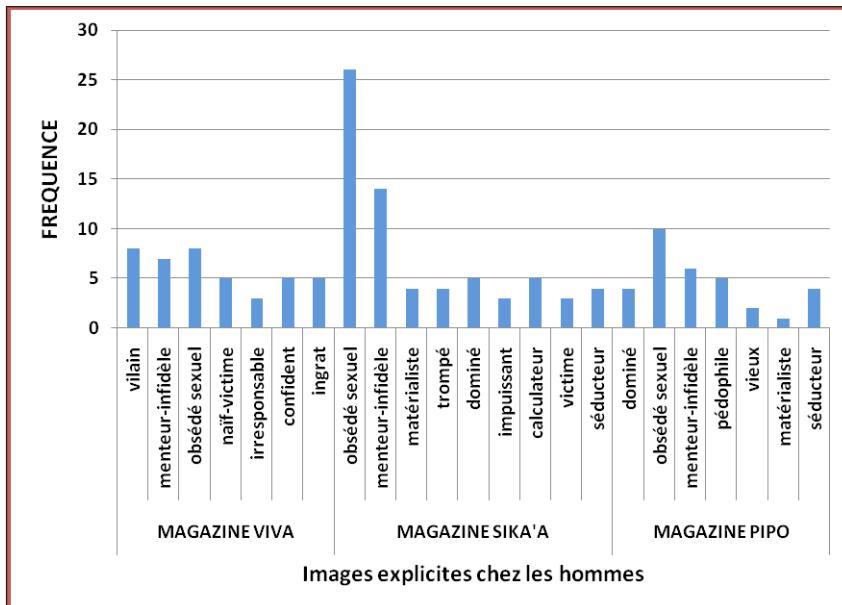
Source : Auteur, réalisé à partir de la synthèse du dépouillement des trois magazines

Parmi les images récurrentes et significatives décrivant de manière prépondérante l'homme, nous avons : obsédé-sexuel, menteur-infidèle, vilain, dominé, pédophile, naïf-victime, confident, ingrat, calculateur-matérialiste, séducteur. La majorité de ces stéréotypes sont connotés négativement.

Dans la représentation de l'homme, le sexe est omniprésent et semble définir intrinsèquement sa nature. Ici, il apparaît comme un individu toujours porté vers le sexe. Sa libido le rend souvent amoral et pervers : les caricatures le montrent toujours en train de fantasmer sur chaque femme qu'il voit, d'essayer de la séduire, enclin à tromper sa femme et à s'adonner à la pédophilie. Même lorsqu'il est vilain (ce qui est très fréquent) et vieux, il peut parvenir à ses fins, en usant de l'argent et des mensonges. Cependant, il lui arrive de fuir ses responsabilités de conjoint et de père. Il est naïf devant les mensonges et les ruses des femmes qui le trompent et l'escroquent financièrement. Il subit aussi l'infidélité (le mari trompé), la ruse, la violence féminine (domination féminine) et les conséquences des rivalités entre femmes. Parfois, il devient volontairement esclave de la femme en espérant une récompense sexuelle. Mais lui-même ne récompense pas toujours les femmes qui se

sacrifient pour lui par amour. Son ingratitude le conduit à abandonner une partenaire généreuse et attentionnée pour une autre.

Finalement, on remarque une permanence de stéréotypes habituellement véhiculés par l'imaginaire collectif : l'homme porté vers le sexe, son infidélité, ses mensonges et sa capacité de séduction. Toutefois, son image de naïf, de victime et de matérialiste est plus surprenante, dans la mesure où ce sont des attributs fréquemment associés aux femmes. Le directeur de publication du magazine *Sika'a* explique ce paradoxe en partie : « Les hommes sont débrouillards, mais leur faiblesse est le sexe. Et c'est là que les femmes sont plus fortes et profitent d'eux »[3].

Il est fort étonnant de constater que dans l'ensemble des trois magazines, la violence faite aux femmes et la domination masculine auxquelles l'imaginaire collectif fait habituellement référence, en Occident comme en Afrique (lorsqu'il est question de l'image ou de conditions de la femme), sont peu évoquées. Les caricatures montrent plutôt un détournement des clichés porteurs des représentations de la féminité et de la masculinité. Ce détournement mérite d'être questionné. Nous reviendrons sur cet aspect plus loin, dans la deuxième partie de cet article.

Au-delà de ces images stéréotypées, il convient de s'intéresser au rapport entre le discours médiatique (comme production) et l'imaginaire social, en montrant aussi les ruptures représentationnelles des deux genres.

Construction médiatique et représentations du genre : images et imaginaire

En paraphrasant P. Marchand (2004:222) dans son analyse de la presse quotidienne, nous estimons que les magazines de notre corpus contribuent à la construction de conceptions plus ou moins implicites à travers lesquelles l'image de l'homme et de la femme subit des connotations de valeur (idéologique, socio-psychologique, morale, etc.) susceptibles d'exercer une influence considérable sur les lecteurs. En exagérant les défauts pour choquer et corriger les mœurs, la caricature devient finalement le lieu de production d'un imaginaire médiatique susceptible d'influencer l'imaginaire collectif ou individuel (social, psychologique, symbolique, etc.). Mais en même temps, cet imaginaire porteur d'une réalité sociologique actuelle constitue le terreau dans lequel le journaliste pioche des éléments pour bâtir son discours, pour fabriquer son miroir grossissant et réfléchissant.

La forme est porteuse de sens et l'image se donne à voir comme représentation d'une vérité. Existe-t-il alors une vérité sociale de la femme et de l'homme togolais dont la presse fait écho à travers l'humour et la satire ?

Féminité et masculinité : des identités et des personnalités en mutation

Après l'approche globale permettant de dégager de façon claire les images récurrentes et dominantes, il importe d'aller plus loin pour illustrer les écarts et les ruptures relevés dans la matérialisation de ces stéréotypes. En réalité, il existe de nouveaux comportements et des imaginaires antagoniques qui tissent ou complexifient les rapports entre l'homme et la femme.

Nous avons donc procédé à l'analyse systématique des images traduisant bien ces antagonismes. Les données détaillées sur l'explicite et l'implicite qui en découlent ont été consignées dans un tableau général (Cf. annexes 1 : tableau 2). Ces résultats ont permis ensuite de réaliser le tableau de synthèse ci-dessous afin d'apporter un éclairage rapide, non seulement sur les perceptions de la femme et de l'homme dans la société togolaise, mais aussi sur la nature des interactions qui définissent leurs rapports.

Tableau de synthèse : inversions et détournement des stéréotypes

Représentation de la féminité		Représentation de la masculinité	
Explicite	Implicite	Explicite	Implicite
Femme : -autoritaire -dominatrice -courageuse -sans cœur -profiteuse -indépendante -ultra moderne (branchée internet)	Femme : -masculine -tyrannique -insoumise -combattante -gagnante -cynique et cruelle -irresponsable -inconsciente	Homme : -faible -soumis -sensible et malheureux -peureux -virtuel	Homme : -infantilisé -efféminé -dominé -esclave -domestique -anormal -perdant -irresponsable -absent

Ce tableau confirme le détournement et l'inversion des stéréotypes homme-femme analysés dans les paragraphes suivants.

Détournement et renversement des stéréotypes : une déconstruction des rapports homme-femme

Comme le montre le tableau, les images sont très fortes et très parlantes. La comparaison des traits explicites et implicites présentés comme correspondant à la nature profonde de chaque genre met en exergue une opposition radicale. Les rapports sont construits sur un mode antagonique. En effet, les images explicites révèlent déjà les couples antinomiques suivants : autoritaire/faible ; dominatrice/soumis ; sans cœur/sensible ;

courageuse/peureux ; cynique/malheureux… Le seul point qui rapproche l'homme et la femme appartient au champ du virtuel (Internet) : des rencontres sur Internet, sans engagement, qui laissent chacun libre et indépendant.

Les images implicites viennent cristalliser davantage cette réalité dichotomique. Ici encore, la femme apparaît sous des traits que l'imaginaire social définit comme masculins et l'homme sous des traits de femme. Il y a, en évidence, une substitution identitaire qui crée une nouvelle espèce où la femme, malgré les apparences, est un homme et où l'homme est en réalité une femme. Quand elle est tyrannique, l'homme apparaît comme infantilisé, efféminé et réduit en esclave domestique. Lorsqu'elle combat, domine et gagne, lui est soumis et dompté, faible et dans la posture de perdant. Si elle apparaît comme inconsciente et irresponsable, lui est présenté aussi comme irresponsable, anormal et absent. On s'aperçoit très bien que toutes ces images n'ont rien d'élogieux, elles sont toutes connotées péjorativement.

Tout cela confirme une réelle inversion des natures de l'homme et de la femme. Il y a donc détournement de stéréotypes : le féminin se masculinise et le masculin se féminise. Ce renversement participerait-il de la révolution silencieuse des femmes africaines dont parlait Sami Tchak (1999) ? En effet, après l'enquête sociologique qu'il a réalisée sur la sexualité féminine en Afrique, il écrit ce qui suit :

> « On dit que les femmes africaines sont dominées par les hommes. Cette affirmation doit être nuancée […]. Mais au sein de tout système qui légitime la domination d'un groupe d'individus par un autre, en fonction du sexe, de l'âge ou de bien des critères conventionnés, les dominés se créent toujours quelques espaces de libertés en contournant les normes, en les transgressant, en passant par toutes les ruses possibles. […] Profitant parfois de leur autonomie financière, de leur instruction scolaire, de l'évolution de certaines valeurs surtout en milieu urbain, [les femmes] font silencieusement, mais efficacement, leur révolution » (Tchak 1999:21-22).

Il s'agit désormais d'un rapport de force qui sacre la domination féminine sur le masculin, du moins sur le plan symbolique. On remarque qu'il n'est ni question de complémentarité ni de symétrie dans les relations de couple. Le caricaturiste pousse ici le vice en matérialisant, physiquement, ces changements de personnalité et de rôle. La femme a, physiquement, une carrure et une posture d'homme, comme le montrent les images ci-dessous :

Pipo Magazine 003:2

Viva 005:10

Pipo Magazine 004:10

Cette inversion ici présentée contredit les théories établies de la suprématie masculine.

L'une d'entre elles, en particulier, celle de Bourdieu (*La domination masculine* 1998), trouve naturelle la domination des hommes sur les femmes. Pour lui, ce naturel des rapports sociaux s'inscrit inconsciemment dans les comportements des dominants (les hommes) et des dominés (les femmes) et les pousse à agir conformément à la logique de ces rapports sociaux. Les hommes doivent se conformer à la logique de l'honneur, ils doivent toujours faire preuve de leur virilité et les femmes doivent se conformer à la discrétion, au service et à la docilité. C'est ce qu'il a appelé « la violence symbolique ».

La représentation de la féminité dans la presse togolaise est aux antipodes de cette vision bourdieusienne. Elle montre plutôt une femme qui s'est masculinisée, pour se libérer de la domination masculine, devenant elle-même « bourreau » pour cesser d'être victime. On arrive ainsi à la déconstruction et reconstruction de nouveaux rapports entre genres, sans changer le modèle dominant/dominé. Dans ce rapport de force, le sexe devient une arme omniprésente que manipulent savamment les femmes.

L'hypersexualité comme un jeu et un enjeu pour la femme

Tout le long de ce travail, la principale caractérisation de la féminité se traduit finalement en termes de domination et de liberté sexuelle, une sexualité assumée dans le comportement et dans le langage verbal. Là où l'on pourrait voir une certaine forme de régression de la femme sur le plan moral et social, si l'on considère les valeurs psychologiques et morales qui sous-tendent les connotations négatives des clichés accompagnant les représentations de la femme, des journalistes et des lectrices y voient une arme de combat, une chance pour la femme.

En effet, dans le corpus étudié, la femme entretient un rapport particulier avec le sexe : elle est aguichante et aguicheuse, dévergondée, infidèle. Au-delà des questions morales, les interactions avec l'homme font voir que le sexe constitue davantage pour la femme un jeu et une arme de domination ou de libération. Cette réalité peut se lire à deux niveaux : le premier est incarné par la femme aguicheuse, ensuite par la *superwoman sexuelle* (la *krokeuz* d'hommes).

Dans le premier cas, il faut souligner le fait que pour la femme, pouvoir vivre librement sa sexualité est déjà une grande victoire, dans la mesure où nous sommes encore dans des sociétés où dans l'imaginaire collectif, la vraie femme c'est l'épouse qui fait passer le plaisir de l'homme avant le sien, qui doit avoir beaucoup de retenue dans l'expression de ses désirs sexuels et qui ne peut surtout pas avoir plusieurs partenaires masculins. Dans la presse, les personnages féminins sont affranchis de toutes ces contraintes : elles peuvent donc jouir de la liberté de vivre pleinement leur désir, d'être maîtresse de leur corps et d'en disposer librement quand, où et avec qui elles le décident. En d'autres termes, il s'agit pour la femme de ne plus être un objet sexuel assujetti au bon vouloir de l'homme : elle devient sujet désirant et désiré. C'est elle aussi qui décide de comment et quand « récompenser l'homme ». D'ailleurs, elle est montrée comme cynique et cruelle lorsqu'elle s'en sert pour soumettre l'homme ou pour obtenir un confort matériel. Il n'est donc pas étonnant de constater que même la femme au foyer recourt aux mêmes méthodes que la prostituée, car elles ont toutes deux le même combat : vivre librement leur sexualité et prendre leur revanche sur l'homme.

Tout cela se fait avec la complicité des journalistes qui, bien que dénonçant certains travers, semblent défendre la cause des femmes. Le directeur de Pipo magazine développe fort bien les raisons de cette complicité :

> « Pour nous, c'est une image positive, car la femme dominatrice est une femme battante qui ne se laisse pas faire par les hommes. Pendant longtemps, elle a été marginalisée et dominée par ces derniers. Ici, dans le magazine, elle prend les choses en mains. Nos lectrices s'identifient à cette femme et sont contentes. Elles nous téléphonent souvent pour nous féliciter. Par exemple le personnage de Pipinapi, par ses exploits, fait ce que beaucoup de femmes auraient voulu faire mais n'osent pas. Elle venge donc toutes les femmes »[4].

L'image ci-dessous montre en effet l'héroïne, Pipinappi, en action et donnant une leçon à cet homme incarnant tous les obsédés sexuels, insatiables et sans scrupules.
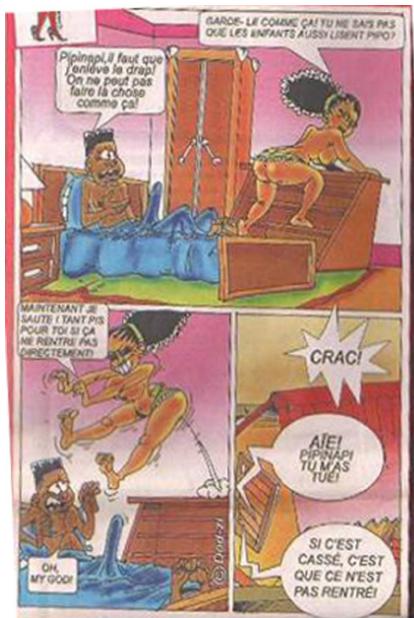
Pipo magazine 002:12

L'imaginaire médiatique (notamment dans *Pipo magazine*) a ainsi inventé une *superwoman Krokeuz* de sexe dont la super-performance anéantit le plus endurant ou le plus fort des hommes. Grâce à des méthodes radicales, elle amène par exemple l'obsédé sexuel à se ranger.

Certes, « le sexe est bien une arme au sein des couples. Une arme dont les maris et les épouses usent avec toutes les ruses possibles » (Tchak 1999:41), mais ici cette arme est utilisée par une héroïne, extérieure au couple, pour sauver le couple. Il ne s'agit pas de l'aguicheuse dévergondée ou de la voleuse de mari qui encourage l'infidélité masculine légendaire, il s'agit d'une justicière des femmes qui punit l'homme par le sexe afin de le ramener au bon comportement.

Du contrat de communication à la recréation du social

La question ici est de savoir si le journaliste reproduit simplement une réalité sociale ou s'il contribue à la produire. Reprenant la notion de *contrat de communication* chère à R. Ghiglione, Pascal Marchand explique que :

> Faute de négociation directe – comme cela se passe dans la communication entre deux individus – le contrat est déterminé par ce que le public attend d'un certain média et par ce que les rédacteurs du média croient que le public attend d'eux. Pratiquement, le contrat sur lequel se fonde la communication médiatique est différent selon les buts que se propose le moyen de communication (Marchand 2004:221).

Alors, quelle est la source d'inspiration et quel est le but poursuivi par les magazines *Sika'a, Viva* et *Pipo* ? Quelle idéologie préside au choix des images, à la mise en scène de la représentation d'un monde vraisemblable construit ou non, à travers la caricature ?

Les journalistes caricaturistes interrogés disent s'inspirer de l'actualité sociale. Le directeur de publication de *Sika'a* souligne : « C'est juste ce que nous observons dans la société que nous avons exagéré à travers la caricature »[5] ; le directeur de *Pipo magazine* va dans le même sens :

> « Nous nous inspirons des rumeurs, du vécu quotidien des personnes de notre entourage, des faits sociaux, faits divers… Nous choisissons, après discussion en comité de rédaction, les sujets qui peuvent plaire à notre public et nous essayons de les illustrer. Mais parfois il nous arrive d'être purement imaginatif afin de marquer notre originalité par rapport aux autres médias, mais en restant toujours proche de la réalité »[6].

Le choix des images présentées par les trois magazines n'est pas gratuit, il obéit bien sûr au désir de correspondre aux attentes du public pour lui plaire, mais il est aussi porteur d'une idéologie que ces médias distillent au sein de la population lectrice. Cette position idéologique pose les trois médias en *amuseurs-moralisateurs* qui veulent amener le lecteur à la réflexion par le biais de l'humour : mettre en scène pour dénoncer les dérives et amuser pour faire passer le message. En effet, comme nous le

confie le directeur de publication de *Viva*, « A travers le sexe, les lecteurs savent souvent que ce sont des dérives sociales que nous dénonçons. Le sexe est introduit dans les scénarios, juste parce qu'il fait rire »[7].

Pour autant, le journaliste ne peut pas nier le fait qu'il projette sa propre perception et sa construction de la réalité par le discours médiatique et, par conséquent, contribue à créer un imaginaire susceptible de rencontrer l'imaginaire collectif qu'il partage avec son lectorat.

Certains journalistes de *Viva, Sika'a* et *Pipo magazine* perçoivent la femme comme une battante qui déploie souvent des stratégies de survie. Cette dernière apparaît dès lors comme une source d'inspiration extraordinaire pour le scénariste : « Il est évident aussi que les femmes entreprennent beaucoup pour survivre, contrairement aux hommes qui doivent, soit travailler, soit voler, les femmes inventent de nombreuses stratégies en cherchant à mettre leur corps à profit. Elles sont pour cela des personnages très féconds pour un scénariste. »[8].

S'ils dépeignent la femme comme forte et dominatrice, c'est à cause de « son influence grandissante dans la société d'aujourd'hui » et du fait que les hommes sont faibles devant les femmes. En d'autres termes, c'est le sexe qui cause la perte des hommes, alors que les femmes savent en jouer et en profiter. En outre, ils se constituent en porte-parole de la femme souvent marginalisée et dominée par l'homme.

Le détournement de stéréotypes permet finalement aux médias, tout en se nourrissant du réel, de construire leur propre discours sur la femme en produisant ainsi un imaginaire qui va au-delà de l'existant. Le public, par identification ou par compensation, finit par s'approprier cet imaginaire médiatique.

Conclusion

La caricature par principe est provocatrice, elle déforme, exagère certains vices ou caractéristiques du sujet visé. Le dessin caricatural peint en réalité *l'anormal* afin de « *choquer et occasionner une prise de conscience, parfois une autocritique, ramener donc à la norme qu'elle exaltera à l'envers* » (Melot 1975:123). C'est dans cette logique que s'inscrivent les magazines satirique et humoristique togolais étudiés. Leur point de vue sur la société transparaît nécessairement dans le choix et le traitement des dessins proposés aux lecteurs. Les magazines *Sika'a, Viva* et *Pipo* dénoncent les écarts de comportement aussi bien chez l'homme que chez la femme, ils déconstruisent les stéréotypes, mais ils ne proposent pas de modèle.

Ce travail a permis d'identifier les éléments caractéristiques de la féminité et de la masculinité tels que véhiculés par la presse satirique togolaise. Il a également permis de s'apercevoir, du moins dans l'imaginaire médiatique, que les rôles et les identités socio-psychologiques bougent au point de devenir interchangeables. Toutefois, une étude sociologique approfondie aurait pu permettre de mesurer la portée sociale de ces changements dans les rapports homme-femme, de voir si la production médiatique, caricaturale rencontre une réalité sociale en train de se construire ou non. Néanmoins, on peut naturellement souligner le fait que l'imaginaire médiatique et l'imaginaire collectif s'interpénètrent et se fécondent mutuellement. De ce point de vue, les médias sont témoins d'une réalité dont ils rendent compte ou qu'ils contribuent d'une certaine manière à faire advenir.

Nonobstant, la masculinisation de la femme par les médias implique-t-elle la défaite du sexe masculin (en référence à ce qu'Engels disait sur la « grande défaite du sexe féminin ») ? En tout cas, on peut dire que ces médias ont su capter et matérialiser, symboliquement, les attentes des femmes qui voudraient prendre leur revanche sur les hommes.

Il serait intéressant, dans un travail futur, de s'interroger, d'une part, sur la provenance des stéréotypes véhiculés, sur les influences qui déterminent les rapports homme-femme dans les sociétés africaines. D'autre part, on pourrait également chercher à comprendre comment les écarts de conduite (mis en exergue) non seulement ne choquent plus certains individus, mais sont constamment reproduits aussi bien par les médias que par l'imaginaire collectif au point qu'une catégorie de personnes s'y reconnaisse.

Notes

1. Il s'agit de Sika'a créé en 2008, Viva en 2011 et Pipo magazine en 2012.
2. Entretien administré en juin 2012.
3. Entretien de juin 2012.
4. Entretien administré en juin 2012.
5. Entretien de juin 2012.
6. Entretien administré en juin 2012.
7. Entretien administré en juin 2012.
8. Entretien administré en juin 2012.

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Magazine/ n°page	Contenu de l'image	Explicite	Implicites	Observations
Pipo 003 : p.2	Une femme forte prend son mari, chétif, par les épaules, le soulève en lui posant une question injonctive sans lui laisser le choix d'une réponse personnelle	-Femme autoritaire -Homme faible	-infantilisation de l'homme -masculinisation de la femme -tyrannie de la femme -insoumise	-La femme a une tête qui fait peur -Elle est forte et musclée -Elle ne correspond pas aux canons physiques de la femme - L'homme a peur et semble terrorisé -La femme est grande et l'homme est petit (taille et corpulence) -La femme est en posture de combat et de domination
Pipo 004 : p.10	Une femme debout, l'index pointé sur son mari assis et faisant la vaisselle, le gronde sévèrement et lui donne des instructions, sur un ton autoritaire, pour d'autres tâches. Ce dernier revient rendre compte, tête baissée et épaules tombantes	-Femme autoritaire -Homme soumis	-féminisation de l'homme -soumission de l'homme masculinisation de la femme -tyrannie de la femme -domination de la femme -femme insoumise	-L'expression du visage de la femme fait peur : elle crie en grimaçant -Elle porte un pantalon et domine (en taille) l'homme assis -La femme est grande et l'homme est petit (taille et corpulence) - La femme est en posture de combat et de domination
Pipo 006 : p. 5	Une femme punit son mari qui est allé rendre visite à un ami au lieu de rester à la maison pour faire la vaisselle et la lessive.	-Femme autoritaire -Homme soumis et terrorisé	-homme efféminé et peureux -homme dominé -femme tyrannique	-La femme est grande et l'homme est petit (taille et corpulence) - La femme est en posture de domination

Viva 003 : p. 7	Un homme qui a peur d'un petit lézard demande à sa femme de le sauver. Celle-ci le prend tout en se demandant si c'est vraiment un homme qu'elle a épousé ou une poule.	- Femme courageuse -Homme peureux	-infantilisation de l'homme -l'homme est un être anormal -femme insoumise -masculinisation de la femme	-L'homme est gros et musclé au niveau du buste et de la tête, mais il a des jambes et des pieds comme des brindilles : anormalité -La femme a une forme plus proportionnée et normale.
Viva 005 : p. 1	Une femme avec un air déterminé, valise à la main, quitte son mari qui porte leur bébé dans ses bras. Elle lui crie son adieu en lui donnant l'ordre de bien s'occuper de leur fille, alors que l'homme, d'un air malheureux, lui déclare son amour.	-Mère sans pitié -Père sensible et malheureux	-irresponsabilité de la femme -indépendance de la femme -impuissance de l'homme	
Viva 005 : p. 1				
Viva 006 : p. 4	Une femme forte et musclée, les mains sur les hanches, demande gentiment à son mari chétif et petit de la porter jusqu'au lit. L'homme, tout tremblant, lui demande de le laisser d'abord finir son repas.	-Femme autoritaire -Homme terrorisé	-femme cynique et cruelle -femme masculine et tyrannique -domination féminine -soumission de l'homme -homme-esclave -Femme insoumise	-La femme est grande et l'homme est petit (taille et corpulence) -la Femme est en posture de combat et de domination

Viva 007 : p. 1	Une jeune femme très bien habillée, à l'occidentale, présente fièrement à ses parents son partenaire masculin habillé aussi à l'occidentale (costume-cravate), avec un écran de télévision ou d'ordinateur comme tête sur laquelle il est écrit « facebook. com ». Les parents de la jeune femme, en habits traditionnels, sont scandalisés.	-femme moderne -homme moderne et virtuel	-femme inconsciente -homme inconscient
Viva 005 : p. 2	1- Une femme avec un bébé de deux ans : ses parents, villageois, veulent connaître le père de l'enfant ; elle leur annonce, avec un sourire, qu'elle l'a trouvé sur facebook ! 2- Une autre jeune femme enceinte, avec trois enfants, répond, d'un air joyeux, à son père dépité qui l'interroge sur les pères de ses enfants, qu'elle a trouvé le 1er sur TCHATCH.COM, le 2ème sur YAHOO, le 3ème sur FACEBOOK et le dernier sur BADOO !	-femme moderne -homme virtuel -	-femme inconsciente et irresponsable -homme absent et irresponsable

Sika'a 0067 : p. 1	Une femme très forte se fait porter par son mari pour traverser une zone inondée. Le mari, qui semble ployer sous le poids, a un visage grimaçant de douleur pendant qu'elle se mire dans le miroir en demandant à l'homme de marcher doucement. Une autre femme, voyant ce spectacle, considère cela comme un signe d'amour de l'homme, avis que son mari à elle ne semble pas partager.	-femme profiteuse -homme soumis et faible	-femme cruelle et cynique -domination féminine -homme esclave	

Locating Kenyan Media in Anti-Rape Discourse: A Feminist Critique

Lyn Ossome*

Abstract

The tendency in most African media to sensationalise sexual and gender-based violence abstracts this issue from the reality of its prevalence, and at the same time averts critical engagement with the social, political and economic contexts within which sexual violence occurs in society. This paper applies a critical feminist analysis to media coverage of sexual violence that has been observed during key moments in Kenya's political history. The paper draws from representations of sexual violence reported in the media at various epochs during Kenya's transition from colonialism and authoritarianism towards democracy and elections, and through these narratives, attempts to construct a theoretical framework within which the relationship that exists between women in Kenya and the (democratising) state might be analysed. The paper shows that anti-rape discourses were produced in the media but served different purposes than that of pursuing a feminist agenda, depending on the imperatives of the time in Kenya's historical political development.

Key Words: rape, media, democracy, state, elections, violence.

Résumé

La tendance dans la plupart des médias africains à faire du sensationnel sur la violence sexuelle et sexiste soustrait cette problématique à la réalité de sa prévalence, tout en évitant l'engagement critique avec les contextes sociaux, politiques et économiques dans lesquels la violence sexuelle est exercée dans la société. Le présent article applique une analyse féministe critique à la couverture médiatique de la violence sexuelle qui a été observée à des moments clés de l'histoire politique du Kenya. L'article s'appuie sur les représentations de la violence sexuelle qui ont été rapportées dans les médias à différentes époques de la transition kenyane

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du colonialisme et de l'autoritarisme à la démocratie et aux élections, et à travers ces récits, essaie de construire un cadre théorique dans lequel pourrait être analysée la relation qui existe entre les femmes kenyanes et l'État (en voie de démocratisation). L'article montre que les discours contre le viol ont été produits dans les médias, mais ont servi à des fins autres que celle de promouvoir un agenda féministe, en fonction des impératifs du moment dans l'évolution politique historique du Kenya.

Mots clés : viol, médias, démocratie, État, élections, violence.

Introduction

The documentary by Jennifer Siebel Newsom titled Miss Representation exposes how American media erodes female self-worth. In the film, Newsom, Gloria Steinem, Katie Couric, and others lament the way today's TV, film and Web content (for example, dolled-up little girls strutting down pageant catwalks, gossip bloggers mocking a starlet's size) teach us that our worth is based on our desirability (Arnold-Ratliff 2011:56). Misogynist concerns remain central to the master narrative – in the economy, in the press, in film and popular culture. In most African media misogyny is visible in the pervasive coercion of women through the media into a 'way of being' that is rooted in sexist insinuations of women's sexuality and reproductive functions as wives, lovers, mothers, daughters, and care-givers. Not even powerful women in leadership are spared as media are awash with sexually nuanced 'lessons' regarding the culturally acceptable ways in which female politicians ought to behave in public. Such media discourses are firmly rooted in a certain form of cultural permissiveness that ought to be understood in a similar way to that which (bell hooks 1994:110) speaks of: cultures that condone and celebrate rape, where male pleasure is the focus of all relationships, and female desire comes second. In addition, the representation of sexual violence in mainstream media is steeped in a compulsory heterosexual discourse that utilizes female desire in the commoditization of pleasure. The valorisation of women's sexuality in the media enterprise is entertained as an object whose consumption normalizes the heterosexual domain of violence away from which female victims of rape desire to stand in order to articulate their abuse. In other words, the media acts as the mirror through which capitalist society sanitizes and absolves heterosexist complicity in the perpetuation of sexual violence against women. Lastly and related to the preceding point, political economy analysis of the media draws attention to the ways in which discourses of sexuality and sexual violence are used to arouse heterosexual desire

for commodity consumption, and to stoke ethnic and political loyalties among the public.

Critical scholars associated with theories of political economy provide a useful set of organising principles to guide such enquiries. The first is to remember that ownership and decision-making lie at the heart of what will circulate, be talked about, and ultimately be acted upon. The second principle, a corollary of the first, is that media content can never be adequately examined outside of its proper context, which has been determined largely by the structures, routines, and relations of power that produced it (Meehan and Riordan 2002:132). Feminist critical scholars concerned with the political economy of communications have expanded these tenets by factoring in gender. In the process, they provide a theoretical framework to question how men and women's political and economic relations in the larger society enter into both ownership and message-making patterns in the media (ibid.). The discussions detailed in this paper illustrate the ways in which media representations of rape allow consumers to preserve narratives of 'good' versus 'bad', through which viewers profile 'perpetrators' and 'victims' in foreclosed terms, and characterise rape in stereotypical terms that have the effect of delimiting the analytical domain within which sexual violence occurring on a daily basis in society or phenomenological rape may be understood (Hirsch 1994:1024).[1] Thus caught in this trap, rather than media representations of rape becoming the prism through which society can reflect upon the political, social and cultural factors that enable rape, the media has inadvertently succeeded in reverting the spotlight back onto itself, and representations of rape therein emerge as a reflection of the balance of power, influence and interests that determine both media content and reception.

Recent scholarship has been directed towards engaging critical unresolved questions in contemporary legal and feminist research, asking whether experiences of rape are essentially similar, and whether race, class and culture position rape victims and their assailant in significantly different ways (Hirsch 1994:1026). Indeed, some feminist analytical schools highlight the importance of engaging in critical media analysis in reference to social phenomena like sexual violence. For example, proponents argue that media analysis of rape that adopts a feminist historical materialist methodology must be thoroughly historical – it must eschew any explanations that claim to apply to societies across epochs. In practice this means that such an analysis must be suspicious of any

claims to universality regarding any aspect of women's situation. If there exists any circumstances common to the situation of all women, these must be discovered empirically, not pre-supposed (Young 1980). Others speak of the need to focus on analysing events of violence, and their construction, in a range of specific, rather than universalised, contexts and thereby prepare ourselves to combat the many manifestations of rape (Hirsch 1994). The centrality of media in this project is visible in the plea by some that feminists ought to regard rape 'not as a fact to be accepted or opposed, tried or avenged, but as a process to be analysed and undermined as it occurs' (Marcus 1992:388), an approach which suggests that politically important differences in the construction of rape and rape identities emerge through analysing representations of rape. This approach implicates the media as important contexts of investigating rape (Hirsch 1994). These scholars insist on developing, therefore, a [feminist media] theory that can articulate and appreciate the vast differences in the situation, structure and experience of gender relations in different times and places. I turn briefly to this possibility in relation to Kenyan media in the sections that follow.

When Women's Bodies Matter: The State and Women's Sexual Propriety

Kenya's colonial history demonstrates the centrality that (white) women's sexuality played in the construction of discourses in the colony as far as law, order and governance were concerned. This is more so in relation to the pervasive anxieties that were generated by 'black peril'. The term refers to the debates over sexual morality that were based on fear of sexual assaults upon white women and invoked defensive arguments of race and class. Whites were urged to guard against the polluting influence of black sexuality – African men were widely presented as a diseased and degenerate menace, African women as wanton, lustful symbols of uncontrolled sexual behaviour (Anderson 2010:48). This history also critically introduces the media as one of the avenues through which the colonial state controlled, manipulated and governed the local African and European populations at the time. The newspapers became an effective mouthpiece for settler views, with the *Daily Leader* urging its audience, in relation to the wave of alleged sexual assaults on children between March and May 1920 that 'it was time for Europeans to set aside their sensitivities and make a public outcry against the rising incidence of sexual crimes' (Anderson 2010:54). The language used to discuss sexual assaults became increasingly explicit: provoked by the horrors of child

assaults, the European community appears to have been jolted into confronting sexual matters more directly.

The *Daily Leader,* while apologising to its readers for the detailed discussion of sexual assaults, argued that a full public debate was now essential, if 'this hideous crime' was to be 'nipped in the bud' (ibid.). Readers were encouraged to communicate their views to the paper, and a stream of letters was published. Mothers were urged to put their duty to the community above their fear of scandal and stigma, and to bring to the courts all such cases. For its part, the government was urged to impose the death penalty upon convicted offenders. Soon thereafter, the *Daily Leader* was championing the suggestion that castration and branding was surely a more fitting punishment, holding greater terror for 'the native mind' than did death. European debate was fuelled as much by the demand for retribution as by the perceived need for a deterrent (ibid.). The colonial state effectively and explicitly vetoed sexual violence, and the imperative for maintaining law and order, which the government tacitly delivered via the media was done in explicitly racist terms. The spectre of 'black peril' revealed a complex psychology borne of an overriding concern with 'race mixing' or the fear of 'race defilement.' In other words, it is unlikely that sexual assault or rape by itself would have motivated the sort of concerted reactions or severe punishments that the Europeans at the time called for.

By contrast there have been periods when the state through its action or non-action (as perceived via the media) has sanctioned sexual assault and violence against women and girls. Worth discussing therefore is whether contemporary media in Kenya reflect the position of the state with regards to violations of a sexual nature, and act as a window into gauging the state's intrinsic relationship with women? In other words, to what extent do issues raised in media reports linking sexual violence to the state nuance the analysis and understanding of rape?

Susan Hirsch's (1994) analysis of an epochal incident that occurred during Kenya's recent post-colonial past offers just such a window. Hirsch recounts the time in mid-July 1991 when male students at St. Kizito, a Kenyan boarding school, raped more than 70 female students and caused the deaths of 19 others who suffocated in the crowded dormitory where the attack took place. In her analysis of the media coverage of the St. Kizito incident in Kenya and in the United States where it also received coverage from major newspapers, Hirsch explores the culturally specific images of rape victims and rapists represented in media accounts and the complex and divergent understandings of rape underlying these images.

The article demonstrates that these images and understandings shift in politically significant ways as media accounts cross cultural and national boundaries in a system of global communication (Hirsch 1994:1024).

The argument has been made that the uncritical assumption that rape 'experiences' are identical is precisely the means through which scripts of rape are re-inscribed and how they depict women as 'always already' victims (Hirsch 1994; Marcus 1992). Arriving at such a conclusion manifests in a number of ways that contribute to the invisibilizing nature of media representations of rape. Firstly, this argument normalises rape, foreclosing analysis of the ways in which factors other than gender conflate to produce media representations of women as being essentially *rapable* (MacKinnon 1987). That is, gender rarely acts alone in determining the conditions that enable sexual violence, but rather is one of many intersecting forms of oppression which both condition the reproduction in media of femininity as the object of rape, and in doing so, dim or completely erase attention to other forms of subjection like class, race, ethnicity, age or sexual orientation, which might similarly render individuals – both female and male – more vulnerable to sexual violence. The lack of attention to rape victims as acting subjects also decontextualises the act of violence and renders a one-sided story – often one that seeks to absolve the perpetrator at the same time as it silences the victim. We may thus be compelled to ask who it is that benefits from the suppression of certain categories that could shed more insight into the nature of rape, or which interests gain most protection from the reification in the media of certain essentialising discourses of sexual violence. Significant in this regard is the contention by classical political economists that control over the production and distribution of ideas ensures cultural and therefore ideological domination by those who own the means of production (Golding and Murdock 2000:76). To the extent that this process plays a key role in maintaining class inequalities (ibid.), it becomes obvious that the factor that enables this class reinforcement is the very silencing and subsequent erasure of class discourse from broader discourses of rape carried in the media. The discussion that follows illustrates the probability of generating on the one hand a foreclosed discourse of rape through media, or on the other hand, the desirable possibility of opening up the analysis of rape so that it takes into account the prevailing political and economic contexts and the extent to which these conditions facilitate rape discourses within the media.

When Women's Bodies Mediate: Democratic Transition and Rape Discourses

Accounts of the St. Kizito incident linked the violence to aspects of modern life. Within Kenya, national newspapers diverged sharply in their assessment of the 'causes' of the crimes. Specifically, the rapes at St. Kizito were described by some Kenyan journalists as a manifestation of the sexism rampant in contemporary Kenyan society. A similar argument was also pursued by the U.S. media coverage, which interpreted the incident through a narrative of modernization that depicted the victims and their assailants as pawns of 'traditional culture', the source of men's violence against women (Hirsch 1994:1025). Others explained them as effects of the severe political repression of the postcolonial state. The explanations followed from media interests in the contexts of local, national and international politics, including the connections of the media to other institutions of power at those levels. These interests and how they were negotiated varied among publications within Kenya. In addition they varied cross-nationally. The Kenyan coverage of St. Kizito diverged from standard conventions for reporting and explaining rape (Smart and Smart 1978).[2] Rarely do media accounts direct attention to the structural problems of social life – such as sexism, racism, and class antagonism – that underpin how and in what ways sexual violence is perpetrated. In media reports of the St. Kizito incident, however, structural tensions were a part of the explanations offered in each national context (both U.S. and Kenya), yet in very different ways (Hirsch 1994:1038).

Kenyan media explanations reflected a tension between those who read the St. Kizito incident as evidence of the breakdown of the Kenyan education system and those who saw in it the severe but routine oppression of Kenyan women. The political stakes involved in discourses about education and gender relations in Kenya at the time made the struggle over interpreting the St. Kizito incident much more than a difference of opinion over how to account for sexual violence (Smart and Smart 1978).[3] One week after the attack, the feature section of the *Sunday Daily Nation* explored in detail how a flawed education system gave rise to the St. Kizito incident. The headline of a full-page article 'Why strikes and Kizito tragedy had to happen' firmly linked the St. Kizito violence to protests at other schools. The article interpreted instances of school unrest as reactions to the extreme academic competition fostered by the Kenyan education system in combination with poorly managed schools and limited opportunities for postgraduate employment and education (Hirsch 1994:1040). Explanations that linked the St. Kizito incident to a

history of violent protests in Kenyan schools also incorporated a model
of pent-up pressure and release to account for the violence.[4]

Comments in subsequent editorials and articles in the *Daily Nation*
extended the pressure-release model for political ends by implicating the
Kenyan state as contributing to the pressure experienced by the schoolboys.
A psychologist noted for radical critiques of the Kenyan government posited
a connection between authoritarian rule and violent school uprisings:

> We have created a culture of violence and domination in society which
> influences the youth towards violence rather than dialogue and tolerance...
> (politicians) burn effigies of their enemies and demand their detention....
> They ridicule teachers thus undermining their authority and yet expect
> them to produce disciplined youths. Little do they realise that by such
> actions, they are encouraging the youth to do the same (Daily Nation, 16
> July 1991 in Hirsch 1994:1040).

In Hirsch's argument, the above passage illustrates one way in which
some journalists negotiated the Kenyan political climate over a decade of
severe restriction on criticism of one-party rule. Oppositional journalists
embedded their critique of government's role in social and political
problems in discussions of seemingly unrelated issues. For some papers
such as the Daily Nation, education was a frequent topic through which
government authority and competence were covertly attacked. The Daily
Nation accounts of St. Kizito located its cause in flawed structures of
authority and thus encouraged public scrutiny of the Kenyan state and its
education policy (Hirsch 1994:1041).

Not surprisingly then, newspapers like the *Weekly Review* and *Kenya
Times* which were perceived to be affiliated with the government adopted
a different and often diversionary tone in their analysis of the St. Kizito
incident. The Weekly Review, like the *Kenya Times*, specifically located
the explanation for St. Kizito in strained relations between Kenyan men
and women rather than in the structure of schools or in the abuses of the
government. In a front-page editorial, Hilary Ng'weno, the Editor-in-Chief,
set the tone for the *Weekly Review's* approach to the event by noting,

> there is more to the St. Kizito incident than a mere breakdown of discipline
> in our schools. More graphically than any other event in recent years,
> this tragedy has underscored the abominable male chauvinism that
> dominates Kenyan social life. (Weekly Review, 19 July 1991, in Hirsch
> 1994:1040)

In an editorial that contrasted sharply with those written by his
counterparts at other publications, Ng'weno claimed that 'those so adept

at fulminating against the ills of society are generally silent about gender issues in this country' (ibid.). Ng'weno placed the blame for the St. Kizito violence firmly on the inherently sexist and abusive attitudes of Kenyan men toward women (Hirsch 1994:1041).

At the same time, members of the Kenyan public expressed a range of reactions to the divergent explanations offered in media accounts. Some public statements drew political battle lines: President Moi denounced comments linking school violence to state authority as politically motivated misrepresentations whilst government opponents demanded school reform and an end to state repression (Hirsch 1994:1042). However, women's groups applauded the media focus on St. Kizito as evidence of the problem of sexism in Kenya.

The media in post-colonial Kenya was opening up and evolving, although as had been the case during the massive colonial project, this development remained closely tied to the country's political history: the media did not make a significant break with the propaganda media machine through which the colonial administration set out the boundaries of legality, defined permissible sexuality and governed the public.[5] As became clear during the early 1990s when the St. Kizito incident played out, the 'threat of force' was gone. Whilst the media still presented issues within a framework that served the interests of the dominant institutions, the mechanisms it used had become more subtle.[6] The discursive space opened by the media coverage of the St. Kizito incident is an important window into understanding the overall shifts that were taking place in relation to Kenyan women's political activism during the 1990s. The push for democratic reforms gained greater urgency and women were at the time insisting that the definition of human rights be broadened to accommodate aspects that generally affect women alone. These gender-based human rights issues included freedom from all forms of physical and psychological violence against women, such as rape, sexual harassment, and wife battering, as well as the gender division of labour and various forms of sex discrimination in legal, employment, and ideological structure (Nzomo 1993:66).

Feminists weighing in on the St. Kizito incident viewed it as the precursor to these demands for rights, arguing that the intense media spotlight on that [tragic] incident had greatly helped to sensitize women to the need to put pressure on the Kenyan government and society to address the issue of violence against women (ibid.). Over the next two decades, women in Kenya learned to take advantage of available spaces and opportunities to bring national and international attention to their

issues. All of this, Nzomo argues, was part of a larger lobbying strategy in the democratic transition period. Women were particularly adept at attracting the media to sensitize the public on gender issues, and to highlight their agenda, and in this way these issues and voices stayed alive throughout the time of the struggle for democratization (Nzomo 1993:68).

Yet as the competition for democratic space intensified within Kenya's highly ethnicized political environment, it became apparent that the opening up of democratic space in the media had not necessarily materialised in ways that could minimize the exposure of women to generalised violence and in particular to sexual violence. Women's vulnerability to rape and sexual harassment was repeatedly brought to the fore during each of the general elections after the 1992 elections that marked the return to multiparty politics in the country. Electioneering periods since then have been characterised by generalised violence and sexual violence. Indeed, the literature suggests an increase in cases of sexual violence observed during electioneering periods in Kenya since the onset of multiparty democracy. There is, however, paucity of comprehensive data on violence that occurred during elections in the early years of democratization (1992 and 1997) under President Daniel arap Moi. Some scholars have explained this lack of data as owing to the donor community's vested interest in the success of multipartyism. Stephen Brown (2001) for instance argues that after opposition parties were legalised, donors repeatedly discouraged measures that could have led to more comprehensive democratisation. They did this by knowingly endorsing unfair elections (including suppressing evidence of their illegitimacy) and subverting domestic efforts to secure far-reaching reforms. In the face of anti-regime popular mobilisation, donors' primary concern appeared to be the avoidance of any path that could lead to a breakdown of the political and economic order, even if this meant legitimising and prolonging the regime's authoritarian rule (Brown 2001:726). This point requires more empirically nuanced contextualisation within the broader democratisation processes that had engendered multiparty political competition in Kenya – media liberalisation itself being a part of this project. It nevertheless offers the possibility of thinking through the ways in which the media can be implicated in the political economy of violence. Thus, although the media has over the years since the onset of multiparty democracy carried stories placing violence, including sexual violence, within the context of elections, the argument may be made that broader political imperatives have always formed the parameters of media representations of violence, and discourses of violence produced therein.

More recent scholarship implicates the media in this way, demonstrating the fact that violence repeatedly witnessed during electioneering periods in Kenya is not epiphenomenal, but rather is indicative of the structural nature of violence already embedded within Kenyan society. Straight (2009), for instance, has argued in relation to violence observed in North Eastern Kenya in mid-2005, that media representations are implicated in cycles of violent conflict through erasure and misrecognition. Most crucially, she argues, media representations tend to focus on cultural stereotypes that tacitly legitimate ongoing violence by explaining it away as timeless and cultural. These uni-dimensional representations can distract from the culpability of political elites and from the role of economic and political disenfranchisement in sustaining violence. They can also mask the ways in which some elites benefit from the propagation of cultural stereotypes even while deliberately engaging in manipulation of ethnic fault lines (Straight 2009:21).

The question has been asked regarding whether democratisation processes can deliver a 'bundle of goods' that account for everyone, or whether the intractable problem of sexual/violence during elections will remain as one of democracy's foremost subjects: that recurrent question that justifies the need for (democratization's) constant reformulation. In feminist parlance, it could be argued that key concepts within democratization discourse – participation, equality, fairness, justice, freedom – have retained credibility as worthy objects through their reproduction within subjective texts such as sexual violence. The generalised violence and sexual violence observed during electioneering periods in Kenya thus broadened the media's space of speculative engagement with the topic of democracy, and as the discussion below demonstrates, the media continued to treat rape in variedly experimental ways up until the 2007/08 violent elections, during which a marked shift could be observed in the ways that the media treated the subject of rape.

When Women's Bodies Serve: The Media and (S)Elective Democracy

> ... [Large media outlets] like other corporations, have a product to sell and a market they want to sell it to: the product is audiences, and the market is advertisers (Mitchell and Schoeffel 2003:14).

Feminists argue that the mere presence of rape reports in the media is indicative of the fact that feminist discourses have successfully claimed subversive space in television and print media. This fact, however, belies the profound ways in which gender ideology continues to shape television production practices. In addition, it conceals the ways in

which representations of women are governed by genre conventions, competitive constraints, and audience familiarity with and presumed affinity for stereotypical codes of femininity (Watkins and Emerson 2000:155). A number of guiding questions are derived from these gaps: what discursive course have representations of sexual violence taken in Kenyan media? In the context of elections, who is the audience and who forms the biggest market? Still in the context of electoral democracy, to what extent is sex/sexuality/sexual violence acceptable in mainstream media discourses, and when?

I apply this reasoning in constructing a framework that can be usefully applied in understanding media representations of sexual violence against women that occurs in contexts of political contestations like elections in Kenya. In this construction, I ask to what extent the media has used 'rape propaganda'[7] to capture audiences/and which audience; and the ways in which these stories are framed in order to attract audiences. Further, I affirm the argument made by Mitchell and Schoeffel (2003) that the media puts out points of view and political perspectives which satisfy the needs, the interests and perspectives of the buyers, the sellers and the market. In so doing I challenge the points of view that regard genre selection and representation in the media separately from the political contexts out of which such genre are reproduced. In fact I view attempts to do this with suspicion.

In the context of elections, the views that influence media perspectives are concomitant with the dominant liberal view of democracy within which multiparty politics is justified. For instance, viewed separately, liberal notions of freedom and fairness are considered as being distinct from the broad structures in society that enable sexualised forms of violence, thus constraining the freedom and ability of victims to participate in elections. A recent baseline study in Kenya found such constraining factors to include ethnicity, class and gender.[8] So while historically it has been within acceptable limits for mainstream media to perpetuate the link between generalised electioneering violence and ethnicity, reaching a similar conclusion with regards to the sexual violation of women of low economic status would require that such analysis be extended to include gender and class analysis. Historically too, class analysis has not been in the interest of the post-colonial/colonial state, and much less so the mainstream Kenyan media which George Ogola (2011: 91) argues 'are implicated in political, social and economic dynamics from which it cannot be disaggregated.' Analysis of sexual violence against women during electioneering periods ought therefore to extend its framework far

beyond the mere dissection of questions of masculinities and power (the social roots of sexual violence) as is the norm within gender studies by introducing a structural dimension to rape that compels analysis towards interrogating the political and economic triggers of rape. Such an analysis is broader than the scope of this paper. However, Leslie Steeves' (1997) argument, that media discourse may allow space for feminist interests within the dominant patriarchal ideology, is demonstrable in the case of the 2007/08 post-election violence in Kenya. In this instance the appearance of resistant views would have been significant in making alternative meanings available and in supporting women's growing anti-violence activism. For instance, a useful comparison can be drawn between the ways in which rape that occurred during the 2007/08 post-election violence was treated in feminist writings appearing in reports from local and international non-governmental organisations and writings by human rights activists, and the ways in which the same was represented in Kenyan media. Three significant facts emerged out of the feminist writings. One was the fact that the reported cases of sexual violence primarily involved girls and women from the low-income areas (Wanyeki 2008:94). Another progressive indication was the fact that initial reports claiming that the cases of sexual violence against women had been largely opportunistic were later rebuffed by evidence of the instrumental nature of the attacks – that many women were targeted on account of their ethnicity or based on their political party loyalties (ibid). Thirdly, the fact that the sexual violence included not just the rape of women, but also the forced circumcision (and in some instances, castration) of Luo men who, traditionally, are not circumcised (ibid.). These three factors – touching on elements of class, gender, ethnicity, and masculinities – highlighted crucial points of interrogation which media ought to have, yet failed, to take up. These were issues that on the whole were silenced within media discourses on rapes occurring over this period. The latter point concerning masculinities is particularly interesting. The overwhelming tendency in most feminist anti-rape literature is to construct women as being the obvious subjects of sexual violence. Often as a result, men's experience of sexual violence is ignored or hardly reported by the media. Of relevance here is the idea of cultural intelligibility, which Judith Butler deploys in reference to the production of a normative framework that conditions who can be recognised as a legitimate subject. In the context of Kenya, the underlying myth perpetuated by the dominant culture of the violators is that uncircumcised men are not 'real' men. A highly gendered power relationship constructed between masculinities,

sexuality and violence runs through this narrative, a critical analysis of which would enrich rather than negate understanding of the nature of sexual violence experienced by women in the course of Kenya's democratisation (Ossome 2011:6).

Kenya has had a long history of violent political contestation, from the time of the *Mau Mau*[9] struggle in the 1950s before Independence[10] up until the 1990s when it ushered in multiparty democracy. Its democratization process has been consistently marked by violence, particularly occurring during electioneering periods. 'Ethnic' clashes in Kenya erupted for the first time in October 1991 in Nandi District on the border of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces. At their peak, the clashes affected three out of eight provinces and nearly 20 out of Kenya's then 62 districts. In 1992, prior to the first multi-party general elections, clashes again erupted that distorted the prevailing voter distribution pattern in the affected regions and, in the process, disenfranchised thousands of voters, mostly opposition supporters due to large-scale internal displacement. The struggle for constitutional reform, spearheaded by NGOs, faith-based organizations, professional associations and political parties gained momentum in the period leading up to the second multiparty elections in 1997, when nation-wide violence again erupted. The context of the violence was complex, and reasons diverse.[11] On December 27, 2007, Kenya held its General Elections – the fourth since the return of multiparty democracy to Kenya in 1992. Given that the General Elections of 2002 had finally seen the removal of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) from power by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), largely without incident, there was little expectation that anything could or would go wrong. In some ways, that optimism was not misplaced. The 2007 General Elections were the most contested in Kenya's history, at all three levels – civil, parliamentary and presidential (Wanyeki 2008:91). Violence erupted across the country as soon as the disputed presidential results were announced – in total 1,113 people lost their lives and an estimated 663,921 were internally displaced (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2008:14).

As Wanyeki argues, the ground was fertile for what ensued. Campaigning, particularly through local language radio stations, took an ugly bent, with ethnically prejudiced and stereotyped coverage of both the incumbent Party of National Unity (PNU) and the opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). The Kenyan blogs and online sites, populated primarily by a younger generation of Kenyans, many of whom lived abroad, did the same. Text messages circulated around the country,

playing on angers and resentments arising from the material reality of historical and contemporary inequalities and injustices, but once again articulated and promoted as being ethnically based, and experienced as such. Given the ethnicities of the two presidential contenders – Gikuyu in the case of the incumbent, and Mwai Kibaki and Luo in the case of the main opposition candidate Raila Odinga – perhaps insufficient attention was paid to similar angers and resentments in other ethnic communities, particularly among the Kalenjin, whose leading politicians had cast their lot with Odinga's ODM.[12] Pre-election violence had already been taking place in Kuresoi, a constituency in the predominantly Kalenjin Rift Valley. This violence was similar in form and outcome to that experienced under Moi during the politically-instigated clashes that occurred during the lead-up to the General Elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002. During those clashes, smallholding farmers who were not of Kalenjin origin had been forcibly and violently displaced by Kalenjin militia as part of a deliberate strategy to alter the presumed voting patterns of constituencies in the Rift Valley in favour of the incumbent KANU. Clashes also took place in coastal constituencies of the coast for the same reason – the rationale being that those 'indigenous' to both the coast and the Rift Valley would support KANU, while those who were not non-coastal and non-Kalenjin would support the opposition (Wanyeki 2008:92).

For various reasons, the nature and forms of violence occurring after the 2007 elections received the most attention and was most widely reported. The violence initially took three forms, with sexual violence cutting across all three. First, in the low-income areas of Nairobi as well as the coast and Nyanza provinces, there were spontaneous protests, which turned violent. Second, the Kenya Police Force and the General Service Unit (GSU), a paramilitary unit, responded with extraordinary use of force in the said areas. And third, there was organised violence in the Rift Valley, involving forced displacements and the destruction of property. All three forms soon mutated. As the spontaneous protests in the form of attempted demonstrations involving the destruction of property died down – or rather were violently suppressed, also by militia informally allied to the PNU – the protests took the form of economic sabotage (Wanyeki 2008:95).

The sexual violence included not just the rape of women, but also the forced circumcision (and in some instances, castration) of Luo men who, traditionally, are not circumcised. The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) found that men too had experienced horrid types of sexual violence after the election, which included sodomy,

forced circumcision, and even mutilation of their penises (CIPEV 2008:238-39). The outbreak of sexual violence seems to have been facilitated by the general breakdown of law and order, but the forced circumcisions of women and men seems more specific. Similar acts were perpetrated during the counter-offensive of the Gikuyu militia moving from Nairobi into the south Rift. This militia claimed the name of *Mungiki* (the masses), a Gikuyu militia that has been active in Kenya since the politically-instigated clashes of the 1990s. *Mungiki's* leaders deny being involved, although they admit that they had been approached by PNU politicians interested in the 'self-defence' effort. Indeed, at *Mungiki's* formation, it had urged a return to culture and tradition (as defined by the predominantly young Gikuyu men of the group), including for women, a return to female genital mutilation and a prohibition on wearing trousers. The Gikuyu militia that moved into the south Rift, although not *Mungiki* as such, but under the leadership of a former *Mungiki* leader, enforced the ban on women wearing trousers in Naivasha and Nakuru towns and 'punished' – through gang rape and other violence – Gikuyu women found to be involved with men from other communities or sheltering those from other communities (Wanyeki 2008:96).

Kenya's democratization process has been consistently marked by violence, particularly occurring during electioneering periods; however, no other election period had garnered as much attention as the 2007/08 electioneering violence, which got widespread coverage both in local and international media. Framing the generalised violence and sexual violence occurring during these last elections as something of an aberration could be viewed as an attempt by media to brush over the recurrent violence that has marked every election since 1992. By depoliticizing the issue, media also managed to pass the moral burden of rape on to audiences. It was an effective whitewashing of the broader debates that inflamed the Kenyan public at the time, yet which so clearly threatened complete disintegration of the country.

A 2009 study of media coverage by some of the mainstream media during the post-election violence found that the tone of the stories covering gender-based violence was highly passive, for example, writing that a woman reported that a soldier told her that 'women are not supposed to be beaten but disciplined sexually'. Such were the case in the headlines when male reporters profiled gender-based violence. When comparing the distribution of tone between the genders, both male (87%) and female (82%) respectively had a neutral tone, while female journalists had twice as many articles (10%) compared to 5 per cent for

male journalists with a positive tone (African Women and Child Feature Service 2009:26). The same study analysed the presence of 'female issues'[13] covered in the articles containing internally displaced persons (IDP)-related stories. It established that when a print media did not include any female issues, 41 per cent of the articles had a length of 450-599 words (the second smallest grouping of the article lengths). When an article discussed one female issue, most of the print articles (29%) fell in the largest word count category of 750+ words. Articles that contained two female issues overwhelmingly occurred between the 600-749 word category and the 750+ word category with 46 per cent in each. The study confirmed violence against women got far less media coverage than other forms of violence during the post-election violence and that women affected by post-election violence received less favourable coverage than male issues (African Women and Child Feature Service 2007:26). The analyses revealed that female issues were not usually the first to be discussed and thus only featured in the longer articles, most likely when the reporters had more time to get around to including them. Whereas issues related to internally displaced persons dominated the headlines of the mainstream newspapers in Kenya and internationally, there were hardly any issues on gender-based violence placed on the front pages of the leading dailies. The *Daily Nation* placed four (5.2%) stories on gender-based violence in the headlines compared to *The Standard*, which placed two (2%) and the *Kenya Times* seven (7%). These are significant statistics: during the electioneering period preceding the elections, the *Daily Nation* newspaper was notoriously accused by politicians, research groups and opinion pollsters alike of being pro the Kibaki government and anti-Raila, allegedly because the paper was being managed by a clique of Gikuyu barons, the same ethnic group as Kibaki.[14] *The People* and *Nairobi Star* – both independent tabloid papers – did not place any such stories in their headline during the period.

Overall, stories on violence against women were reported as summaries and in the inner pages by the mainstream print media in Kenya. This could have been necessitated by the media houses' editorial policies and pressure to sell newspapers based on the more 'catchy' stories on the National Accord and negotiating team deliberations that dominated the headlines (African Women and Child Feature Service 2007:27). The study cited here also found that the media often lacked access to the victims of gender-based violence and as a result, the majority of the articles published by local media focused on the perpetrators as women who had been sexually abused were usually reluctant to face the camera

or journalists to re-tell their stories. The police and hospitals were the other main sources of stories of gender-based violence. Going by the revelation that the state security forces had been highly implicated in acts of sexual violence against women (Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence report), the police ought not to have been treated as a reliable primary source of information on rape and other forms of sexual violence.

A number of issues here deserve closer attention: the under-reporting of stories relating to rape; the placement of rape stories in the inner pages and not as headline issues; press over-reliance on third party accounts of rape, including from possible perpetrators; and the passive language used in reporting accounts of rape. These facts suggest that an imperative existed in the aftermath of the 2007/08 elections to push gender-based stories into the media in a way that had not been witnessed during previous elections since 1992. This 'push' was driven in large part by the overwhelming international interest in the post-election violence and the subsequent peace process. However, the argument has also been made elsewhere that the 2007 conflict's relatively short duration was important in ensuring that it could be seen as a catalyst instead of a consolidation of women's traditional roles (Antje, accessed 2012:14-15). The conflict was a kind of turning point for civil society organisations (which include the media). It highlighted the destructive nature of ethnic conflicts and forced women's organisations to re-focus on their goals and their need for a collective female identity. Thus, hardened identity constructions became once more fragile during the post-conflict situation, endorsing the linkage and plurality of ethnic and female identity. These expanding areas of action gave civil society organisations greater relevancy in dealing with the conflict-ridden past. Consequently, Kenya saw more initiatives targeting gender-based violence and an increasing commitment to a stronger shared female identity (ibid.). There is no reason to believe that women's issues of themselves suddenly warranted worthy media attention in 2007/08, or that the carrying of women's issues in the media was a sign of progressive changes taking place in the democratization landscape. Rather, it appears that gender discourses were forcefully (albeit half-heartedly) inserted into the public discourse at the exact moment of violent implosion – at the peak of the post-election violence – when it became imperative for the incumbent state, through the media, to erase ethnic questions from the public discourse. Women's bodies served this role of erasure, in the passive ways in which stories of their sexual victimization were presented in the media without ever really allowing

for the possibility of discussion in the public domain regarding which women were targeted; where they were located, and why they became victims. In essence these are questions of ethnicity, class and gender that lie at the very core of female sexuality.

Within the Kenyan political discourse, questions of generalised violence and sexual violence maintained significant and complex connection with those of ethnicity. Drawing upon such parallels, for instance, was Ogola's (2011) indictment of media in reference to an editorial titled 'Save Our Beloved Country', published jointly on 3 January 2008 by the leading newspapers and featured on the main TV stations, which he argued, seems to have signalled a curious shift in the Kenyan news media. Written at the height of the post-election violence, it attempted to restore faltering faith in the nation and called for an end to the violence to ensure political stability. It raised concerns about the loss of life and property, the negative impact of the crisis on the economy, and the futility of debating who won the elections. But there were some curious omissions. Not once did it mention ethnicity as a factor in the conflict. This was a deliberate omission that merely reified the framing of the conflict as unambiguously ethnic, even though most victims of the violence, including women who were raped, had been profiled and targeted by their attackers on the basis of their ethnic affiliations. Further, this editorial was framed as a narrative of peace, against the backdrop of an artificial reinvention of a nationalistic agenda to temper the ethnic dimensions of the conflict. It did not acknowledge the legitimacy of ethnic political identities and addressed the public as a homogeneous group, with shared affinity to a larger construct, the nation-state. But it set the parameters of inclusion. Patriotism was qualified on the de-legitimization of ethnic political affinities. This patriotic pitch underlined several key issues. First, it gestured toward the reintroduction of an 'ideology of order' similar to those constructed by the Moi (1978-2002) and Kenyatta (1963-1978) administrations. Second, it demonstrated the shared cosmology of power between the news media and the state: it was in the interest of both the state and the media that the nation should survive. Emphasizing chaos, anarchy, destruction, and a collapsing economy and not attempting to examine their causes – indeed, suggesting this was not the right time for such analysis – was a narrative that seems to have been legitimizing an emerging broader political script: the reinvention of the nation and the nation-building project, with the state and the media enjoined as partners (Ogola 2011:89-90). Women, as 'markers of national boundaries', as 'mothers of the nation', and as 'pacifist bearers of peace', have long been

used in the service of promoting such gender-conservative nationalist discourses in post-Independence Kenya, and therefore the obscuring of the violations they were experiencing in 2007 ought to be read as having been paramount to this wider nationalist project.

The scale of rape reporting in media during the 2007/08 post-election period was also unprecedented compared to any other time in Kenya's election history. This spike could be attributed to the intense media exposure that the violence in general received. For complex political reasons that included overt pressure from the international community and massive humanitarian response, human rights violations occurring during this period received broad media coverage and there was comprehensive documentation of sexual violence both within the country and internationally. Yet the discursive line adopted in the media reports stuck neatly to a liberal discourse of (civil and political) rights, while eschewing any sustained discussion of the structural demands (encompassed by social and economic rights) that fuelled the post-election chaos. In other words, in a context such as Kenya where there was fear that privileging the discussion of ethnicity might have opened a can of worms, sexual violence could be packaged separately as a serious violation of the rights of women that deserved attention of state and media – the same state and media that throughout electioneering periods had been complicit in undermining and abusing the rights of women, including those who aspire for political office (African Women and Child Feature Service 2009:12), or who participate in politics as part of the electorate.

Conclusion

This paper has sought to expose, through analysis of three distinct political periods in Kenya's history carried out within three broad narratives, the ways in which media representations of sexual violence against women have worked in the interest of the various forms of 'market' that the media in Kenya pursue. The first narrative, which was grounded upon the materiality of women's bodies, sought to highlight the ways in which Kenyan media historically pursued an agenda that was dictated in part by the state. Through this narrative, the colonial state sought ostensibly to exercise control over women's sexual propriety, although as the paper illustrates, it largely was one of the mechanisms used for exercising control over the colony using women's bodies as markers. The second narrative explored questions regarding the democratic transition of the state, and the ways in which a substantially suppressed media at the time

projected questions that were considered to be urgent political questions into the public domain. This narrative looked extensively at the ways in which the St. Kizito rape case which occurred in 1991 was treated in both local and international media, and in particular the ways in which the story mediated democratisation discourses within the public domain via the then repressed media. The final narrative through which the paper discussed questions of anti-rape discourses in Kenyan media provided an analysis of the media coverage of sexual violence that took place during the 2007/08 post-election violence. In this case the paper has argued that media coverage of rape was partial to the demands both of the state and of the international community that invested heavily in the subsequent peace process.

The paper has demonstrated the ways in which women's bodies tacitly serve a partisan and ethnic agenda, thus exposing the partiality of mainstream media. The central argument being made is with respect to the structural nature of violence observed as against passive media representations of rape that seek to separate rape discourses from the political economy of media. The discussions point to the fact that context, and therefore historicity, in the analysis of rape matters. The paper has highlighted also the breath of subjectivities, including ethnicity, sexuality, gender and class that intersect with rape in complex ways not supported by the liberal application of rights as the primary recourse for violations of this nature. This suggested framework of analysing rape within contexts of structural violence and democratic contestations is a radical shift from the predominant literature. Yet it is a challenge that feminist scholars ought to take on in order not only to understand the nature of sexual violence that persists in locking women out of political spaces, but which could also be a critical tool for articulating exactly what women mean when they demand free and fair elections.

The media is endowed with a very specific role in this regard, that of providing a voice to those marginalised because of poverty, gender, or ethnic or religious affiliation. By giving these groups a place in the media, their views – and their afflictions – become part of mainstream public debate and hopefully contribute to a social consensus that the injustices against them ought to be redressed. By providing information and acting as a forum for public debate, the media play a catalytic role, making reforms possible through the democratic process and in the end strengthening democratic institutions and making possible public participation without which democracy is a mere sham. The space for expression in media is, however, powerfully mediated by dominant

ideologies around gender, class and ethnicity. It is only in acknowledging the ways in which these factors intersect to produce specific discourses, and adopting a critical approach towards the dissemination of reports on sexual violence, that the media can fulfil a more progressive role with the possibility of engendering truly anti-rape discourses.

Notes

1. Hirsch similarly argued that scholarly explanations of rape and feminist efforts to stop rape through legal and extra-legal means have created identities of 'rapist' and 'raped' that 'pre-exist the rape itself' and repeatedly construct women as 'sexually vulnerable objects' always either already raped or already rapable. Vulnerable female victims and unstoppable male perpetrators are standard rape identities inscribed in and through culturally specific 'scripts of rape', in which the end of the scripted drama is most often the rape of a woman.

2. Smart and Smart argue that media explanations of rape generally focus on the psychological motivation of the perpetrator and on aspects of the context that facilitated commission of the crime (e.g. an unlocked door, previous conflict between the parties involved).

3. The U.S. media coverage indicted consciousness of this divergence yet took a firm position that the cause of the violence was directly linked to Kenyan women's subordinate position in relation to men. By so doing, they reflected important understandings about women's rights and the application and significance of those rights outside the United States.

4. The pressure-release model emphasized the inevitability of the boys' explosive reaction given the growing tension in the poorly run institution.

5. Other scholars make a similar point based on the fact that by using state institutions and other instruments within the public and private sphere, such as the media, the administration ensured that opposition to [Jomo] Kenyatta's rule was contained and delegitimized on the grounds that such disunity was inconsistent with the needs of the state. In the early post-independence period, therefore, the media were seen by the state as a partner in the nation-building political project (see Ogola, George, 'The Political Economy of the Media in Kenya', Africa Today, Vol. 57(3), p. 80.

6. An example of such subtlety is to be found in Noam Chomsky's argument that there exists a complex system of filters in the media and educational institutions that ends up ensuring that dissident perspectives are weeded out, or marginalized in one way or another. The end result is that what are called opinions 'on the left' and 'on the right' in the media represent only a limited spectrum of debate, which reflects the range of needs of private power – but there is essentially nothing beyond those 'acceptable' positions (see this discussion in Mitchell, R.P. and J. Schoeffel (2003), Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky, London: Vintage Books, pp. 12-14).

7. I adopt this line of reasoning from Noam Chomsky's 'Propaganda Model' (see Mitchell, R.P. and J. Schoeffel, 2003: 15-18).

8. An unpublished baseline study conducted by the author in between june 2009 – January 2010 among women that had experienced sexual violence during the 2007/08 post-election violence period in Kenya revealed a nexus between women's economic location, ethnicity, and sexual violence. This preliminary work sought to investigate the increase in reported cases of sexual violence and also to examine state responses to women that were affected.

9. Mau Mau is the colloquial term for the 1950s armed uprising by poor and landless Kikuyu against the British settler regime in Kenya and its more prosperous Kikuyu allies.

10. Elkins, C. (2005), Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya. New York: W.W. Norton, and Anderson, D. (2005), Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire. New York: Henry Holt, are the most recent contributions to the substantial historiography of Mau Mau.

11. Some opinions suggest that the intention was to provide Kenya African National Union (KANU) leaders with an excuse to impose a State of Emergency, suspend democracy and the rule of law by decree until they recaptured initiative over the political space.

12. According to Kenya's latest population census (2010) ranking of the country's ethnic groups with more than one million people, the Gikuyu form the largest ethnic group in Kenya (6,622,576), followed by the Luhya (5,338,666), Kalenjin (4,987,328), Luo (4,044,440), Kamba (3,893,137), Kenyans of Somali origin (2,385,572), Kisii (2,385,572), Mijikenda (1,960,574) and Meru (1,658,108) – see The Standard online newspaper at http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/InsidePage.php?id=2000017245&cid=4. Ethnic rivalry has marked the relationships between the Gikuyu, Luo and Kalenjin ethnic groups since independence. A historical analysis of this hegemonic contestation of political, cultural, ethnic and economic spaces is however beyond the scope of this proposal.

13. Where 'female issues' were taken to include: women's rights violations, healthcare, sanitation, malnutrition, lactating children, gang and individual rapes, horrendous female and genital mutilation, sexual assault or experiences and other injuries including loss of family members, their houses, animals, property, etc.

14. See Kenya Stockholm Blog, 'The Daily Nation' and 'Raila's Stolen Presidency', available at http://kenyastockholm.com/2009/03/23/the-daily-nation-and-stolen-presidency/ (accessed 10/09/2012) for a detailed political economy critique of media during the 2007 electioneering period.

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Gendered Portrayal of Political Actors in Nigerian Print Media: What Impact on Women's Political Participation?

Idongesit Eshiet*

Abstract

The objective of this paper is to investigate the gendered portrayal of political actors in Nigerian print media and its impact on women's political participation based on an empirical study. The study adopted a combination of methods – content analysis and cross-sectional survey. A case study of the coverage of the corruption charges of two former Speakers of the lower legislature (male and female, respectively) during the 2007-2011 administration was conducted on two purposely selected daily newspapers – *The Punch* and *The Guardian*. To complement the findings of the content analysis, a cross-sectional survey was conducted on a sample size of 100 respondents on their perception of media portrayal of female politicians. Findings of the content analyses revealed that the coverage of the cases was gendered, with the female Speaker's case being sensationalised, hyped and trivialised. However, the findings of the survey indicate that a majority of the respondents saw the coverage as justifiable, believing the media simply reported the truth about the female Speaker.

Résumé

Cet article se propose d'explorer la représentation sexospécifique des acteurs politiques dans la presse écrite nigériane et son impact sur la participation politique des femmes, en se fondant sur une étude empirique. L'étude a adopté une combinaison de méthodes – analyse de contenu et enquête transversale. Une étude de cas sur la couverture médiatique des accusations de corruption à l'encontre de deux anciens Orateurs de la chambre basse de la législature (un homme et une femme, respectivement), au cours du gouvernement de 2007-2011) a été réalisée sur deux quotidiens

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choisis expressément – le *Punch* et le *Guardian*. Pour compléter les résultats de l'analyse de contenu, une enquête transversale a été réalisée auprès d'un échantillon de 100 répondants, sur leur perception de la représentation des femmes politiciennes dans les médias. Il ressort des analyses de contenu que la couverture des affaires comportait une dimension sexospécifique, celle concernant l'Oratrice ayant été traitée de manière sensationnelle, exagérée et banalisée. Toutefois, la plupart des répondants ont considéré que la couverture était justifiée, étant convaincus que les médias n'ont fait que rapporter la vérité en ce qui concerne l'Oratrice.

Introduction

The media as an institution plays a pivotal role in creating awareness and shaping attitudes in society. Also, the media constitute the real public space through which citizens understand politics. This role makes the media a veritable tool for either altering or further entrenching the negative gender stereotypes that exclude women from politics. In Nigeria, women constitute a minority in the political scene. Despite several years of democratic rule, no female has occupied any of the highest political offices – president, vice president, governor, senate president, etc. In recent times, female representation in national government has further decreased from 9 per cent in the 2007 administration to 6 percent in the 2011 administration. The questions arise, why the decrease in representation? What role has the media, as a pivotal instrument of creating awareness and shaping attitudes, played in enhancing women's political participation? How do the print media portray male and female political actors? These are some of the contending issues that the study seeks to unravel.

The Media and Molitics

In today's globalised world where information communication technology has become more sophisticated, the media has become even more important as a tool of information dissemination. In politics, the media constitutes the real public through which citizens understand the 'political' (Corner 2003:75). In fact, the media have become the 'playing field' for political actors in the twenty-first century as voters' perception of political figures and issues are shaped principally through the news media**.** Lawrence (2004) observes that the media have considerable power to shape individuals' understanding of public life, to set the agenda on key issues and to influence the political process. Other studies, for example, Schmitt-Beck's (1996) study of the 1990 German national elections, show the power of the media to influence people who are less informed about politics or who have weak party identification. The study

revealed that the media and opinion poll information about the perceived electoral strengths of the competing parties had a measurable effect on the vote, sufficient in a tight contest to decide the outcome.

Gender and Media Portrayal of Political Actors

The media constitutes one of the key institutions that can shape and change attitudes regarding gender stereotypes within the political sphere. Therefore, the ways in which women and men are portrayed; their access to the media; and their visibility as political agents in the media, certainly impact on their political career (Mervi 2006). Despite this obviously important role of the media in enhancing political careers, women do not have a fair representation vis-a-vis men. Statistics show that women have poor access to the media. According to Media and Gender Monitor (2011), women constituted the focus of only 19 per cent of news stories in politics and government in 2010, while only 24 per cent of news stories were reported about women globally. Similarly, the Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) report observes that of the 84 news websites monitored by the project in 2010, only 23 per cent of newsmakers were women. These statistics show that men dominate the news and this has been the situation over the years. An earlier study by Norris (1997) on the media coverage of women heads of state globally lends credence to this. The study reveals that measured by the standardised measure of daily stories per leader, women leaders were covered in fewer stories.

In instances where women are the focus of the news, they are often misrepresented. Media reports on them are often negative, reflecting widely held stereotypes in society, which have nothing to do with their political aspirations (Mervi 2006; Jenkins 2002). Thus, Lawrence (2004) observes that the media exercises significant effects on the formation of public opinion about women politicians, which differs from that about men. In recognition of this negative role of the media on women's political careers, the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995 admonished the media to develop strategies to increase women's participation in decision-making through promoting a less stereotyped image of women and offering them equal access to the media (Mervi 2006). Decades have gone by since this appeal and there is yet to be a remarkable improvement in women's participation in decision-making globally. Women still hold only 20 per cent of parliamentary seats globally. Although this is a remarkable increase from the 11.3 per cent in 1995, the progress is still very slow and there are wide variations among countries (FORBES 2012).

The media often frames women politicians through stereotypes and traditional societal values. Kahn (1994) observes that there are differential expectations in the media and the wider community about the interests and competencies of female and male politicians. For example, the media tends to stress the compassionate and nurturing qualities of women, while competencies are emphasised in men. In a similar vein Lawrence (2004) observes that in the past, the media's starting point was that women belonged at home and they were expected to marry and raise a family. Braden's (1996) account of the media portrayal of the first United States congresswoman (Jeannette Rankin) lends credence to this. The account reveals that the press made her an instant celebrity as she was regarded as an anomaly and an oddity that had strayed too far from the cultural norm. There are still elements of this in the treatment of contemporary female politicians.

Lawrence (2004) observes that the relatively rarity of women in the political world sometimes means that the few women in politics attract more attention from the media and are equally perceived as being more newsworthy by the media, albeit in a trivialising sense. Jenkins' (2002) analysis of the biographical accounts of female politicians by the Australian press reveals that such accounts focused on gender-based evaluations. Emphasis is placed on age, marital status, looks, fashion sense and domestic and family lives, rather than on the substance of decisions and actions. Similarly, a study of British women parliamentarians by Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross (1996) reveals that their outward appearance was the subject of considerably more attention than that of their male counterparts.

Women politicians are also framed by the media as being 'outsiders'. Their representation further reinforces societal perception that women are outsiders in politics. They are frequently portrayed as exceptions and 'diversions from the serious male game of politics'. Motion's (1996) study of women's politicians in New Zealand buttresses this fact. The study reveals that successful women politicians were often portrayed as lacking feminine characteristics and resembling their male counterparts. Alternatively, they were depicted as lonely outsiders, unable to adjust to the world of politics. Similarly, Media Monitoring Project's (1999:9) report of a survey of the portrayal of women politicians in the South African media reveals that they were represented as unfeminine, 'iron women', ruthless, belligerent and doggedly determined. These, the report observes, are attributes which are positively correlated with strong leadership by the media when men display them. However, when women

politicians display such attributes, the media criticises and vilifies them. In the same vein, Norris's (1997) study of media portrayal of international women leaders reveals that many of the stories focused on the 'first woman' status (being the first woman to hold such a position) of the leaders as well as on 'the breakthrough for women' (a woman attaining such a position constitutes a breakthrough for women).

The media also portrays women politicians as the agents of change who will clean up corruption in politics. Thus, the entrance of women into politics is commonly perceived by the media and in fact the entire society as a breath of fresh air. Therefore, female politicians are expected to behave better than their male counterparts. When these high expectations are not met, Haines (1992) observes that the condemnation is all the greater. However, Lake (1994) observes that this softer, more caring image is often cultivated by the female politicians themselves, as a means of making themselves more attractive to the electorate. Lawrence (2004) argues there are dangers associated with these exaggerated, saintly images of female politicians, as such inflated expectations are almost certain to be disappointed. This places women politicians between a rock and a hard place. If they dare to be different, they are seen as a problem, and if they fit into the bill, they are equally seen as a problem. So either way, women politicians are criticised and vilified by the media.

The media also belittles female politicians by portraying them as sexual objects. They are portrayed as passive creatures that are being wooed and won over by powerful male politicians and their political positions are represented as tokens in exchange for sexual favours. Jenkins' (2002) analysis of the press in Australia shows that one of the female politicians (Cheryl Kernot) who was touted as a possible future Prime Minister was portrayed by the media as a sexual object of some top and powerful political leaders, whom the media presumed were the ones enhancing her political career.

This discriminative coverage of female and male politicians may translate into electoral disadvantages for women. This is because perception of social reality often corresponds with media 'realities'. Media images are often internalised and accepted as accurate representations of reality by media audiences. Thus, differential treatment of female and male politicians may influence voting decisions in favour of the men. This may be a contributing factor to the low participation of women in politics globally and in countries such as Nigeria. It also buttresses Tuchman's (1978) argument that the media have attempted to banish women to hearth and home.

Theoretical Framework

The agenda-setting theory of the media constitutes the theoretical framework of this study. The theory states that media content sets the agenda for public discussion. Thus, agenda setting illustrates the powerful influence of the media in shaping the public's view of what issues are important. The theory was first put forth by McCombs and Shaw (1972) who argue that although the media may not exactly tell us what to think, they may tell us what to think about. According to them, in choosing and displaying news, editors, newsroom staff, and broadcasters play an important part in shaping political reality. Readers learn not only about a given issue, but also how much importance to attach to that issue from the amount of information in a news story and its position. Thus, once headlines, special news features, discussions, and expert opinions are focused on an issue in the media every day, the issue will continue to be a subject of discussion among the public.

This was the case with the female Speaker's corruption scandal in Nigeria. The story made the front page headlines everyday in a row from the day of the first report until the Speaker eventually relinquished her position. Similarly, special news features, discussions and expert opinions on the scam, were frequent stories in the media.

However, the coverage of the male Speaker corruption charge was not this sensational. The story made fewer headlines with few special news features on it. In fact, discussions and expert opinions on it were toned down. This correspondingly elicited limited public reaction. Thus, the male Speaker was not forced to vacate his seat as was the case with the female Speaker. Yet, at the expiration of his tenure as a Speaker, he was immediately arrested, detained and charged to court by the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC – the organ of government in charge of fighting financial crimes), for corrupt practices, while in office. The female Speaker, whose corruption case was sensationalised, had no case to answer with the Economic and Financial Crime Commission at the expiration of her tenure.

Research Methods

The study used a combination of research methods – content analysis and a cross-sectional survey of women's 'perception of media portrayal of women politicians'. A content analysis of the coverage of the corruption charges of two former Speakers of the lower legislature (male and female, respectively) during the 2007 – 2011 administration was conducted on

two purposely selected daily newspapers – *The Punch* and *the Guardian.* These newspapers were chosen because of their wide coverage, as they rank among the leading daily newspapers in Nigeria. The content analysis covered a period of 72 days (21 August 2007 to 31 October 2007), when the corruption scam against the female Speaker was reported; and 84 days (20 October 2008 to 18 February 2009), when that of her successor, the male Speaker was reported, respectively. Both Speakers were accused of corruption with regards to the award of contracts. While the female Speaker was accused of a N628 million contract scam for the renovation of the official residence of the house leadership (Speaker and Deputy Speaker), the male Speaker was similarly accused of a scam in a N2.3 billion contract for the purchase of cars for the house leadership and standing committees. The content analysis assesses the quantum of stories, number of editorials, and number of paragraphs and headlines written on each case. Secondly, the contents of the reports of each case were qualitatively studied, in terms of the manner in which the respective cases were framed by the newspapers and the implication this had for the image of the respective Speakers before the public. To complement the findings of the content analysis, a cross-sectional survey was also conducted on women's perception of media portrayal of female politicians. A structured interview schedule was used to elicit responses from a hundred randomly selected female respondents in the Lagos metropolis of Lagos State. The interview sought to unravel their perception of media portrayal of female and male political actors, and if such portrayal is gendered, especially in relation to the corruption reports of the subjects of our case study.

Findings

The analysis reveals that a total of 198 and 155 stories were written by *The Punch* and *Guardian* newspapers, respectively, within a timeframe of 72days, on the female Speaker as compared with 31 and 15 stories, in *The Punch* and *Guardian,* respectively, for the male Speaker within 84 days. At least, a story was written on the scam every day with regards to the female Speaker in *The Punch* newspaper. In terms of paragraphing, the female Speaker's story has 3,660 and 2,844 paragraphs in the two dailies, respectively, as compared to 588 and 266 paragraphs for the male Speaker (see Table 1).

With regard to editorial, the female Speaker's story attracted three editorials in each of the newspapers as compared to only one editorial in *The Punch* and none in the *Guardian* for the male Speaker. Similarly, the female Speaker's story has 58 and 53 (sometimes extremely bold)

headlines in each of the respective dailies, while the male Speaker has only eight and six headlines, respectively (see Table 1).

This disproportionate amount of coverage on the scandal involving the female Speaker confirms observations from scholars such as Lawrence (2004) that the relatively rarity of women in politics means they attract more attention from the media, as well as findings from the Media Monitoring Project (1999) indicating that South African women politicians were more prone to criticism than their male counterparts. The female Speaker was the first ever in Nigeria, hence the huge attention that her corruption scam attracted.

Table 1

Content Analysis	Female Speaker		Male Speaker	
	Punch Newspaper	*Guardian* Newspaper	*Punch* Newspaper	*Guardian* Newspaper
Length of coverage	72days	72days	84days	84days
Quantum of articles	198	155	31	15
Number of paragraphs	3,660	2,844	588	266
Number of editorials	3	3	1	0
Front page headlines	58	53	8	6

However, the ordeal of the female Speaker should not be blamed on the media alone. Perhaps the greater blame should go to her colleagues in the same and rival political parties within the legislature, who took advantage of the media's agenda-setting role to ensure that the issue remained in the public domain through incessant negative press interviews and conferences. These reports from the observations of some of the pro female Speaker legislators, who lamented about the incessant press interviews by fellow colleagues, buttress this point:

> 'in all the media in the country... newspaper, televisions, magazine or whatever, the crisis at the house has formed the major news' (*Punch* 18 October 2007:43). [Reports often based on negative press interviews by fellow legislators].

> 'Chairman of the House Committee on media and publicity expressed concern over the allegation, which has gained currency in the media (*Guardian* 24 August 2007: cover page). [Reports often based on negative press interviews and conferences by fellow legislators],

This action of the legislators of appropriating the agenda-setting role of the media to keep the issue in the public domain of course elicited the expected public response. There was outcry from all spheres of the society, calling for the immediate resignation of the Speaker. In the male Speaker's case, the opposition from political colleagues was weak; the media coverage was similarly not hyped, hence, there was only an insignificant public outcry for his removal or resignation.

The qualitative analysis of the contents of the coverage in terms of the manner in which the respective cases were framed shows that the frames reflected the widely held stereotypes about women and men in the Nigerian society. The female Speaker's case attracted more stories and sensationalism because she had failed to live up to the unrealistic expectations of the media (and society) that female politicians are 'outsiders' and 'agents of change'. Her entanglement in corruption charges was seen as an unpardonable transgression. Hence, the issue attracted three editorials in each of the dailies. In fact, one of the editorials questioned her leadership capabilities, despite the fact that she had had three consecutive tenures as a legislator and she was one of the principal officers in the previous administration. Another of the editorials admonished her to resign immediately. These excerpts illustrate the disappointment of the media on her fall from grace.

> 'I find it rather sad that the first woman Speaker would engage in the act. We are disappointed and embarrassed by that. The expectation that a woman will bring a motherly instinct to management of our resources is shattered' (*Punch* 9 September 2007:43).

> 'the attempt by Mrs Etteh (Speaker) to pass the blame to her subordinates portrays her as weak and incapable of providing the kind of purposeful leadership and direction that the house requires to deliver results'(*Punch* 25 September 2007:14, Editorial).

Similarly, many of the stories showed her as the 'other' who has transgressed into the male's political space. Her 'first woman' status was constantly reported as well as the disappointment that her action had brought to the 'breakthrough for women'. She was commonly referred to as a 'disgrace to womanhood'. Equally, some stories portrayed her first as a woman before being a politician. She was constantly referred to as

'Madam Speaker'. The stories on her male counterpart simply reported him as Speaker.

Her educational qualification was downplayed. She has a Diploma in Law and Beauty Therapy, respectively. She was also an undergraduate student, studying Political Science atthe University of Abuja. However, she was ridiculed as an inept and naive hairdresser that is lacking in political expertise, as these excerpts illustrate –

> 'the mere fact that we have this crisis shows that she does not have any managerial capacity, (and) lacks political skill'(*Punch* 22 September 2007:A3).

> 'when she was elected, the members were fully aware that her highest educational attainment was that of a hairdresser' (*Punch* 25 September 2007:9).

> 'to make the transition from a beauty shop to the No 4 position in the country is no easy feat'(*Guardian* 30 September 2007:54).

She was portrayed as undeserving of being a Speaker. Her ascendancy to Speakership was portrayed as a reward from political godfathers as depicted by these excerpts:

> 'she has some very powerful sponsors who anointed her and imposed her on us' (*Punch* 20 October 2007:9).

> 'her election as a Speaker was a rare and spectacular reward of loyalty by a party famous for its treachery' (*Punch* 2 October 2007:13).

> 'a hairdresser became the Speaker only because of her relationship with the oga (former Nigerian President) of the previous administration' (*Punch* 27 October 2007:A5).

The issue was trivialised and stereotyped along gender-based evaluations. This finding supports Jenkins' (2002) and Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross's (1996) observations in Australia and Britain, respectively, which reveal media reports of female politicians as focusing on gender-based evaluations such as outward appearance and fashion sense.

> 'the Speaker cannot understand that it is not about money, godfather or about twisting the system around her fancy nails' (*Punch* 2 October 2007:13).

> 'Etteh (Speaker) should be recalled so that she can return to her beauty salon and resume work as a hairdresser'(*Punch* 30 September 2007:7).

> 'what would it profit Etteh (Speaker) ...to shrug off this debilitating scandal and continue in office as Speaker with a handbag full of cracked mirrors, facial masks and mascara?' (*Guardian* 28 September 2007:51).

She was also represented as ruthless, belligerent and doggedly determined as illustrated by these excerpts – *'a congenital liar and brazen manipulator of the levers of power'* (*Punch* 2 October 2007:13); [who did not demonstrate] *'an iota of remorse, before, during and after at the panel'* (*Punch* 25 September 2007:9) [and whose appearance while at the panel set up to investigate the scam] *'looked like a champion boxer determined to defend her title'* (*Guardian* 28 September 2007:51) [and was also] "*vividly ill at ease*"(*Guardian* 28 September 2007:51). Her response to the accusation was represented as '*emotional and sentimental comments'* (*Punch* 27 September 2007:14).

On the other hand, the media construction of the male Speaker's case was issue based. The case was neither hyped nor trivialised by either daily. Stories focused on the core issues involving the scam as demonstrated by the excerpts below. Hence, the scam elicited minimal attention from the public.

> 'The crisis in the House of Representatives over the purchase of 380 committee vehicles worth N2.3 billion worsened on Thursday. The leadership of the house under Speaker Bankole has been accused of profiting from the contract' (*Punch* 7 November 2008:6).

> 'House referred the controversy surrounding the purchase of 380 cars for committee duties to its committee on Ethics and Privileges for investigation. Keyamo alleged a fraud of overpayment or misappropriation of about N42.5 million in the deal' (*Punch* 21 October 2008:8).

> 'Keyamo had accused the House leadership of short-changing the Nigerian tax payers of over N500million when it purchased cars from PAN' (*Guardian* 31 October 2008:9).

Comparison between the two newspapers reveals that the *Guardian* newspaper was more issue-based in its style of reporting than *The Punch*. Similarly, the quantum of stories, front page headlines and the number of paragraphs on both issues were less in the *Guardian* newspaper than in *The Punch* (see Table 1).

To further buttress the findings from the content analysis, a cross-sectional survey was conducted on a sample of 100 randomly selected females in the Lagos metropolis, using a structured interview schedule. The interview sought to unravel their perception of media portrayal of female and male political actors [in light of the corruption scandals] and if as women they considered such portrayal as gendered?

The socio-economic background of respondents as revealed by the analysis show that a majority of them were middle aged (40-49 years – 35.4%); married (56.0%); and educated with about 40 per cent being first

degree holders. About 48.0 per cent were engaged in the public sector, while only 10 per cent were self-employed. Also, a majority (52.3%) of them earned monthly incomes of less than N100, 000.00.

An analysis of their political orientation shows that a majority of the respondents (80%) were interested in politics and of those interested in politics, 51.0 per cent were members of political parties. For party members, only 21.6 per cent held executive positions in parties and among this, the leader position constitutes 63.6 per cent of positions held.

Respondents' assessment of women's representation in politics shows that a majority (70%) acknowledged women's low representation in politics and attributed this to the marginalisation of women within the political space, due to the commonly held notion that politics is for men.

An analysis of the corruption scams of the female and male Speakers reveals that a majority (more than 90.0%) of the respondents had paid attention to the scandal involving the female speaker as compared to 61 per cent who had followed the case of the male Speaker. A majority (80%) had followed the story on television, although a good number (41%) had read it in print. The remainder had followed the issue on the radio (34%) or via social media (21%).

In terms of the nature of coverage, a majority (61%) of the respondents admitted the female Speaker's case was not hyped, arguing that the media simply reported the truth. However, 39.0 per cent of them admitted the coverage was biased and sensationalised because of the 'woman' factor. Similarly, 58.5 per cent of them did not consider the media coverage had influenced the outcome of the case (the removal of the Speaker). For them, the Speaker's removal was just. In fact, they commended the media for exposing the Speaker who was a 'disgrace to womanhood'. However, 41.5 per cent saw her as a victim of negative media coverage and attributed her forceful removal to the sensationalism that the media created about the case. They argue that for simply being a 'woman', who dared to tread upon a strange terrain that is an exclusive preserve of men, her mistake was seen as an unpardonable sin, hence the intense media coverage. However, for the male Speaker, being in politics was a natural domain and a man being involved in corruption was nothing strange, hence his case did not generate as much interest in the media as that of the female Speaker.

An analysis of respondents' general assessment of media coverage of female politicians reveals that about 57.0 per cent believed the media was gendered in its coverage of female politicians, as women politicians were often portrayed negatively. However, about 43.0 per cent said there was

no biased reporting. With regard to the medium most culpable of negative coverage of women's politician, findings reveal the television (52%) as the most culpable, followed by the print media (26.0%) and then radio (22%). However, respondents did not attribute the low participation of women in politics to the negative media portrayal of female politicians. About 68.0 per cent said the media portrayal of female politicians is not the reason for the low participation of women in politics but rather the marginalisation of women within the political space.

Conclusion

The media is an important tool for changing attitudes and creating new perceptions. In today's world, the media has become even more important in providing knowledge and shaping attitudes, especially with regard to political behaviour. This study has shown that the portrayal of political actors in Nigeria by the print media is gendered. This finding corroborates the findings of other studies (Braden 1996; Motion1996; Sreberny-Mohammadi and Ross 1996; Media Monitoring Project 1999; Lawrence 2004; Jenkins 2002) in other parts of the world. The study has further revealed that public perception including those of women is in support of this gendered portrayal. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Women being products of their cultural environment do have images that are in consonance with prevailing cultural perceptions of women. These images are further reinforced by the stories in the media as Mervi (2006) observes that media reports on female politicians are often negative, reflecting widely held stereotypes in society. This probably informs the findings of the study that the gendered media portrayal has not influenced the low participation of women in politics in Nigeria. However, it is my opinion that the media can help ameliorate the low participation of women in politics in Nigeria, due to its enormous power in shaping political behaviour as evidenced by empirical data (see Kahn 1994; Schmitt-Beck 1996). Therefore, the Nigerian media report of female politicians should be issue-based, devoid of trivialisation and sensationalism, as was the case of the female Speaker's corruption charge. The media should sensitise the public to the idea that women's participation in political life is an essential part of democracy. Probably with the assistance of the media, more women will encroach upon the political terrain, thus increasing women's representation from the present paltry 6 per cent.

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'*Ndezve Varume Izvi*'[1]: Hegemonic Masculinities and Misogyny in Popular Music in Zimbabwe

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Abstract

Popular music has proved a fertile ground for the display of masculine identities, and songs have proved a ready-made arena for the playing out of these identities. This paper endeavours to offer an analysis of popular music in Zimbabwe, showing how hegemonic masculinities and misogyny are celebrated and venerated. The study uses discourse and content analysis on popular songs released in the last five years to highlight how music is a medium for normalising and transmitting masculinities and femininities from one generation to another. It highlights how popular music recreates and reinforces the perceived inferiority of women and how messages portrayed in songs mirror the dominant and hegemonic ideas about social life and sexuality. Young males and females listening to such music grow up believing that these sexual stereotypes are true. The paper concludes that, ultimately, popular culture mirrors real life and as such the masculine nature of music is one way in which sexual domination of women is celebrated and reinforced.

Key Words: Hegemonic masculinities, popular music, gender, misogyny, Zimbabwe

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Résumé

La musique populaire s'est avérée être un terrain fertile pour manifester des identifiés masculines, et les chansons une arène toute trouvée pour exprimer ces identités. Le présent article tente d'offrir une analyse de la musique populaire au Zimbabwe montrant comment les masculinités hégémoniques et la misogynie sont célébrées et vénérées. L'étude utilise le discours et l'analyse de contenu portant sur les chansons populaires parues au cours des cinq dernières années pour souligner en quoi la musique est un médium pour normaliser et transmettre les masculinités et les féminités d'une génération à l'autre. Elle met en relief la façon dont la musique populaire recrée et renforce l'infériorité perçue des femmes, et comment les messages présentés dans les chansons reflètent les idées dominantes et hégémoniques concernant la vie sociale et la sexualité. Les jeunes hommes et femmes qui écoutent cette musique grandissent en croyant que ces stéréotypes sexuels sont vrais. L'article conclut qu'en fin de compte, la culture populaire reflète la vie réelle et, de ce fait, la nature masculine de la musique est un moyen par lequel la domination sexuelle des femmes est célébrée et renforcée.

Mots clés : Masculinités hégémoniques, musique populaire, genre, misogynie, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Popular music as an art form is highly gendered in Zimbabwe. It has proved a fertile ground for the display of masculine identities, and a ready-made arena for the playing out of these identities. Popular music also plays a significant part in the representation of gender and sexuality in contemporary social settings (Bennett 2005). Frith and McRobbie (as cited in Bennett 2005:337) have argued that, in some cases, such representation has emphasised dominant gender roles, for example, in rock and heavy metal music's portrayal of male domination, physical prowess and the sexual subversion of women. The role of music in constructing gender relations is increasingly coming under the critical lens in Zimbabwe and the mushrooming of youthful urban-based musical groups, commonly known as urban grooves, has rejuvenated the debate on the representation of women in the media (Chari 2009, Mate 2012 and Manase 2011). However, in spite of the heated debate on the representation of women in music, academic enterprise on this subject has been conspicuous by its absence (Chari 2009).

The paper's main interest is to examine the creation and re-creation of the woman's body and its portrayal in popular art. Women have

been a staple theme of Zimbabwean popular music as objects of either caricature or adoration from time immemorial (Chari 2009). According to Chenorff (1979), making music is not a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them. Messages portrayed in songs mirror the dominant and hegemonic ideas about social life and sexuality and popular music is far from being merely a passive pleasure (Bennett 2005). As noted by McClary (2002), for better or worse, music socialises us. Bjorck (2011: 9) has argued that unproblematised assumptions of popular music as 'free' may instead function as exclusionary normalisation. Ultimately, popular art epitomises real life and as such the masculine nature of music is one way in which sexual domination of women is celebrated and reinforced.

The objective of this paper is to outline the misogynistic representation of women in popular music, to document masculine and misogynistic symbols and language in popular music, and to analyse the gendered meanings of popular songs. We emphasise the production, reproduction and continuance of meaning, particularly through discourse. Borrowing from critical constructivism, our analysis highlights how meaning is constructed through language.

We define popular music in Zimbabwe to include all music widely played on the radio and which has dominated radio chart shows but our analysis concentrates on music produced in the last five years in all genres in Zimbabwe. Our focus is a nuanced analysis of the content and discourse in these songs highlighting how popular art forms are gendered. We subscribe to the view that songs as any form of art are a conduit of cultural transmission and, as such, the messages they carry are important in understanding the dominant ideas about social life in any society. What we sing and celebrate as a society influences our ideas about masculinities and femininities. Musicians are often called social commentators yet they are also influential in promoting dominant discourses in society. Music is not simply leisure or entertainment, but a site in which fundamental aspects of social formation are contested and negotiated (McClary 2002:54). As such, in this paper, we show how music influences and is influenced by discourses of hegemonic masculinity.

Our methodology focused on understanding the songs, their meanings and the context in which they are sung: hence, we applied qualitative content analysis whereby we sifted through the content of various songs, identifying the lyrics, the melodic phrases and language used. The qualitative content analysis sought to establish the meanings, representations and hegemonic gender stereotypes in the songs. We

focused on language, symbols, visual images and other forms of semiosis in the songs as means of portraying a particular gender discourse. Given the power of the written and spoken word in reinforcing particular gender regimes, we sought to describe, interpret, analyse and critique social life reflected in the text (Luke 1997). The language and lyrics of popular songs offer a glimpse into the social organisation of a society and how dominant discourses around gender and sexuality are celebrated, valorised and reinforced in popular art.

In choosing cases, we purposively selected songs from all genres which had either misogynistic or gender themes sung by both male and female artists. We started with 500 songs which mentioned women from a list of over 1,200 songs chosen from a yearly top-one-hundred chart on a local radio station. The top 100 songs from 2000 to 2011 formed the sample and this period allowed us to choose a wide variety of songs to ascertain that misogynistic lyrics are fairly entrenched within the music culture in Zimbabwe. The sample included international songs that were removed because we concentrated on locally produced songs and singers. From the 500, we purposively sampled songs that specifically described or alluded to women in graphic terms. In the end we selected 30 songs from various musical genres such as urban grooves, *sungura²*, dancehall, reggae, gospel and house. The majority of the sampled songs were urban groove songs because of their popularity and gendered messages. Urban grooves are more prone than most genres to contain misogynistic messages largely because of the influence of American hip-hop music, which tends to portray women in sexually suggestive ways.

Conceptual Framework

To better understand the portrayal of women in popular music we employed the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2005) notes that hegemonic masculinity is the dominant and most idealised form of masculinity in any gender regime. It is a normative standard against which 'all other men... position themselves... and [which] ideologically legitimate[s] the global subordination of women to men' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832). Connell's (2005) framework points to the fact that people practice masculinities and femininities rather than having or being them. This means that aspects of various masculinities can exist simultaneously in the same person, so that someone can engage in protest masculinity while being respectful to women (Connell 2005). Certain masculinities can be viewed as the hegemonic discourses in particular societies. In this instance, in Zimbabwe, the dominant discourse that

is portrayed and venerated in popular music is hegemonic masculinity. Discourse can be defined from various standpoints. A number of scholars agree that discourse is related to power, ideology and can be understood in relation to social structural problems such as race, gender and class (Bhatasara 2010). Jorgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that discourse can be a group of ideas or patterned way of thinking which can be identified in text, verbal communication or social structures or a form of social action that plays a part in producing and reproducing the social world.

Gendered Nature of Popular Music

Several scholars have written on the subject of gender and popular music but the term popular music 'defies precise, straightforward definition' (Shuker 2005:203). While the term 'popular' connotes such diverse ideas as 'of the folk', 'contemporary', 'mass-produced' and 'oppositional' (as in counter-culture), particular genres or songs often – if not always – blur these categories (Kassabian 1999 as cited in Bjorck 2011:9-10). Williams (1976:199) asks what is meant by the word 'popular'? Is 'popular' what is well liked by many people or what is produced by people? Is it a derogatory word that refers to 'an inferior kind of work'? The distinction between what is popular and serious music is evident in the works of Theodore Adorno (1941) in which he differentiates popular music from other music by its standardisation and formula. For Adorno serious music does have a musical scheme and formula or repetitive style. The standardisation of popular music is a result of the culture industry and mass production that rob listeners of any choice (Adorno 1941:310). Connolly and Krueger (2006) defined popular music as music that has a wide following, is produced by contemporary artists and composers, and does not require public subsidy to survive, and this includes rock and roll, pop, rap, bebop, jazz, blues and many other genres.

Issues of gender and popular music have previously mainly been explored by researchers in sociology, culture studies, media studies, and popular music studies and while many studies have focused primarily on Western pop and rock music, the body of research also includes texts about a variety of musical genres and cultures (Bjorck 2011:10). The significance of gender is shown to be evident in a number of areas such as: the construction of popular music history, the perceived masculine or feminine nature of particular genres/styles, audiences, fandom, record-collecting, occupation of various roles within the music industry, youth subcultures, and gender stereotyping in song lyrics and music videos (Shuker 2005). Bjorck (2011) explained the gendered nature of popular music by focusing on what she termed sexual representation and gendered

signification. Sexual representation means that some genres have been pointed out as particularly over-represented by males, while gendered signification refers to how popular music appears to be broadly aligned with two traits associated with masculinity: assertive and aggressive performance, and technological mastery.

Writing on popular music and how gender is constructed in Taiwan and China, Moskowitz (2009) notes how Mandopop[3] lyrics provide models for gendered thought and behaviour, and reflect pre-existing conceptions of gender. Largely, lyrical depictions of women promote remarkably traditional gender roles and men appreciate such depictions. Men are portrayed as energetic, hard-hearted, considerate, tolerant, free like the wind and drifting, whilst women are portrayed as emotional, meek, illogical, frail and dependent on men, childish, agreeable, yielding, passive victims to men's caprice, and pretty (Moskowitz 2009:71-72). At the same time Moskowitz cites some of the contradictions and paradoxes in Mandopops. For example, notions of innate differences between men and women are reified yet they are also undermined by allowing men to sing and write the songs about these images.

The nexus between gender and popular music has been similarly articulated by Valdez (1999) who highlights many tensions and conflicts concerning gender and social identities in the Dominican Republic. Valdez (1999) drew a connection between Bachata music, the emotionalism of the male characters, and the physical and psychological violence carried out against the female characters. Costello's (2009) also provides several examples of the problematic relationship between Bachata music and gender and, more specifically, of how the music intersects with misogynistic behaviour by the male characters. He argues that the combination of male emotionalism and violence towards women and its relationship to Bachata music is similar to the cultural dynamic that operates with the bolero and masculine identity in Latin America (Castello 2009:5).

Popular music can act as a purveyor of misogynistic attitudes. In his analysis, Shore (2009) pays attention to androgyny and misogyny in popular music. One could argue that the word 'androgyny' reveals the homosocial syntax of language, significantly, by placing the *masculine* part of the word before the *feminine* (Irigaray 1993). Since the 1960s, pop music has been a principally 'homosocial' discourse in which female, gay, queer and androgynous bodies have provided an embodied rupture to progression of hetero-patriarchy (Cooper 1985; Reynolds and Press 1995; Davies 2001; Lecklider 2004). Shore (2009) is of the view

that the Rolling Stones songs Under My Thumb' (1966) and 'Yesterdays Papers' (1967), for example, project an identity of women as subservient preachers of domesticated suburbia. Essentially, these songs describe how the Rolling Stones see a 'woman's role' that 'resides in her sex, in her mouth, (and) in her ability to give pleasure' (Whiteley 2000:37 cited in Shore 2009).

Valdez (1999) observes that the Bachata in the Dominican Republic, similar to other popular music in Latin America, provides a forum for men to express their emotions that does not threaten their sense of masculinity and may, in fact, foster a hyper-macho aggressiveness that finds an outlet in the oppression of women. Contrary to the characteristics of women, Castello (2009) talks about feminine subjectivity where the female characters seem to uphold the typical image of women in Bachatas: cold, calculating forces of emotional and social disorder, emotional detachment and unfaithful and uncaring in love. Gender stereotypes in Bachata music are thus reinforced in which women are forces of social disorder and tend to be more practical and less sentimental while the men are the romantic, idealistic victims who end up suffering emotionally (Castello 2009).

In Cameroon, similar to some countries in West Africa, Fuh (2011) observed that popular songs promote the phallus, defile femininity, denigrate women as objects of contemplation, portray patriarchy, and yet, reveal men in crisis. Fuh (2011) articulates what is termed 'crisis in masculinities'. This discourse of manhood in crisis presupposes 'that the failures of men are due to the successes of women, potentially disrupting the social/gender order' (Walker 2005:2). In such a context that has emerged in Cameroon, popular music has been focusing on the sorrows of unrequited love, infidelity, sexual promiscuity, poverty, misery, treason, despair, suffering and exploitation. Such songs carry contradictory messages of men as patriarchs and victims, and women as oppressed, whilst at the same time portraying women as oppressors and deconstructing patriarchy, liberating women and victimising men (Fuh 2011).

Vambe (2000) observed that most songs by male artists in Zimbabwe reveal a deep concern for society's need to control female sexuality. The major stereotypical images produced and circulated through songs by male singers are those that present women as hopeless victims of social circumstances, dangerous and loose (Vambe 2000:82). Vambe gives a number of examples such as male singer Leonard Zhakata, whose songs portray women not only as victims of male machinations but also as objects of male sexual desire. For example, Vambe noted that in '*Maruva*

enyika' (The flowers of the country), the singer raises the important issue of AIDS which threatens humanity in Zimbabwe. In the song women are perceived as 'flowers' that decorate homes, yet they have poison (AIDS) which leads to death. The song depicts women as 'dangerous' victims because they harbour poison within them (Vambe 2000:82).

Whilst many of the scholars cited above have articulated how female sexuality is demeaned in popular music in general, some scholars have drawn attention to specific types of popular music. For example, in Zimbabwe, Chari (2008) focused on the representation of women in male-produced 'urban groove' music. Other scholars in other contexts have paid attention to rock and roll, jazz, country, rap and hip-hop music (Middleton 1990; Armstrong 1993). Chari's centre of analysis was on whether representation in urban grove music empowers or disempowers men and women and the possible impacts on consumers of such music. The lyrical content of male-produced 'urban groove' music celebrates negative stereotypes of women, violence against women, commodification of women, and other negative representations which undermine the empowerment of women in society (Chari 2008). Male-produced urban groove music not only circumscribes women in positions of subordination but also sanitises violence as a means of hegemonic control (Chari 2008:102).

In relation to the above, Chari (2009), focusing on urban grooves and the impact of global popular culture, is of the view that sex, simulated sexual intercourse, sex dance, coarse humour and obscenities are the staple diet of urban groove music. Chari noted that urban groove musicians appear to be borrowing from Western popular musical icons such as Tupac Shakur, Eminem, Snoop Dogg and others who regard sex as a fetish and litter their music with sexual remarks and overtones, obscenities and swear words. Chari also makes a connection between urban groove music and violence. Violence is a staple theme of urban groove music and celebrated as the ultimate form of individual liberation. In such instances women become collateral damage when violence is committed (Chari 2009:180). Soft violence, which is verbal, is what mostly characterises the music of Stunner and Nasty Trix, which they celebrate beauty in 'pejorative' imagery – a kind of 'tongue in cheek' scenario (Chari 2009:180).

Similar to what Vambe (2000) pointed out, Chari gives the example of Nasty Trix's song '*Mwana Anotyisa*', which means dangerous child, in which the musician compares the beauty of a girl to the Rwandan genocide and also evokes the image of women as vectors of diseases.

Popular music also reproduces male hegemony and celebrates tough masculinities. Manase (2011) in his study of Winky D's music pointed out that in his song *Vanhu Vakuru* (Big Man), he expressed his survivalist identity by bragging that he is the 'most wicked' man in town, a big fighter, and a man of high class who is loved by all beautiful girls (Manase 2011:88). Manase also argues that the songs glorify violence; for example in *Nhinhi* (trouble maker), Winky D sings in praise of his tough image as a street fighter with a well-built physique and asserts that his heroic qualities surpass those of all his enemies and even the late armed robbers Chidhumo and Masendeke, who became notorious after escaping from the maximum Chikurubhi Prison in Harare (Manase 2011:89).

Mate (2012) articulates the issue of language that has emerged within urban groove music in Zimbabwe pertaining to sex, sexuality and the objectification of women. According to Saul (2006), 'objectifying women' means presenting women as dehumanised and objects for male sexual pleasure. Mate (2012:124) argues that the stories in songs show that women are discussed in a context of neo-patrilineal identities as potential wives or as non-marriageable within a neo-patrilineal and consumerist context; and hence, males who can access resources can assert control over women and affirm their masculinity in both long-term and short-term relationships. Mate also highlights that street terms for young women may also be seen as a form of objectification and when considered together with names for men, it is clear that they are categories which speak to emerging subjectivities, punctuated by consumerism and related sexualities. For example, girls are referred to as (among other things) *koso, chimoko, jimbisi* (whore), *gero* (girl), *bhebhi* (baby/babe), and chi-danger (a small dangerous escapade/ something that gets one into trouble) (Mate 2012:124).

In other Southern African countries, popular culture and popular music have also been subjects of contestation in relation to gender and sexuality. Malawian popular music in general is male dominated, with class and gender dynamics serving to replicate dominant gendered power relations between male and female performers or fans (Gilman and Fenn 2006:380). Female popular music has also been appropriated by men in Malawi which has led to a consolidation of chauvinistic attitudes and values (Lwanda 2003:137). Most songs as performed by males who appropriate female music may become subverted towards anti-feminism and it may be made to sound misogynistic and chauvinistic, and may be used to buttress male dominance (Lwanda 2003:138).

In South Africa during the migrant labour system in the 1940s and 1950s, there was a masculinisation of popular music performance supported by state apparatus which put men into positions of complete dominance (Ballantine 2000). This process also handicapped women by limiting them to being carriers of sexual frisson for men's groups, reducing them to passive objects of contestation and display, and restricting them to nurturing roles. For example, some songs by the Manhattan Brothers vilified women by presenting them as spendthrifts, temptresses and prostitutes or as fickle, loose, and defiled (Ballantine 2000).

In other contexts, Adeyele-Fayemi (1994), using a strand of Yoruba popular music as an example, showed how women function as consumers of a constructed representation and naming in Nigeria. In almost all forms of popular culture, women are derided, ridiculed, objectified, or rigidly categorised in accordance with male power and control as mothers, wives, good-time girls, and at best, as romanticised queens and goddesses (Adeyele-Fayemi 1994). According to Adeye-Fayemi (1994), sexual parodies of women are a regular feature in Yoruba popular music and most of the musicians employ the services of young women as dancers for their musical videos. The lyrics are often lurid and vulgar and each album comes up with more imaginative ways of describing the female anatomy as 'fresh fish' (succulent bodies), 'sweet banana' (breasts), 'bulldozers' (buttocks), 'caterpillar' (body contours), and many more (Adeyele-Fayemi 1994). Adeye-Fayemi 1994) mentions Nigerian Yoruba singers such as Sunny Ade who has used sex/sexuality as an entertainment gimmick. Sunny Ade popularizsed the slang siki siki (breasts) and once sang *omú siki siki siki siki ni iyì obìnrin* (bouncy breasts are a woman's greatest asset).

Findings and Discussion

After analysing the sampled songs, seven themes emerged which outline how popular songs in Zimbabwe present and portray women in a [variety of] sexist and misogynistic ways. What is clear is that popular music is a medium through which hegemonic masculinities are being populated, cemented and passed to future generations. The emergent themes are explained below.

Presentation of the Female Body

Sexual references to women's bodies are part of pop culture especially music. Comedian cum singer Kapfupi in his song popularised the word '*mutumba*' (big drum) to describe big bodied women. The term

quickly became popular with people especially touts and conductors who harassed women with big backs by shouting the word at them. Nyamuda (2011) cites a case in which a heavily built woman made her way past a bus terminus in Harare and was subjected to whistles and lewd remarks '*Mutumba asekura*' (literally meaning a woman with a big body especially buttocks). According to the law such acts are classified as sexual harassment and two men were arrested and fined for harassing a woman whilst numerous protests were staged by women's organisations (Nyamuda 2011). Another popular way to describe women in songs across genres is using the word '*akabatana*' (she is well built). Such words objectify women's bodies and inscribe sexual meanings to these bodies. Women are presented as sexual objects for men's enjoyment. As such what is celebrated in popular music are women's looks. Their achievements in other spheres of business or arts are largely ignored. Dominant views of women as sexual items are rooted in hegemonic masculinities that promote certain objectification of women as the apt way of highlighting who they are.

Objectification of women is apparent in such urban groove hits as *'Excuse me Miss makadini, zvamakapfeka kamini, dai mauya kwandiri muzofadza inini'* (excuse me miss how are you doing? You are wearing a mini skirt. You should come to me so as to make me happy). We interpret this to mean that the purpose of beautiful women is to make men happy. The singers portray the notion of how men seek to sexually consume women and collect them as trophies. Urban music culture is more daring with its sexual presentation of the female body. In other songs they talk of women's bodies as a Coca-Cola bottle shape. The following lyrics in a Sani Makhalima song provide an example of the focus on women's bodies:

> *Ganda rako rakanaka* (your skin is beautiful)
>
> *Inzwi rako rakanaka* (your voice is beautiful)
>
> *Maziso ako akanaka* (your eyes are beautiful)
>
> *Makumbo ako akanaka* (your legs are beautiful)
>
> *Malips mahips akanaka* (your lips and your hips are beautiful)

This fascination with women's beauty preoccupies much of popular music. Women's outward sexual appearance is expressed in this song that ultimately portrays how many males in Zimbabwe define women. Popular music as an arbiter of masculinities and femininities expresses certain kinds of masculinity/femininity which divorces and strips women of all substance whilst only concerning itself with their bodies and beauty.

Sexual depiction of the female body is linked to how women are viewed as sexual toys. The dominance of males in popular music explains why such ideas about women are highly visible. A majority of singers are male and most popular songs within the sample drawn for this paper were sung by men. Men's voices and ideas dominate the airways and thus masculinities are valorised and femininities are sidelined. This is part of a wider gender system in Zimbabwe in which women are objectified and seen as property (Mate 2012).

Portrayal of Women as Witches and Whores

The emergence of urban grooves as a popular music form amongst the youths has seen the rise in lyrics that paint women as witches and whores. Urban groove artist Stunner retorts in one of his songs, *'Mababe amuinawo kwandiri ama garinya'* (your girlfriends are all whores). Other songs denounce alleged promiscuity of girls and that they are after older rich men. For example, Stunner's '*Rudo rwemari*' narrates a girl who is only interested in money and is seen as a gold digger. Popular culture often contains and perpetrates negative perceptions of femininity. Most popular songs depict women as people who love the material and the fancy things. Male singers in love songs outline how they would buy women all they want in life. In his song Xtra Large notes how he will rent a plane for a woman if she falls in love with him. Alexio Kawara also highlights how he will buy her leather sofas, televisions and radios. Borrowing from Bjorck (2009), we can see how hegemonic masculinity discourses are produced and reproduced through meanings and symbols contained in popular music.

Celebration of Women's Reproductive and Domestic Roles in Popular Music

Portrayal of women as weak, meek and motherly is hugely evident in popular music. Winky D in one of his songs retorts that '*Ndomai mfana vangu ava*' (this is my baby's mother). This emphasis on the reproductive aspects of women concretises the idea of women's domesticity and their relegation to the domestic sphere. Simon Chimbetu in one of his songs says that '*Ndiwe chete mudzimai wangu, ndiwe chete watova mai vevana. Wochengeta hama zvakanaka'* (You are the only one my wife, the mother of children. Keep the relatives nicely). The idea of women as household keepers is prevalent in most songs where marrying a wife is celebrated as a way of ensuring order and happiness in a man's domestic space. Women are celebrated as wives and

domestic heroines and this view is cemented from one generation to the next through dominant ideas contained in popular culture.

Women are constructed as feminine, weak and victims who are only good for domestic labour. Xtra Large in the song '*Ndoda kushamula newe*' (I want to go with you) paints a picture of men as providers who buy women all they need and require. The only thing women can do is to love a man who in turn will provide all their material needs. The idea of men being providers is based on patriarchal views of male breadwinners. As such, real men can provide for their wives and children. In a song entitled '*Musikana akanaka*', Alexio Kawara talks about wanting a beautiful woman to be the mother of his children. Alick Macheso in another song called *Shedia* encourages a woman to be a good wife and keep her household in spite of problems from her mother-in-law. The idea of women as domesticated is thus continuously perpetrated and celebrated through popular music in Zimbabwe. Women's places and spaces are thus defined in the domestic sphere. Hegemonic ideas on femininity revolve around women's reproductive role. Many songs refer to women's biological ability to be mothers. This portrayal of women is dependent on how women's roles are constructed in patriarchal societies.

Portrayal and Celebration of Hegemonic Masculinity

Lewis (2004) argues that culture is the vehicle by which partriachial values that valorise masculinity are transmitted from one generation to the next; and as such, music as an arbiter of culture is a transmitter of male supremacy. Many popular songs in Zimbabwe describe, celebrate and valorise certain types of masculinity, thereby institutionalising and solidifying hegemonic masculinities in Zimbabwe. Such a normative standard against which all other men position themselves, is based on the belief of male superiority, heterosexuality and multiple sexual partners, among other things. King Shady's song, which is part of this paper's topic and was important in framing the question of this paper, is an excellent example of how hegemonic masculinities are exulted. Below are various excerpts of lyrics from the song with the literal translation. They are not organised in any order but are quoted to show the nature of masculinities at play.

  Ndezve varume izvi, simudza ruko kana uri murume   (this is for me, raise your hands if you are a man)

  Handina sini rebaccossi (I do not have small penis)

  Ichi chipo handidye mugondorosi (my big penis is a gift, I do not eat any medicines)

> *Ndati ndikuudze kuti I am the big boss* (I have to tell you that I am the big boss)
>
> *Choya chinenge ndebvu dzaRick Ross* (pubic hair is as big as Rick Ross's beard)
>
> *Muhomwe handina mari asi mubhurugwa ndiri loaded* (I do not have money in my pocket but I am loaded in my pants)
>
> *Ndopinda mupostori handitambise maseeds* (I do not use condoms because it's a waste of sperms)

From the song, certain characteristics define a 'real' man: big penis, risky sexual behaviour, sexual strength and overpowering women.

Hegemonic masculinities are part and parcel of popular culture in Zimbabwe. Songs are important sources of meaning and as such hold much value in understanding how a people are organised. King Shady's song illuminates how young men need to prove their masculinity by showing their strength through sexual prowess. This is because of the masculine nature of music through assertive and aggressive performance. In a song, Sniper notes that he is a soldier; this portrays images of strength, control, violence and manliness. Other forms of sexualities are subordinated to this superior manliness. Female singers, listeners, radio disc jockeys and fans are part of the system that privileges and valorises hegemonic masculinities. These songs are played on radio by disc jockeys and made popular by listeners, which include many women who are complicit in promoting hegemonic masculinities.

Hegemonic Views on Sexuality

Homosexuality is socially and culturally unacceptable in Zimbabwe. In many Africa societies, any variation from heteronormativity is considered 'pathological', 'deviant' and 'unnatural', thus sustaining gendered hierarchies while limiting public debate on such issues (Urgent Action Fund Africa 2006). The president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, was quoted as saying:

> (It) degrades human dignity. It's unnatural, and there is no question ever of allowing these people to behave worse than dogs and pigs. If dogs and pigs do not do it, why must human beings? We have our own culture, and we must rededicate ourselves to our traditional values that make us human beings...What we are being persuaded to accept is sub-animal behaviour and we will never allow it here. If you see people parading themselves as lesbians and gays, arrest them and hand them over to the police (http://www.zbc.co.zw/news-categories/opinion/11653-is-homosexuality-african.html).

In terms of sexuality, the dominant discourse is thus heterosexuality. Popular art forms are also authorities of venerating and buttressing heteronormality. Thus, pop songs in Zimbabwe in many ways highlight heterosexual love. For example, Winky D's *Love pafirst sight* narrates love between a man and a woman whilst Tongai Moyo in his song *Nemumvura Mese* focuses on heterosexual love. This is true of all the love songs we sampled and there is no reference to homosexual or queer relationships. Such relationships are shunned and dominance of heterosexuality is reinforced.

The framing of sexuality within popular music thus does not allow space for alternate forms of sexuality. In Zimbabwe, homosexuality is generally shunned, with the current president being at the forefront of denigrating gays and lesbians. There are no songs specifically demonising gay people in Zimbabwe; however, in underground tapes various singers, especially amongst urban grooves, are known to use sexuality as a way to denigrate opponents. It is considered an offence to accuse another man of being a *chichi* (derogatory name for gays); thus, there is a lot of such name calling in underground music. The music describes 'real men' as those who are strong, heterosexual and unemotional. Homosexuality is thus seen as something to be shunned as it is seen as a serious affront to be called one. The perceived 'abnormality' of homosexuality is thus reinforced whilst heteronormativity is valorised as 'normal'.

Ownership of Women as Property

In a gospel song, urban groove singer Toby claims that heaven is for the pure of heart and not the rich. The rich are described as those who *own* beautiful cars, houses and women. Women, especially those perceived as beautiful, are part of the accumulation that all rich men must have. Accumulating women is part of the culture promoted by the urban groove genre which is mainly dominated by urban youths. Borrowing from Western music, urban youths are expressing thoughts on women, sexuality and relationships in which women are depicted as the property of men. In one of his songs, Crystals notes '...*babe rangu, toy yangu*' (my girlfriend, my toy). Among young people (especially males), the propertisation of women becomes part of their worldview. Music in most instances expresses what people already believe and thus artists are simply conveyors of culture in which the idea of accumulation of women as pieces of property is part of accepted patriarchal culture and the prowess of men is measured by conquering women.

The treatment of women as property relates to how men in patriarchal societies actively control women's sexuality. Women's sexuality is controlled by patriarchal institutions: firstly by the father whose job is to keep her safe from 'sexual predators' to ensure she is a virgin when she gets married to 'fetch' a high price. After marriage, the husband becomes the protector and overseer of this sexuality. Winky D in the song *Musarova Bigman* (do not beat up Bigman) alludes to this aspect of fathers controlling their daughters' sexuality in the following lyrics:

> Ndakasvikirwa ndakagara nemwana wevanhu pamubhedha (a father caught me with his daughter on the bed which insinuates a sexual encounter)
>
> Baba vake ndokuti mfana rasta dakudhedha (the father wanted to kill me)

This boy is caught by the father being sexual with the daughter, which is enough for him to be seriously beaten. Policing female sexuality is part of patriarchal discourse on sexuality. Chiweshe (2012) outlines how a married woman through *lobola* (bride wealth) has her sexual and productive rights move from her father to her husband. Her sexuality first belongs to her father and then her husband. Music is one way used to promote chastity and sexual purity amongst women. Sexuality remains deeply rooted in the policing and surveillance of women's bodies by a patriarchal sexual discourse which muzzles women's sexual agency and promotes hegemonic ideas of heteronormality.

Women Artists and their Portrayal of Gender in Popular Music

In this section we discuss some of the popular songs by women artists analysing how they discuss issues of gender and sexuality. Women participating in popular music are often accused of engaging in a system that continuously demeans and portrays women in a negative way. Regarding sexuality and popular music, Shayne Lee (2010:8) argues that '...popular culture can function as a location for feminist politics by affording women access to subversive sexual scripts and new discourses of sexuality to renegotiate their sexual histories.' Popular music thus can afford women space to express often repressed sexual identities. Carrey (2011) argues that music is creating a new space for discourse on female sexual empowerment. Lee (2010:8) commenting on black female singers in America, adds that:

> Rather than portraying sexy black divas of popular culture as victims or mere objects of the male gaze, I depict them as feminists who create new scripts and carve out new space for female sexual subjectivity by exerting distinctive brands of sexual empowerment.

Music thus can offer a space for women to protest and carve out space to create and perform their identities. In this perspective Zimbabwean female musicians have to be understood as actively creating meaning and space through popular music.

There is however a lack of female music that challenges the patriarchal status quo. Rather, the majority of music reinforces ideas of women in a domesticated role. Female singer Fungisai Zvakavapano, for example, has a song portraying the virtues of a 'good' wife. She says that women should be virtuous, hardworking and the pride of their families. Laziness among women has to be shunned. The depiction of a 'good wife' based on biblical and patriarchal ideologies, which celebrate virtue in women, is reinforced in this song and many other similar songs. Female singers at times cannot escape the context in which they are singing and writing music. They participate in the creation and popularisation of music that promotes patriarchal ideas. This is true with most youth female singers who sing about love and relationships in the same way as their male compatriots.

Conclusion

This study has established that popular music is an important carrier and transmitter of hegemonic cultural and social ideas about femininities and masculinities. Popular songs by male singers such as Winky D, Snipper and Alexio Kawara celebrate and valorise hegemonic masculinities whilst women are highly feminised, objectified and commoditised. The singers create and recreate meanings about sexuality and women's bodies and positions thereby promoting heterosexuality and justifying patriarchal ideas and practices. Using concepts of discourse and hegemonic masculinities, the paper has highlighted how meanings are created and re-created by the powerful within specific contexts to promote and justify certain ideas. It has shown that hegemonic masculinities and misogynistic ideas are part of popular culture in Zimbabwe. Female singers may offer an alternative discourse on female sexual freedom through their music but they are also constrained by the context within which they operate and, ultimately, they too reinforce male domination and female subordination through their songs.

Notes

1. Literally translated, it means 'this is only for men'. It is a chant made by popular urban groove musician King Shady at the start of his song which celebrates and venerates male sexual prowess.

2. This is a Zimbabwean genre of music loosely based on Congolese rhumba and made popular by people such as the Chimbetus – Simon and Naison, Nicholas Zakaria, John Chibadura, Alick Macheso, the Ngwenya Brothers, Ephraim Joe and Tineyi Chikupo among many others.

3. Mandopop is a colloquial abbreviation for Mandarin popular music. Mandopop was the first variety of popular music in Chinese to establish itself as a viable industry.

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An Exploration of the 'Gendered' Dimensions of Women's Success in Ghana's Media/ Communication Industry

Abena Animwaa Yeboah* and Esi Eduwaa Thompson**

Abstract

Ghana's return to democracy and a liberalised business environment in 1992 ushered the country into a period characterised by an ever-growing media/communication industry. From journalism, through public relations to advertising, there has been an upsurge in activity and, consequently, in competition. In the midst of this competitive environment, some women have made visible gains, having attained different levels of success evidenced by various awards they and the organisations they lead have won. This is in spite of the numerous challenges that women have been known to face in media-related industries (see for instance Okpara 2006; Steiner 2002). This paper reports findings from interviews with three such women that delved into their career journeys to explore whether there are gender implications for their success.

Key Words: journalism, public relations, advertising, women in decision-making, socialisation, gendering advantage

Résumé

Avec le retour à la démocratie et un environnement des affaires libéralisé en 1992, le Ghana est entré dans une période marquée par une industrie des médias/de la communication en pleine expansion. Du journalisme à la publicité, en passant par les relations publiques, il y a eu un regain d'activité et par conséquent, de concurrence. Au milieu

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de cet environnement concurrentiel, certaines femmes ont réalisé des gains visibles, ayant atteint différents niveaux de réussite attestés par divers prix remportés par elles et par les organisations qu'elles dirigent. Et cela, malgré les nombreux défis auxquels elles ont été confrontées dans les industries liées aux médias (voir par exemple Okpara 2006 ; Steiner 2002). Cet article présente les résultats d'entretiens avec trois de ces femmes qui ont plongé dans leurs parcours professionnels pour déterminer si leurs réussites ont des incidences sexospécifiques.

Mots clés : journalisme, relations publiques, Publicités, les femmes dans la prise de décisions, socialisation, prise en compte du genre dans les avantages.

Introduction and background

The media and communication industry is generally perceived as a gendered professional frame in which male and female practitioners are treated differently and show signs of doing their work differently (WACC 2010; Thompson 2009; Broyles and Grow 2008). Often, these differences are underpinned by inequalities and disadvantages of which women are the victims. In spite of these inequalities, however, the industry continues to see an influx of women. In a few cases, some of these women are rising to leadership positions.

In Ghana, the last two decades have seen the media landscape experiencing a boom that perhaps only compares to the latter days of the colonial era where political activists and independence advocates used the press to build support for and to argue for self governance. The Fourth Republican Constitution in 1992 has resulted in a very buoyant media and communication landscape. As at the end of the second quarter of 2012, there were 228 radio stations and 28 TV stations operating in the country (NCA 2012). Newspapers seem to be as varied as there are varied issues and political positions to champion.

Alongside these developments in the main media, other communication and media-related industries, such as advertising and public relations, have also seen an increase in activity. Given that the industry in Ghana also shows signs of being gendered with evidence of the existence of a glass ceiling for women's progress in some cases (Byerly 2011), it is no surprise that the boom that the industry has received appears to favour men when it comes to leadership and management. From media organisations through communication agencies to communication departments of corporate organisations, men outnumber women in leadership/management positions (Byerly 2011). In spite of this, however, a few women have managed to rise to top positions in the industry and are

heading organisations that have received industry recognition. Indeed, the women themselves have been the object of industry recognition too.

The question that this paper sought to examine was whether, in the lived experiences of such women, their gender has had any implications for their journeys up the industry ladder. More importantly, we sought an exploration of the possible ways in which their gender may be thought of as having facilitated their success. We pose such a question, informed by the understanding that people are social beings and products of their socialisation. Much as the foundation for a person's identity may be traced to genetic formation (nature), it is difficult to conceive of life without influences from the environment and what is learnt from it. For the purposes of this study, the authors take the view that this learning from the environment (whether in the work environment or in others) may have implications for a person's output. Where the conditions learnt/ internalised from the environment are gendered, the implication is that their consequences for men and women's behaviour would be differently felt and expressed.

As social beings, men and women undergo socialization processes that have been known to be carried into the work frame. Discussing this within the context of what she calls 'socialisation for work', Cohen-Scali (2003:239) refers to the tendency, within the family setting, to transmit notions, attitudes and representations about work. According to her, gender, as well as other factors (including values), is at play in this process of socialisation for work. This study sought an examination of how such socialisation, together with Cohen-Scali's (2003:242) 'socialisation by work' (the re-orientation men and women have to go through in order to fit in the workplace),can be drawn on, by women, for career success.

Gender and Work

Literature examining the relationship between gender and work output, delivery styles, leadership and success is expansive, with the academic interest in these relationships coming from various disciplinary orientations. Given the study's wide scope in terms of relevant concepts, this section contains a broad presentation of what is known about the various concepts and their relationships. The concepts discussed include socialisation, gender and work, gender and media practice, and gender and leadership.

Socialization is seen to be a major platform by which boys and girls learn to become men and women. These orientations influence behaviour as they serve as the organising basis for such behaviour in different

contexts, including the workplace. Evidence from Ghana indicates that as early as around 12 years, boys have internalised the roles they should play as boys and men in society, particularly with reference to the domestic setting and in their relations with girls (Adomako Ampofo and Boateng 2007). On the one hand, such data enable an understanding of what cues boys and girls may be receiving on the domestic front. On the other hand (and particularly of interest to this study), such literature presents the contexts in which girls learn to grow into women, to enable an analysis of any skills developed therein that they may leverage for career success.

Steady (2011) alludes to a tendency for the domestic socialisation to be carried over to the work frame. She argues, for instance, that motherhood (in this case the learning of how to be a mother) was a strong and positive attribute in women's leadership. By implication, women may bring their motherhood skills and abilities to bear on what they do at work and as leaders, and the relationship fostering attributes of motherhood could then yield benefits. Again, by implication, what has been known in the literature to characterise women's 'transformational' leadership could actually be a leveraging of socialised skills.

Steady (2011) therefore, argues that the socio-cultural context/climate, and institutional environment in which female leadership emerges and is enacted, have to be taken into account in understanding how females work and lead. This study draws inspiration from this position and argues that more attention needs to go into examining what the socio-cultural environment and its influence on men and women imply for the workplace.

However, men and women's work and career success cannot be discussed from a gender perspective with a blind eye turned to the organisational environment itself. For, whereas gendering precedes the work environment, it may continue in it. Thus, workplace interactions (networks) and communication could also inform the identities that men and women develop which by extension may then serve to impact their journeys along the career ladder.

According to Kanter (1977), men and women, depending on their proportional sizes as categories within organisation, develop a consciousness of their states that then inform their behaviour and, in turn, may affect their success within the organisation. Where women find themselves as a minority category relative to men (for instance, women in management or male dominated roles), they become tokens in the midst of dominants, and are highly visible (by virtue of their proportional

scarcity). Also, they may have their differences with men exaggerated to retain the status quo and are more likely to be judged with group characteristics rather than individual characteristics. Together, these conditions put pressure on tokens (the women) and may become the driving force for their behaviour. Kanter reported that women in token positions, in trying to negotiate the pressures of tokenism, exhibited two characteristics: they either tended to overachieve and to try to draw attention to their work as equally good and comparable to men's work or they sought a low profile (Kanter 1977). Either way, their behaviour as tokens could have implications for how high and how fast they could rise along the career ladder.

Closely related to Kanter's work in discussing the possible ways in which one's gender could impact career growth is research that has looked at employee networks and their implications for output success and job satisfaction. According to Ibarra (1993), networks are the storehouses of a variety of instrumental resources that are critical for career advancement. Who an employee bonds with and gets the opportunity to move with within the organisation could be a platform for access to various advantages and disadvantages. Limited network access could mean multiple disadvantages, including restricted access to information and resources critical for career advancement and success. For instance, Baroudi and Igbaria (1993) have suggested that exclusion from informal social networks could be disadvantageous to minorities who are unable to influence any organisational actions and the implications of such actions for their careers.

It is insightful to note that network formation is not neutral, as there are dynamics at play. Employees tend to bond with those they share task proximity as well as similarities in interests and characteristics with (Brass 1985). Thus, where women find themselves as tokens (either numerically or in power) with no/few others like themselves, they may be excluded from critical networks. This means that they may be unlikely to receive supervisory/peer coaching, mentoring and counselling and will be likely to experience different career outcomes relative to their male counterparts (Baroudi and Igbaria 1993).

In addition to networks and the implications of tokenism, research into the gendered nature of the very roles men and women play within the workforce is also important for a discussion on the factors (from a gender perspective) that can affect women's success in the communication industry. Subtle organisational conditions may ascribe certain roles and ranks to men and others to women that can result in differentiated identities

and benefits (salary levels, promotions with their resultant effect on job satisfaction levels) (see, for instance, Alvesson 1998). These are often a result of standard images of some roles, which are constructed based on stereotypes that favour masculine traits (Meyerson and Fletcher 1999). Such conditions may make female practitioners (having internalised them) follow the norm, not seeking to consciously affect the flow of things, which then could result in the continued existence of a 'glass ceiling effect'. Perhaps this is one way of explaining the tendency for gendering in the media/communication industry.

Within the industry, research evidence reports male and female practitioners to be concentrated in different ranks doing different things. In 2004, the Annenberg Public Policy Center asserted that the glass ceiling still exists in the US communication industry across the professional streams (Falk and Grizard2004). More recently, data from Ghana indicated that men outnumbered women in the media companies and that women were 'strikingly absent in governance (28%) and top management (15.8%)' where major company decisions and policies were made (Byerly 2011:93).

Public Relations has been reported as increasingly becoming feminised (Dozier, Grunig and Grunig 1995). Where this feminisation has been observed, the general understanding has been that it does not seem to correspond to an increase of women in managerial roles, however. Thus, even though women practitioners may be in the majority and as such could be beneficiaries of the payoffs from numerical strength, their absence in managerial roles could mean that they remain marginalised.

Within the field of advertising, research evidence points to a gendered distribution of practitioners across the various units. For instance, Broyles and Grow (2008) have commented on the tendency for the creative and management positions in ad agencies to manifest a concentration of men, while women are concentrated in those positions that deal with client interfacing. Alvesson (1998) has also looked at gender in the ad agency and reported a concentration of females in client service work such that male practitioners engaged in client interface tend to experience some strain on their gender identity.

Such evidence of gendering is important, considering that gendered industries hold different promises for different people, depending on where they stand in the continuum. For instance, Baroudi and Igbaria (1993) have argued that work that is segregated as 'women's work' tends to have lower status, lower earnings and limited advancement opportunities.

The literature on gender and work has also looked at leadership. How men and women lead, in terms of the differences in styles and leadership orientation, has received attention in the effort to explain the factors impacting women's success at work. Two major leadership styles that have been studied are the transactional and transformational styles. Transactional (authoritative) leadership is characterised by certainty, clear direction, personal oversight, and formalised exchanges between leaders and the subordinates (Cruz, Henningsen, and Smith 1999). Transformational or charismatic leadership, on the other hand, is characterized by risk taking, goal articulation, high expectations, and emphasis on collective identity, self-assertion, and vision (Ehrhart and Klein 2001; McWhinney 1997).

These styles of leadership are also seen along gendered lines as men are perceived to project transactional leadership traits while women are associated with transformational leadership styles (Aldoory and Toth 2004; Ehrhart and Klein 2001). Other descriptors attributed to males and females are as follows: male – structure, autocratic, instruction giving and business-oriented and females – consideration, participative, socio-expressive and people-oriented (Appelbaum, Audet and Miller 2003:48).

It has been argued that the sex difference in leadership can be related to gender socialisation in which individuals portray stereotypes that do not easily change. Women and men are therefore influenced by gendered roles they expect of themselves and which their colleagues, superiors and subordinates expect of them (Aldoory and Toth 2004). This means that the socialised selves that women and men bring from home may actually become the basis on which they and others enact and evaluate their leadership.

From the literature reviewed above, there seems to be a connection between socialisation (whether from the home or at work) and the way men and women work. However, very little attention seems to have focused on whether, and how, women's gender (identity and socialisation) serves as a facilitator for their career growth.

Some Methodological Considerations

This study adopted a qualitative approach in which we conducted three interviews with three women who head organisations in Ghana's media/ communications industry. The interviewees, Esther Cobbah, Norkor Duah and Afia Ansaa Ampene, were purposively selected on the basis of their gender, work as media/communication practitioners, current positions as leaders of media/communications organisations and the fact that they have

all been recipients of various industry (and other) awards in recognition of their work and success. At the time of data collection, all three were middle aged and had raised biological children during the course of their careers. Both Duah and Cobbah were married while Ampene was not and had raised her children as a single parent. Duah and Cobbah also had professional training in communication (having attained a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree respectively). Ampene, on the other hand, was a trained teacher.

Interviewees were contacted by phone, introduced to the study and asked for an appointment. Following this, the researchers visited their homes (Duah and Cobbah) and office (Ampene) where the interviews, lasting an average of two hours, were conducted in English.

All the interviews were recorded, the data transcribed and typed out before analysis was conducted. Our main mode of analysis was phenomenological, by which we sought to draw out, using the lived experiences of the interviewees, the ways in which their identities as women may have facilitated their journeys up the career ladder.

Career Histories of Interviewees

In the section below, we present the career journeys of each of our interviewees. As might be clear by the end of the section, all three have achieved appreciable levels of success, justifying their inclusion in the study.

Norkor Duah

Norkor Duah currently heads Ghana's oldest advertising agency, Lintas (also known as Lowe Accra due to its affiliation to Lowe Worldwide). She is one of the most respected names in the advertising business in Ghana. In 2008, she was selected Marketing Woman of the Year by the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana and was, at the time of the interview, serving as the first woman president of the Advertising Association of Ghana (AAG).

Her first contact with the industry was in the 1970s when she joined the agency for a holiday job after her secondary education. Following the interest she developed, she studied advertising at Watford College in the UK and returned to take up a job with the agency as an Account Executive. Around this time, she also got married and raised her family of two boys and a girl. As is characteristic of the industry, she often had to stay up late, working and trying to meet client deadlines.

Also equally challenging was the office environment she found herself in. In the 1970s when she joined the industry, advertising was almost completely male dominated at the professional staff level. Her agency had only one other female professional member of staff. All other females were secretaries or models. Most of her professional colleagues, therefore, were males who had different interests from hers, forcing her to associate with the non-professional female staff most of the time. The lone woman professional she met in the company when she joined as a holiday intern made no effort to bond with Duah. The situation was not different on the client side either. According to her, this situation of male dominance across the agency and client base made her strive to show no visible signs of competition with her male colleagues. But beneath this attitude, she turned the male dominance into a catalyst for her journey up. She worked extra hard to show her merit and to gain legitimacy.

Duah rose through the ranks and became Deputy Managing Director, a position she held for eight years until 2001 when she became Managing Director. As a leader, she is still faced with the male dominance syndrome, as her colleague heads of other agencies and the client organisations she serves are still predominantly male. But she believes, as a mother figure, she has some advantages over her male colleagues that have implications for her leadership success. She focuses on achieving results but with a 'heart'. She is also convinced that the industry today is more favourable to women than in times past. Indeed, in her agency, she says she is surrounded by female practitioners.[1]

Esther Cobbah

Esther Amba Numaba Cobbah is the CEO of Strategic Communications Africa Ltd (Stratcomm Africa), a communication consultancy in Ghana. She is also chairperson of the local chapter of the International Public Relations Association. She was recently awarded the Best Entrepreneur in Media Communication in Ghana, 2011. Cobbah's real entry into Ghana's media/communications industry was in 1980 when she studied at the School of Mass Communication (now the School of Communication Studies) of the University of Ghana for a postgraduate diploma. This was in the pursuit of her childhood interest in the creation of understanding between people. At the School, she found all the courses in the programme really enjoyable and recalls that she could deal with them, without much effort.

Upon completion, she took up an internship at the United States Information Service (USIS) offices in Accra, following which she joined

the then Ghana Industrial Holdings Company (GIHOC) as the person in charge of communication for the 26 companies under the holding company. She held this position for two years before going to Cornell University for a Masters Degree in Communication for Developing Countries. She returned to take up an appointment with the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC) as the person responsible for the management of investor relations and later, public affairs. She was at GNPC for ten years.

Being in the male-dominated oil industry meant that she was one of few women. However, unlike the other women, her responsibilities required her to be visible, often in contexts where she was the only woman present. But in such situations, she constantly reminded herself that it was as much a woman's world as it was a man's world.

While at GNPC, she got the opportunity to manage communications for the West African Gas Pipeline Project for two years, from where she moved to start her own consultancy – Strategic Africa Communication Limited in 1994. With the exception of her internship at the USIS, Cobbah's appointments have all placed her in positions where she reported directly to the CEOs. She asserts that the communications industry presents a lot of advantages to women that she has sought to leverage in her journey up the professional ladder. These include the industry's need for practitioners to, sometimes, play 'servant roles', a requirement which women's socialisation as care givers makes them better suited to meet.

In spite of these benefits that she believes women's gender gives them in the industry, however, she maintains that gender also presents some challenges to career growth in the industry. Some of the challenges that she experienced include women's difficulty in creating personal space and time for their careers. In addition, the uncertain hours that practitioners often have to work can have negative implications for women's career success, as it is difficult combining their domestic expectations/ responsibilities with such schedules. In her case, she sought to negotiate these challenges by investing in technology (washing machine, blenders etc.) and people (house helps) that facilitated her domestic duties to ensure that she could free up more time for her career.

Currently, as a leader, Cobbah says she is results-driven but also tends to put emphasis on relationships. She believes that while delivering results is important, the people behind the results must be treated with a human face and a motherly heart.[2]

Afia Ansaa Ampene

Afia Ansaa Ampene is the producer, director and hostess of *Mmaa Nkomo,* the longest running independently-produced TV Women's talk show programme in Ghana and the owner of 3As Production Company. Her career in the media/communication industry in Ghana started in the late 1980s when she was invited to host a radio teaching session on cultural studies for junior secondary schools with a text she had co-authored for the new educational system.

Being a professional Twi (a local Ghanaian language) teacher and totally new to broadcasting, she relied on the programme's producers to be taught script development and other rudiments of on-air teaching. The success of the first broadcast, coupled with her natural flair for broadcasting, led to her being invited to take up the television Twi teaching programme targeted at secondary school students. Around the same time, she also took up an opportunity to host the Akan edition of *Adult Education*, a local language television talk programme that sought to educate the populace on a variety of issues that affect their lives. All this while, she was also a full-time teacher at the Tema Secondary School where she taught Twi until she voluntarily retired from teaching in 2006.

As a part-time broadcaster handling three programmes across television and radio, negative sentiments soon started flowing from the full-time employees of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation. She was taken off Adult Education but returned soon after, since her replacement failed to be as successful as she had been on the programme. Following her return to the screen, her broadcasting career suffered another jolt when the director for television decided to take local language programmes off air. This was greeted with audience disapproval, as people kept calling asking for her and the programme to be reinstated. The director invited her to his office at which meeting he asked her to create her own TV programme and this saw the birth of *Mmaa Nkomo*, a programme she has produced and hosted for the last 13 years. The programme currently airs on three local TV stations. She has travelled across the world to give Ghanaians in the Diaspora the opportunity to highlight issues of interest to them.

Ampene's decision to develop a programme targeting women was borne out of her experience and observation of TV content at the time, which she says completely lacked programmes dedicated to issues of importance to women. She therefore sought to develop a programme to create a platform to discuss such issues and in so doing mainstream them into public discourse. She says doing this has been the basis of her career success as it meant that she dealt with issues that directly affected

lives. As a result, it has brought her local and international exposure and recognition, and made her an icon of women's empowerment in Ghana. She says she has received a lot of encouragement and support from women entrepreneurs who (having faced the gendered challenges in the business environment) urge her to 'fight on and never to give in'. Both she and the programme (*Mmaa Nkomo*) have received several awards in and outside Ghana, the biggest of which was the Millennium Excellence Award in 2005 for Women Empowerment.[3]

Discussion and Synthesis of Issues Arising

This study set out to explore whether there is any possibility that women's gender (not sex) had any positive implications for their growth in Ghana's media/communication industry. It was premised on the fact that while a lot of attention has been paid to the ways in which women's gender disadvantages them in the industry, there has been little discussion on whether the gender factor ever presents any advantages that may be leveraged by women.

Our aim was not an experimental analysis of causes and effects, rather, we sought a broad understanding of the question, drawing from the lived experiences of three successful practitioners in the industry.

The study found that, indeed, women's gender and the orientations that build up into this identity may be turned into catalysts for professional growth and success. We discuss these orientations under two main themes: the domestic gendering advantage (drawn from their socialisation to be mothers and wives) and the workplace gendering advantage (drawn from learning to live as women in the workplace).

The findings presented in this discussion represent a synthesis of information gathered across the interviews rather than a conscious labelling by the interviewees. Even though the possibility of relationships between gender and career success could be gleaned from their lived experiences, in many instances, the interviewees themselves did not label it as such. It appears that even when such advantages have been leveraged by the interviewees, the experience is so latent that they fail to connect it to their gender.

The 'Domestic Gendering' Advantage

One of the most influential settings for socialisation and the consequent gendering of boys and girls is the domestic setting from where based on what tasks they are assigned, where they are allowed to go, how they are

told to behave and how they are told to relate to the opposite sex boys are taught to be boys (men) and girls to be girls (women). Adomako Ampofo and Boateng (2007) have reported how as early as the teenage years, Ghanaian boys have internalised notions of what boys and girls should do or not do in the expression of their appropriate gender roles as relates to the home. Often, the expectation of the women was in relation to domestic chores and taking care of the family, while those of the men bordered more on financial and leadership roles. Indeed, where boys did housework, they deemed it only to be 'helping' and 'doing a favour or a kindness to a woman' (Adomako Ampofo and Boateng 2007:53). In this context, it is possible to see how Ghanaian girls are saddled with most of the responsibilities for housework, a situation that could yield the development of skills for multitasking and for serving others.

We present this context as a basis for the development of skills by girls that could be appropriated to serve their interest in the world of work, particularly in those fields in the industry where practitioners keep busy schedules, trying to meet client deadlines and needs. Once they enter the professional fields in the media/communication industry, particularly those such as advertising and public relations where emphasis is on constantly strategising and implementing multiple activities to meet all stakeholder needs, such skills appear to become platforms which women can leverage to ensure that they move faster up the professional ladder.

As a child, Cobbah's mother consciously sought to instil in her the ability to multitask, a skill she has come to appreciate as very useful for her success in public relations practice. Her career story is replete with anecdotes of how under various conditions she drew on her multitasking skills for success. For instance, while at GIHOC, her schedule as communication officer covered 26 companies, requiring that she was constantly evolving and implementing communication strategies to cater for each of the companies. In spite of this busy schedule, she managed to be responsive to the needs of each of the companies, drawing on her multitasking skills. Such was her ability to combine all her responsibilities that she describes her work as being 'so exciting that there was never enough for me' (Cobbah, interview on 15 April 20121). It was with a similar approach to her work that she travelled her career journey, leading to her current position as CEO of Stratcomm Africa. In this position, she oversees the management of public relations and communication activities for various clients. Between the management of such clients, strategising to meet their needs, supervising work to be done for them, managing her employees and managing her home, Cobbah continues to

draw on her multitasking skills to keep things together and successful. According to her:

> …Women are socialised to multitask… For me, just the opportunity to deal with different situations, manage my children, multitask, deal with different stakeholders and meet their needs at the same time has helped me because that is what this industry is about (Cobbah, interview on 15 April 2012).

Ampene's career story also demonstrates a similar ability to multitask. For more than 10 years after entering broadcasting, she combined teaching with hosting two radio programmes and one TV talk show. This was besides the fact that she was single-handedly raising two children.

> I was teaching and doing this at the same time. I worked hard. As soon as I closed from classes, I prepared my GBC work and I prepared my teaching material too… I was broadcasting on radio, TV and teaching (Ampene, interview on 10 April 2012).

Clearly, the demands on her were substantial, but she managed to efficiently deliver on all, to the extent that her independently produced programme *Mmaa Nkomo* has been so successful as to have won her 22 local and international awards in 13 years. From these stories, it appears that women's socialisation to meet multiple demands can serve as a catalyst for their career success. While we do not assume a causal relationship between socialisation and multitasking (some research connects women's ability for multitasking to cognitive factors; see for instance Ren, Zhou and Fu 2009; Zaidi 2010), we believe the link cannot be completely discounted.

Another aspect of domestic gendering which was found to have played a role in the success of the interviewees was the service orientation which manifests in their ability to better manage conditions that required them to act as 'servants' or to 'reduce' their status in order to rise. While the socialisation of girls as the ones to serve the family and be subordinate to boys/men may be controversial, even detrimental to the collective worldview and wellbeing of women (Steady 2011), it appears that women may turn this orientation to their advantage. This is particularly so in service industries such as in the communication industry, which often requires practitioners to satisfy clients and other stakeholders. According to Cobbah:

> In this industry (PR), women have a peculiar advantage because women are socialised to take care of people and this is a taking-care-of-people industry. Because men have been socialised to be served, they are more

> intolerant of being asked to do things for people. It tends to be more difficult for them (Esther Cobbah, interview on 15 April 2012).

Cobbah, therefore, used this orientation to her advantage. Where conditions required that she went the extra mile to satisfy the needs of her clients and other people, Cobbah easily called on this service orientation. She believes that males under those same conditions, would, due to their socialisation, have had more difficulty doing the same. Also, working in a male dominated environment where her 'presence in certain contexts created discomfort', she often would bend over backward and 'make people feel comfortable' with her (Esther Cobbah, interview on 15 April 2012).

Duah also uses this subordination orientation to her advantage. Working in a male-dominated environment (both at the office and on the client side), one of the ways in which she tried to cope without courting antagonism to herself was to subordinate herself to the males:

> I made them feel like: 'I'm looking up to you to mentor me'. I made them not feel intimidated; that this is a woman trying to… (Duah, interview on 7 April 20123).

Ampene has used a similar approach to work with her male dominated crew since the birth of her independently produced programme (Mmaa Nkomo). This way, she is able to draw from their expertise for the success of her programme without appearing bossy or intimidating. She asserts that:

> If you come and see us as a crew, you would not know I am the leader. Because they all have their posts at GBC – cameramen, executive directors, sound men. So, if they are eager to work with you and you are too strict, you won't get them (Ampene, interview on 10 April 2012).

The implication we draw from these stories is that aspects of what women learn from the home in their preparation as caregivers may be leveraged for success. For, where the ability to subordinate or to multitask is a determinant for career success, women may have an advantage because of their socialisation. This finding agrees with Steady's (2011) argument that women's socialisation to become mothers could be seen as presenting them with advantages to survive and succeed in the world of work.

Another domestic socialisation element that becomes an advantage to women is in being taught to become mothers and to draw on their hearts and emotions. Especially in Africa, a girl's socialisation process is geared towards making her a good woman and mother. These require skills in nurturing, care giving, empathy, compassion and people

centeredness etc. (Steady 2011). It is important to note the possible relationship between this socialisation and the leadership traits that have been documented in the literature as being associated with women: consideration, socio-expressive, participative and people-oriented (Appelbaum, Audet and Miller 2003:48). Indeed, Aldoory and Toth (2004) have suggested that women exhibit these characteristics because they and those around them are conscious of their (women's) socialisation to be mothers and expect them to live up to it. Thus, showing these characteristics at work and as leaders is women's way of living up to the expectations set for them. Our data shows that these motherhood/feminine characteristics could provide the impetus for women's upward mobility in their career. Duah, for instance, draws on this motherly attitude and combines it with her leadership flair to create an atmosphere that works to her advantage and in the interest of her company's success. In her own words:

> ... I needed to bring out the woman in me… to make people feel that it will be well even if there are challenges. It is a people business and it needs a heart. It will not run on software. If you're not a people person, you cannot work in this industry. I usually put on two hats: my leadership hat and my motherhood hat (Duah, interview on 7 April 2012).

Cobbah also draws on this motherliness trait in her relations with her colleagues and employees:

> I feel that the people who would achieve the results (employees) are human beings and they have relationship needs… You have to have a relationship with them (Esther Cobbah, interview on 15 April 2012).

For Ampene, her people centeredness comes to play in her relationship with her employees as that 'thing' that helps her to get the work done:

> When we travel, I go into the rooms of the other ladies, we converse late into the night before going to sleep. They call me always and I call them always (Ampene, interview on 10 April 2012).

From all three interviewees, these characteristics (motherliness, people centeredness and leadership with a heart) seem to have really manifested after the interviewees took up their leadership positions. While these do not indicate how the women leveraged the traits in their journey up, they are still relevant to the study as they are being leveraged for the women's success as leaders in the industry.

The Workplace Gendering Advantage

The processes of socialisation are not restricted to the domestic environment. Other agents of socialisation, such as the school, can also shape boys' and girls' identities (Cohen-Scali 2003). The workplace has also been cited as a place for socialisation (Alvesson 1998). It appears that the conditions under which the interviewees found themselves also led to the formation of certain consciousness that then translated into catalysts for career success.

For Duah, her consciousness as the only woman (professional) in the organisation pushed her to put in 'extra effort' and to do 'something unusual':

> In my journey, I needed to make an extra effort because… I was a woman and I felt that there was no one around me (professional) who was a woman. Because my colleagues (genderwise) in the office were secretaries, I needed to make sure that I did something unusual (Duah, interview on 7 April 2012).

Without doubt, her effort to do the 'unusual' in the discharge of her duties had implications for how high and fast she could rise.

It is important to juxtapose this with her projected outlook of not being in competition with her male colleagues (alluded to earlier under 'domestic gendering advantage'). It appears that while on the surface she projected one image, at the personal level, she so internalised the prevailing conditions at the office that it became a reason for her seeking success.

Cobbah also shows signs of 'socialising' herself to her position as a 'token' and turning this consciousness to her advantage. Finding herself working in the oil industry, which was (and remains) male dominated, meant that sometimes her 'presence created discomfort'. Rather than let this consciousness become a hindrance, she constantly reminded herself that as a woman, she was equally competent to achieve success in that environment:

> When I realised that I was in a male dominated industry, I reminded myself that it's a woman's world as well and that, at the workplace, we are here to work (Esther Cobbah, interview on 15 April 2012).

And so, she focused on working hard and this has seen her rise to head her own consultancy.

Ms Ampene also had work-related realities that served as the basis for aspects of her career success. Although these realties did not specifically pose disadvantages to her nor arise from her gender, her consciousness

of them and her effort to correct them became the very basis for her success story. When she ventured into television, she was not a lone woman, since other women had preceded her. However, opportunities for discoursing on issues that directly affected women's lives were still limited. Actually, only one such programme existed and this was a magazine programme that changed name but not content over time *Women's Digest*. It covered various issues, including cooking, fashion and expert interviews on domestic issues. Such issues were deemed to be of interest to women and reflected the gendered nature of programming at the time (Akrofi-Quarcoo, interview on 1 February 2013). To some extent, the programme and the issues it covered were 'tokens' in the midst of the more 'dominant' issues, such as politics, and it was Ampene's consciousness of this imbalance and her desire to correct it that led to the birth of *Mmaa Nkomo*:

> I said that 'anytime there is something for women on TV, it is about cooking; why can't I do something to cover women and children?' So I piled up issues concerning women and children as well as how to solve them (Ampene, interview on 10 April 2012).

Kanter (1977) alludes to a tendency on the part of tokens to want to do something about their condition. Though in this instance women's talk show programmes (tokens) could not have themselves sought to change things, we see Ampene's interest in doing this as important, considering that she would have been a beneficiary had such programmes existed. To some extent, therefore, she assumed the token position of women's programmes and sought to do something about their state.

Both Duah and Cobbah share this consciousness of the need to do something to correct the disadvantaged position of women in their work environments. Both said they have consciously employed a lot of women so that they can pass on their lessons to them.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has attempted an exploration of the possible ways in which women's gender may present them with benefits that they could draw on as they seek career success in the media/communication industry. Evidence of such gender facilitation could be deduced from the interviews although it appeared to be operating at very latent levels, to the extent that even the persons whose life stories are used in the analysis do not label them as such. The interviews reveal that women's socialisation in the domestic setting may be leveraged for developing multi-tasking

abilities and service orientations in them. In addition, the gendered environment of the workplace could also be internalised, a situation that may cause women to behave in certain ways which may then inure them to the benefit of their career growth.

While these three interviews have yielded some insights into how women in top management negotiate their success, it is by no means an end in itself. Further studies are needed on the lives of other women leaders in the industry. In addition, as this study focused solely on the personal narratives of women leaders, it would be interesting to find out whether subordinates (both male and female) and indeed colleagues of these women leaders perceive and/or experience the 'gender facilitating' elements identified in this study. Also, a study of this nature, with a sample across various professional ranks, may yield very interesting insights.

Admittedly, we sought to investigate a very complex phenomenon with interviews, using a very small sample. We, thus, miss the opportunity to generalise the findings, but we believe that this can be a useful beginning in developing knowledge on the subject of how gender can facilitate, rather than militate against, career progression in the communication/ media industry.

Notes

1. Norkor Duah was interviewed at her residence in Cantonments, Accra, Ghana where the serenity of the environment and the fact that it was a non-working day allowed for a very free-flowing conversation in which interviewers felt free to delve into issues of interest. It lasted about 1 hour and 45 minutes.
2. We interviewed Esther Cobbah at her residence in Cantonments, Accra, Ghana. The relaxed atmosphere allowed for a very informal discussion in which interviewers felt free to delve into issues of relevance as they came up. The interview lasted for approximately two hours.
3. AfiaAnsaaAmpene was interviewed in her office at Community one in Tema, Ghana. Though this was an office environment, Ampene was kind enough to hold all appointments and interferences to enable a conducive atmosphere for the interview. The discussions were open and frank, and lasted for approximately 2 hours and 15 minutes.
4. Sarah Akrofie-Quarcoo is a researcher and lecturer at the School of Communication Studies, with general research interest and expertise on women's engagement with radio in Ghana. We interviewed her in her office at the School of Communication Studies on February 1st 2013. The interview lasted for about 30 minutes.

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