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ABSTRACT

PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN KENYA'S PRINT MEDIA: A STUDY OF
DAILY NATION, THE STANDARD, AND KENYA TIMES,
JUNE 2002 TO JUNE 2003

by

Beatrice P. Moraa Omari

Chair: Charles H. Tidwell, Jr.

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Thesis

Andrews University

Interschool Interdisciplinary Graduate Program

Title: PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN KENYA'S PRINT MEDIA: A STUDY OF
DAILY NATION, THE STANDARD, AND KENYA TIMES, JUNE 2002 TO JUNE
2003

Name of researcher: Beatrice P. Moraa Omari

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Date completed: December 2008

Problem

Portrayal of women in Kenya's print media is replete with stereotype images that portray women only in their domestic roles at the expense of their roles in national development. This study is aimed at determining the extent of this negative portrayal and the likely explanatory reasons.

Method

Content analysis of newspaper articles of a sample of three major dailies—*Daily Nation, The Standard, and Kenya Times*—was carried out for issues between June 2002 and June 2003. A total of 144 issues were identified, coded, and analyzed.

Results

Women and women's issues are allocated less space and portrayed more negatively compared to their male counterparts in all the three dailies. However, women journalists tend to portray women more positively.

Conclusions

Factors contributing towards marginalization of women and women's issues include the patriarchal values in Kenyan society, a small number of women professionals in the media industry, and the fact that media industry is largely male owned and dominated. The situation can be corrected only by conscious efforts by all stakeholders.

Andrews University
Interschool Interdisciplinary Graduate Program

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A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Administration

by

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE.

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Date approved

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I dedicate this work to my family—my loving husband, Herbert,
and my dear children, Jean, Allan, and Rita, for their
prayers and encouragement throughout this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	vi
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	ix
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Theoretical Framework	5
Agenda-Setting Theory	5
Gatekeeping Theory	7
Purpose of the Study	12
Hypothesis.....	12
Research Questions.....	12
Definition of Terms and Acronyms	12
Scope of the Study	14
Limitations of the Study.....	14
Significance of the Study	15
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	17
III. METHODOLOGY	26
Research Design.....	26
The Art and Methodology of Content Analysis.....	26
A Brief History of the Three Dailies.....	28
<i>The Daily Nation</i>	28
<i>The Standard</i>	29
<i>Kenya Times</i>	29
Sampling	29
Data Collection Instruments.....	31
Data Collection	31
Data Analysis and Presentation.....	31

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	32
General View	32
Nature of the Coverage of Women’s Issues.....	33
Coverage of Women Relative to Men.....	36
Women and Violence.....	42
Women and Crime	43
Location of Women’s Stories in the Print Media	46
Reporting on Women	48
Women and Editorials.....	49
Women Reporters and Women’s Issues	50
The Overall Picture of the Portrayal of Women in the Print Media	54
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	56
Conclusions	56
Recommendations	58
For Government	58
For Media Training Institutions	60
For Media Houses	60
For Private Sector	61
For Stakeholders	61
For Women’s Organizations	62
The Sum of It All	62
Appendix	
A. LETTERS	63
B. SAMPLE NEWSPAPERS.....	66
REFERENCE LIST	71

LIST OF FIGURES

1. The Agenda-Setting Theory Conceptual Model	7
2. The Gatekeeping Theory Conceptual Model.....	10
3. Thematic Representation of Women in the Three Dailies.....	36
4. Coverage of Women Relative and Other Stories	40
5. Coverage of Women Under Soft and Hard News.....	45
6. Women Headline News on Crime	48
7. Women Headline News on Crime— <i>Daily Nation</i>	48
8. Women Headline News on Crime— <i>The Standard</i>	49
9. Women Headline News— <i>Kenya Times</i>	49
10. Women and Front Page News.....	51
11. Portrayal of Women in Front Page News	51
12. Editorials on Women vis-à-vis Total Number of Editorials	55
13. Coverage of Women Issues by Women and Men Reporters	57

LIST OF TABLES

1.	Total Articles on and by Women in Newspaper Sampled.....	34
2.	Thematic Representations of Women in the Three Dailies	35
3.	Women Coverage in News, Commentaries, Editorials, and Headlines.....	38
4.	Articles on Urban vs. Rural Women.....	41
5.	Gender Stereotypes	42
6.	Hard vs. Soft News in Relation to Women.....	44
7.	Violence-Related Articles.....	47
8.	Portrayal of Women on Front Pages of the Three Dailies	53
9.	Coverage of Women Issues by Women and Men Reporters	56

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Anno Domino
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
GED	Gender Equality and Development
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MOH	Ministry of Health
MP	Member of Parliament
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NTV	Nation Television
USD	U.S. Dollars

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another supported me through prayer or words of encouragement in the development and writing of this thesis, I say, “God of heaven bless you.”

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Human beings influence each other's attitudes, perceptions, and opinions about situations and even manner of relationships, either individually or corporately. A community's worldview is therefore an outcome of such influences. In modern society, the media is well placed to exert such influence such that what we see, hear, and read in the media and finally imbibe into our belief system is a reflection of the selected priorities and views of the media. The selection and its style of presentation reproduce certain stereotype assumptions about women's roles and status in society that affect the way they are portrayed in the media.

Men and women perceive issues and events from their own unique vantage points. However, when newsrooms are the exclusive domain of men—the reporters, news editors, owners, and makers of news—the public is likely to end up with a rather skewed worldview about women and their role in society.

Although times have changed, women's roles particularly continue to be seen against the background of a traditional and largely neo-artificial stereotypical division of labor, which has perpetuated gender-role imbalances. This has resulted in a situation where women are under-represented in all spheres of influence in life. A radical surgery in the perceptions of members of society is therefore necessary to change these imbalances, and the media stands out as the cardinal instrument in this operation. This

study, through content analysis of the three major daily newspapers in the country, presents statistics that will bring to the fore the images that the media create in the minds of their audiences about women and what the impact of this portrayal is on the advancement of women politically, socially, economically, and academically.

Statement of the Problem

Hypatia, who lived and taught in the city of Alexandria, was an astronomer, philosopher, mathematician, and a mechanical genius who invented among other things the astrolabe and the plan sphere. In A.D. 415, she was ambushed and killed for her beliefs. One of many outstanding women scientists, Hypatia has only recently been accorded the recognition she justly deserves (Alic, 1990).

The above situation is an epitome of the situation in many countries of the world, including Kenya, where women and women's issues are considered not to be newsworthy. An analysis of Kenya's print media shows that women get a lesser than proportionate share of coverage compared to their male counterparts; they are depicted almost exclusively in their traditional roles in the home and not as independent-minded and creative beings who have made many positive contributions to the country socially, economically, academically, politically, and culturally. In cases where women have been reported on in the country's media, they often have been portrayed as victims of circumstances or objects of beauty and not as human beings with hopes and visions, dreams and aspirations.

Margaret Gallagher (1981) says that media treatment of women can best be described as narrow since women's activities and interest typically go no further than the confines of home and family. Characterized as essentially dependent and romantic,

women are rarely portrayed as rational, active, or decisive and that both as fictional media material and as newsmakers in the print media, women are numerically under-represented, an absence that emphasizes their marginal and inferior status in many spheres of social, economic, political, and cultural life.

Prevalent news values define most women and women's issues as not worthy of news, admitting women to coverage primarily as wives, mothers, and daughters. Existing news about women is trivial, related to family status or appearance, and where important women's activities are covered, they are often simultaneously undermined or demeaned (United Nations, 1992).

It is worth noting that even international media coverage of three UN decades of women conferences (1975 in Mexico City, 1980 in Copenhagen, and 1985 in Nairobi) was often marginalized, placed in lifestyle sections, and sensationalized by emphasizing conflict and not the important issues that the media are meant to cover (Cooper & Davenport, 1987).

In their own right, women make headlines usually only when involved in crime, fashion, and entertainment circles. Underlying practically all media images of women across the world is the dichotomous motif that defines women as either perfectly good or wholly evil; mother or whore; virgin or call girl; traditional or modern (Gallagher, 1981).

In Kenya as elsewhere, news is seldom managed or presented for or about women. In all forms of news in the media, decisions are most often made by men even on women's issues. When women who are the majority of the country's population are excluded from decision making about news concerning them, then the media fails to reflect the issues and perspectives that are important to the majority in the society.

By uneven distribution of resources, limited access to education arising from gender inequality throws the majority of women in Kenya into situations where they suffer unequal treatment before the law and within the family, as well as being excluded from socio-economic and political participation. Hence, the chances of women and women's issues attracting attention from the media are minimal. In her presentation during the 1995 Beijing women's conference, Gallagher (1995) states that there are only a few women in leadership positions in the media, which greatly minimizes chances of a strong voice on how their gender should be portrayed in the media and what issues regarding women should be reported. Consequently, she says men are left to develop stories based on their cultural and social values, and because the media is a product of society, then it mirrors those values, ideas, attitudes, culture, and practices of that society. Gallagher says the media simultaneously influences and shapes society so that when women are portrayed as poor, helpless victims, as sexual objects, and as incapable leaders, the recipients of this information take this to be true because, to many, the media is always right.

According to Creedon (1989) only about 10% of journalists are women. Less than 1% of them are managers or owners of media houses. Even these few in senior positions have not succeeded fully in changing the negative portrayal of women because they have to prove that they are tough as men by reporting on those issues that make news—politics, economics, education, and development. Incidentally, all such news focuses on men who are the newsmakers. On the other hand, media owners are propelled by profit and so the few women who own media houses have no time for women and women's issues since such are not considered important and, as a result, will not attract buyers.

Paradoxically, women constitute 52% of Kenya's population (Kenya Government, 2001). Their contribution in Kenya's development should be commensurate and should, therefore, be depicted as such. The situation on the ground, however, is different and warrants a comprehensive and critical analysis in order to put facts in their right perspective. This study was geared towards finding the actual space allocated to women and the actual images created by the print media in Kenya by their portrayal of women through performing a content analysis of stories in the three major daily newspapers, namely the *Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and the *Kenya Times*. Important questions that this study sought to answer include: Which events make news? Who are the main actors in the news stories? Who seems to cover women's issues/news? Where are women's news/issues placed in the newspaper? Which events are turned to issues?

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by two main theories: the Agenda-Setting Theory by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and the Gatekeeping Theory by Lewin (1951).

Agenda-Setting Theory

According to the Agenda-Setting Theory, the media is and should be seen as setting the agenda for modern society through highlighting, downplaying, excluding, or constantly focusing on an issue, hence turning such an issue into a public agenda. This theory posits that the media has a large influence on audiences by their choice of which stories they consider newsworthy and how much prominence and space are given to them, thus influencing public opinion. The theory argues that the media influences people not so much in regard to what they think but in regard to what they think about. In this way, the media is responsible for the pictures in the eyes of their audience. The media

sets an agenda for what the people should think about, and the order of importance of these thoughts.

The Agenda-Setting Theory's central axiom is the salient transfer of important items on mass media agendas to the public agendas, hence influencing people's perceptions and worldviews (McQuail & Windhal, 1993) as Figure 1 illustrates. The Agenda-Setting Theory hypothesizes that issues prominently displayed and frequently emphasized in the mass media will be regarded as important by the media consumers. The more coverage a story or issue receives in the media, the more important it will seem to the public. In addition, the more important an issue is to the audience, the more coverage it will receive.

This theory is appropriate in explaining why people with similar media exposure place importance on the same issues. Although different people may feel differently about the issue at hand, most people feel that the same issues are important. However, the public agenda may influence the media as well. In this way, the Agenda-Setting Theory is quite circular in nature.

Based on this theoretical paradigm, this study critically analyzes the print media's portrayal of women and women's issues within the Kenyan context and raises vital questions in this regard. For instance, how are women portrayed in the print media? Does this reflect the true picture on the ground? How much space are women and women's issues allocated and why? What positions do women hold in the print media and society as a whole? Who owns and controls the media industry?

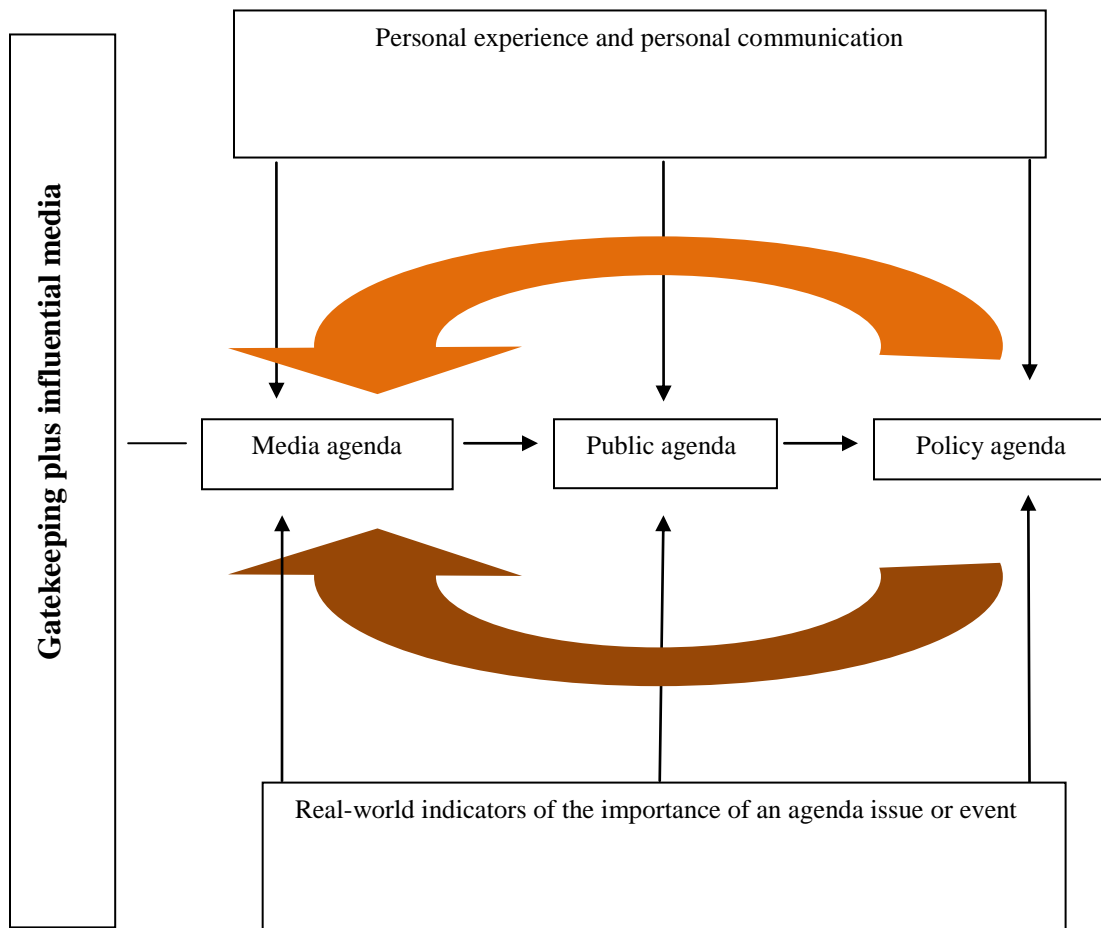


Figure 1. The Agenda-Setting Theory conceptual model.

Gatekeeping Theory

The Gatekeeping Theory on the other hand attempts to analyze, evaluate, and comprehend why some news items are selected while others are rejected. Kurt Lewin (1947) was apparently the first one to use the term "gate keeping," which he used to describe a wife or mother as the person who decides which foods end up on the family's dinner table.

David Manning White (1964) was the first specifically to apply the Gatekeeping Theory in a journalism context by studying the decisions made by a newspaper wire

editor in selecting stories that should be published. White concluded that, overall, the editor's decisions were highly subjective based on the gatekeeper's own set of experiences, attitudes, and expectations as to what constitutes the news. Snider (1967) duplicated White's study and found the results to be much the same. Another gatekeeping study by Bleske (1991), in which the subject was a female wire service editor, also found strong similarities.

The gatekeeper decides which information will go forward, and which will not, as illustrated in Figure 2. In other words, a gatekeeper in a social system decides which of a certain commodity—materials, goods, and information—may enter the system. It is important to realize that gatekeepers are able to control the public's knowledge of the actual events by letting some stories pass through the system but excluding others. Gatekeepers can also be seen as institutions or organizations. In a political system there are gatekeepers—individuals or institutions that control access to positions of power and regulate the flow of information and political influence.

Gatekeepers exist in many jobs, and their choices hold the potential to color mental pictures that are subsequently created in people's understanding of what is happening in the world around them. Media gatekeeping shows that decision making is based on principles of news values, organizational routines, input structures, and common sense. Gatekeeping is vital in communication planning, and almost all communication planning roles include some aspect of gatekeeping.

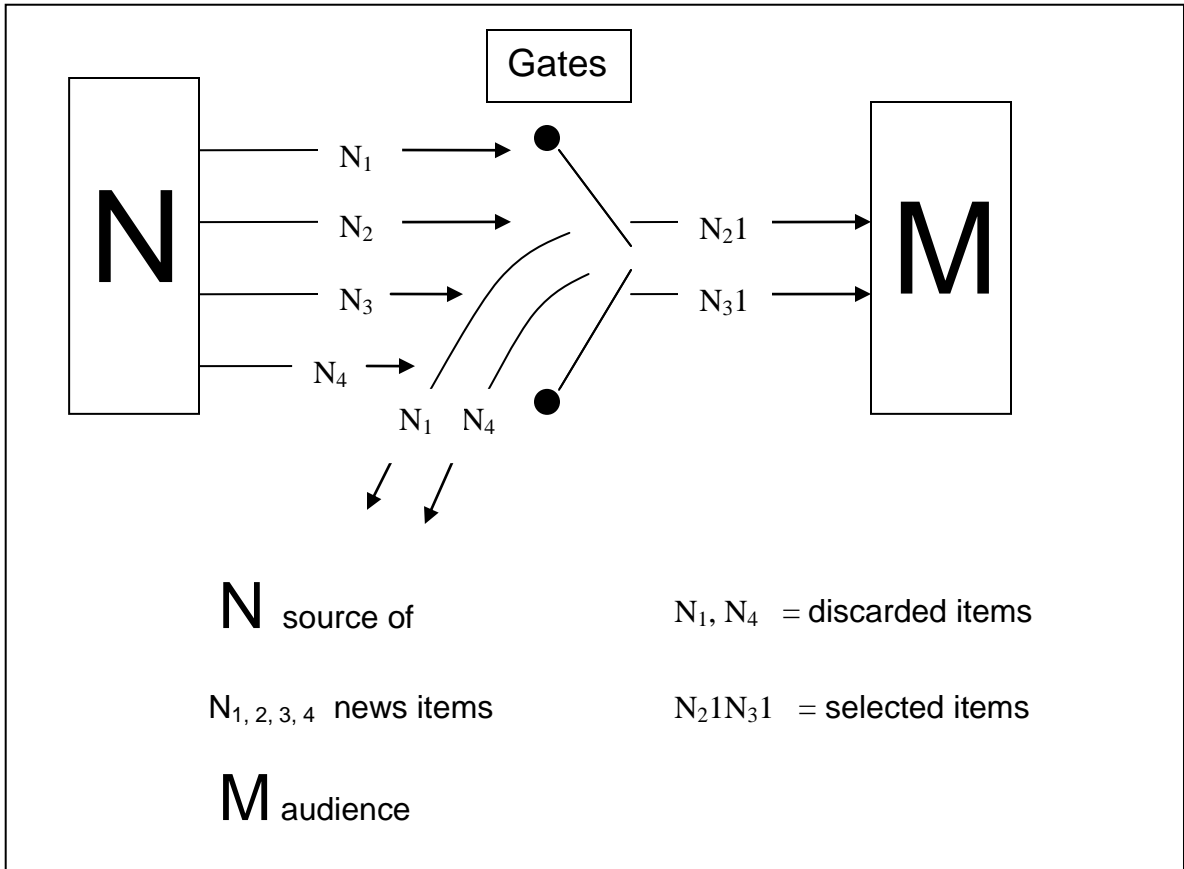


Figure 2. White’s Gatekeeping Theory conceptual model. From “The ‘Gatekeeper:’ A Case Study in the Selection of News,” by D. M. White, 1964, in L. A. Dexter & D. M. White (Eds.), *People, Society, and Mass Communications* (pp. 160-172), New York: Free Press of Glencoe. Retrieved December 12, 2008 from: <http://www.tcw.utwente.nl/theorieenoverzicht/Theory%20clusters/Media,%20Culture%20and%20Society/gatekeeping.doc/>

The gatekeeper’s choices are a complex web of influences, preferences, motives, and common values. Gatekeeping is inevitable and in some circumstances it can be useful. Gatekeeping can also be dangerous, since it can lead to an abuse of power by deciding what information to discard and what to let pass. Nevertheless, gatekeeping is often a routine that is guided by some set of standard rules and regulations.

This theory will be quite useful in helping to explain why the print media in Kenya discards some information while it allows other information to be published, and this may perhaps bring to the fore why men end up getting all the attention in the print media while women get little attention or none.

Other Media Theories

Other media theories exist, but a critical examination of all these theories reveals that they are variants of the Gatekeeping and Agenda-Setting theories, the two theories that formed the framework within which this study is encapsulated. The theories include, but not exclusively, the following:

1. The Media Equation Theory by Byron Reeves and Clifford Nass (1996) looks at interpersonal communication between an individual and the media as “another individual.” That is, it postulates that people will treat the media as they would treat a real person. For example, an audience will smile and keep eye contact when watching a character they like on TV while they will frown or ignore a character they don’t like under the same circumstances. People’s knowledge and appreciation of any agenda, on whatever subject, whether they like it or not, therefore, will largely depend on what the media presents to them. In this sense, by corollary, this theory is functionally similar to the Gatekeeping Theory.

2. The Spiral of Silence Theory by Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann (1984) holds that general opinion is dependent on the majority opinion of a group. This theory can usefully be applied in explaining why individual persons withhold or change their opinions when in a group setting. Media, being the information source, tends to greatly influence the opinion of the recipient public who, in turn, taken as a group, much more influences

opinion of that section of the public that did not directly receive the information from the media.

3. The Media Dependency Theory (Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur, 1976) argues that the more a person depends on the media to satisfy his/her wants, the more the media becomes important to and influential over the individual. The media ultimately becomes the agenda setter for the individual. This theory therefore ties in quite well with the Agenda-Setting Theory before it.

4. According to the Uses and Gratification Theory (Blumler & Katz, 1974), people have a free will to choose the media that best suits their interests, among many alternative media. That is, the media is a means to an end. The theory, however, needs also to take into account the fact that the media may also use people as a means to an end—which the media may want to achieve, making the whole scenario circular in influence.

5. The Technological Determinism Theory (McLuhan, 1962) argues that thinking, feeling, and action by individuals in society are shaped by the media technology that conveys the message. For instance, a computer-cropped, smoothed, and sharpened photo of a female will project as tender and fragile and not fit for tough jobs, whereas an acoustically manipulated voice of a male that is made to sound rugged may create an impression of all men being strong and befitting for tough jobs! The media, therefore, using the available existing technology, aims at the public having what they want. This theory's proposition closely resembles that of the Gatekeeping Theory that appeared almost at the same time, though the former repackages what finally gets to the audience, while the latter filters it.

6. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944) argues that communicators in society with a message influence or encourage a people that have strong opinions through the media to influence the masses. This ties in well with the Agenda-Setting Theory that was propounded much later.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to come up with statistics supporting the presumption that women and women's issues are given little space in the Kenyan print media and, when allocated space, they are portrayed negatively. The study seeks to offer ways and means which the government, the media, and other interested parties can do to rectify the anomaly.

Hypothesis

There is no gender bias in print media coverage in Kenya and women are therefore appropriately portrayed.

Research Questions

Three research questions were addressed in this study.

1. Is there a difference between men's and women's portrayal in the Kenyan print media?
2. Are women and women's issues allocated equal space to that of men and men's issues?
3. Does the gender of the reporter/editor affect the way women are portrayed in the Kenyan media?

Definition of Terms and Acronyms

By-line: Author of news/feature/caption articles.

Caption: Telling a story by means of pictures with a few words below or beside the picture explaining what the event was, what it was about, where it happened, and who was involved in the event.

Event: A discrete happening that is limited to time and space.

Fillers: A news story used as a side story to fill up space in the newspaper.

Gatekeeping: Selection or filtration of information to suit interest of sender or receiver.

Gender: Socially learned differences between men and women.

Hard news: News that is considered important and significant in the print media, hence given prominence over other news by being placed in pages where it can catch the eye of the reader at a glance. These are news stories that denote action. Such news includes politics, war, and business and is usually covered by male journalists.

Kanu: A political regime that ruled the country for 40 years from 1963 to 2002.

Media: Channels of communication.

Narc: Political regime that took over power from Kanu from 2003 to the present.

Negative portrayal: To show or describe in a negative way as opposed to positive portrayal, which shows or describes an object in a positive light.

News story: A story that reports events factually and objectively and is mainly event oriented.

Stereotype: Composite images, traits, or expectations pertaining to a group of people.

Soft news: News that is considered important but not significant such as beauty, home, care, women, and women's issues and charity; news that appeals to emotions. These are usually, by default, covered by women journalists.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses only on the print media with regard to how it portrayed women in their roles in development. When men are referred to, it is for comparison purposes. The electronic media were not considered for two reasons: On the one hand, an assumption was made that the electronic media draw most of their broadcasts from the print media and, therefore, their portrayal of women would be similar to that of the print media; on the other, it would be difficult to extract the transcripts of the relevant broadcast material for analysis.

Limitations of the Study

This study was by no means exhaustive on the issue of women's portrayal in the print media as it analyzed women's portrayal in Kenya based on three mainstream daily newspapers only, namely, *The Daily Nation*, *The Standard*, and the *Kenya Times*, omitting several other daily newspapers such as *Nairobi Star*, *The People Daily*, and *Daily Metro* among others. The study further focused on the nature of the portrayal of women in the print media and not that of men.

The study was also limited by inadequate funds, which allowed for content analysis only. This was at the exclusion of other tools in data collection, for example, interviews, questionnaires, and observation, among others, which would have incurred extra costs for travelling to administer and collect.

Temporal sampling frame was also a constraint in that only a span of one year, between June 2002 and June 2003, was looked at to determine the portrayal of women in the print media. The picture would have been more complete if this frame has been widened to cover a longer time frame.

Paucity, in most depositories, of past newspapers that were the primary data collection tool greatly hampered the progress of the study, leading to a delay in collecting, coding, and analyzing the data. Most public libraries and universities do not stock past newspapers apart from the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

Significance of the Study

Several studies, as sources cited hereafter may show, have been completed on the portrayal of women in the media, but none has so far come up with figures showing the actual space allocated to women and women's issues and the actual number of women working in the print media in Kenya. This study will therefore go a long way in filling this gap by providing facts and figures about women's coverage and the number of women journalists in the print media.

The study also hopes to provide facts to the government and other stakeholders for the reasons underlying the negative portrayal of women in the print media for the purpose of formulating sound gender-balanced policies that will lead to improving the way the print media portrays women. This will lead to gender equality and gender equity in the country.

The study also aims at drawing the attention of the government, the media, and the society on the important roles that women play in the various capacities towards the development of the country and hence urge the media to portray them as such.

The study will help improve coverage and portrayal of women and women's issues in the print media by challenging training institutions in media studies to incorporate gender studies in their training curriculum, if not already incorporated, or strengthen the same if already being studied as a means of equipping aspiring journalists with knowledge and skills on coverage of the same.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of scholars have written on the issue of women's portrayal in the media, but so far none has done a critical analysis of articles in the print media in Kenya to find the actual space allocated to women and women's issues in the print media in contrast to those of men and relate whether the gender of the reporter affects the way women are portrayed in the print media. Thus there is a need for this study.

Gallagher (1981) demonstrates that even in developed Western countries of North America and Europe, women are under-represented in media coverage and are depicted predominantly in domestic and maternal roles and, where employed, they are likely to be in service occupations rather than positions of authority. During the 1995 International Women's Conference in Beijing, Gallagher stated that the print and electronic media in most countries do not provide a balanced picture of women's diverse lives and contributions to society in a changing world. She asks for a balanced portrayal of women and girls in their multiple roles. Gallagher encourages the media to use non-stereotyped, balanced, and diverse images of women because the media are well placed to influence opinions, attitudes, and relationships in the world. Gallagher's study provides a background to my own study as it agrees that women are under-represented in the print media, but it does not show the actual space allocated to women's issues vis-à-vis those of men.

A study by Mtambalike (1996) found that media messages and images are powerful tools in shaping attitudes, perceptions, and values concerning women in society. A Kenya government policy document (Kenya Government, 2006) supports these views by stating that the print and electronic media are powerful tools that create and change opinions, educate, and socialize people and that, in Kenya, just like other developing countries, the media has a role not just of entertaining and informing, but also educating people on priority issues such as democracy, health, human rights, and sustainable development, among others. According to this document, “the Kenyan press has neglected and portrays women in negative light, in essence falling into the trap of perpetuating some of the ill practices, attitudes, and beliefs in the society” (p. 34).

Allen (1994) seems to agree with these views by arguing that women are not a source of news for the first page in newspapers. These views are corroborated by Gitlin (1980) who found that if the concerns and values of women’s movements coincide with the concerns and values of the elite in media and in politics, there are greater chances of their getting recognized and incorporated into the dominant news frames. In this sense, the media willingly or unwillingly contributes towards idealizing and legitimizing certain institutions and people in order to meet their organizational needs while marginalizing other social groups and their voices, thus supporting the consensual nature of society. These studies agree with the Agenda-Setting Theory which states that the media sets the agenda for their respective audiences. This then assisted the current study in analyzing whether the media in Kenya has played its role of setting the agenda on the issues of women’s marginalization so that it can be discussed and policies enacted by the government and other stakeholders to rectify the anomaly.

Current information (Global Media Monitoring Project [GMMP], 1995) shows that women appear in news media in narrow and a mostly negative range of roles as victims of circumstances (e.g., rape, wife battering, or FGM). These views are corroborated by recent studies in this area (Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, 2005) which state that women are generally portrayed in a limited number of roles. Sexualized images of women are rife, and women tend to be defined in terms of their physical appearance and not on their abilities. When they are not being portrayed as sex objects, women are most often shown as victims of violence or homemakers. The study found that although the stereotypes of women as care givers have some positive connotations, they are nevertheless stereotypes, which certainly do not reflect women's complex experiences and aspirations. According to Tuchman (1978), women lack substantive social, political, and economic equality compared to men and, as a result, women have less access to means of telling the stories of their experiences in effective and meaningful ways through the media. This would explain the reason why we have few stories about women making news.

Creedon (1989) agrees with these views and states that women own and manage relatively few mass media institutions and generally lack the economic resources to establish their own. The study found that women also fill fewer news-making roles in society than men, making it more difficult to get their messages to the media thus causing their activities and interests to be segregated by the mainstream media. Tuchman (1978) correlates these views and states that women lack substantive social, political, and economic equality with men in the media and in society as a whole, and hence have less access to the means of telling the truths about their experiences in effective and

meaningful ways through the mass media. According to Sen and Grown (1987), this paucity can be attributed to women's insufficient participation in the process of development. Increasing women's participation and improving their shares in resources, land, employment, and income relative to men are necessary and sufficient to effect dramatic changes in their economic and social positions, which in turn lead to their positive portrayal in the media.

Alexander and Hanson (2001) accuse the mass media of unintentionally imposing a sense of inadequacy on women's self-concepts through advertising in addition to reinforcing a preoccupation with physical attractiveness at the expense of other positive attributes. The study found that if women were not being portrayed as sex objects, they were most often shown as victims of violence and/or homemakers.

Studies in Kenya find women commonly portrayed as objects of art, war, rape, famine, or as care providers in households. Kameri-Mbote and Nzomo (2004) state that very little has been done to ensure that Kenya's domestic law conforms with international standards in respect to women's human rights. They state that this discrepancy works to reinforce male dominance and female insubordination in all spheres of life. These views are collaborated by a recent article in one of the leading Kenyan local dailies that states that as Kenya prepares to present its performance report on the Conventions on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), it is evident the country is far from meeting its obligations to more than half its population. With women forming 52% of the electorate, it is unfortunate that, at the moment, they account for only 8% of the 222 members of parliament (compared to 48% of women MPs in Rwanda, 41% in Nordic countries, 30% in East Africa, 21% in North America, 19% in Europe,

18% in Asia, 13% in South America, while Somalia and Nigeria have 8% and 7% of women MPs respectively) (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2008).

The CEDAW report blames inadequate resources, and social and cultural attitudes that discourage women from participation in politics. The same attitudes undermine women's participation and portrayal in the media (Kweyu, 2006).

A study by Ruth (1998) supports this argument by stating that the portrayal of women as inferior, incompetent, petty, evil, and lacking in responsibility and moral aptitude stands as clear justification to man for women's subordination and suffering. Men argue, she maintains, because women are believed to have caused all the trouble in the world when Eve of the Bible ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Therefore, it is natural and fitting that women should be punished for their deeds and controlled lest they do further harm. Several of such studies, including that of Mwangi (1992), Cherogony (2002), and Mtambalike (1996), show that, indeed, women are portrayed negatively in the print media. However, researchers have neither clearly indicated the extent of the negative contribution by the print media, in Kenya, specifically, nor have they critically analyzed the specific areas or manner of negative portrayal. It is this apparent gap that the current study endeavors to fill.

According to the African Women Media Centre (AWMC, 1999), women in the continent are under-represented and misrepresented in the media. The organization argues that the most predominant set of obstacles faced by women aspiring to move into the upper ranks in the media industry are cultural and social norms which they face every day. In Kenya and, indeed, in many African societies, a very thin line is drawn between women and children in terms of abilities and, therefore, suitability and candidacy for any

position of responsibility. These stereotype notions imbued from childhood ensure that women avoid registering their presence while men continue to hold these stereotype views. Women are, therefore, effectively kept from getting into leadership positions where they can influence management and policy, thereby promoting women's issues. These notions may be attributed to the patriarchal precepts within the Kenyan social order that views women as subordinate to men, hence should not be given leadership positions where they can rule over men.

A breakdown of women in the media in different parts of the world (Gallagher, 1995) is as follows: Japan, 8%; Europe, 45%; and Nordic states, 41%. Gallagher, however, states no data are available to show the number of women working in the media in Africa. As a result of the few women in leadership positions in the media, no strong voice exists on how women should be portrayed in the media; consequently, men are left to develop stories based on their own cultural and social views. This current study then hopes to go a step further and generate actual figures and statistics to show the number of women journalists in Kenya.

A Kenyan legal and policy framework states that while the centrality of women to the development process is now accepted and their crucial role in food production recognized, women in Kenya still form the bulk of the poorest group in the country and are yet to be considered equal partners in the development process. The policy states that stereotypical gender roles have been so deeply ingrained and glorified in language, education, the mass media, and arts to the extent that even women have become desensitized to their own inferior portrayal (Adhiambo-Oduaol, 1995).

In another study, Gerbner (1978) found that women still remain part and parcel of a society whose political, economic, and cultural base remains oppressive. In areas where women attempt to assert themselves, they are ridiculed or treated with contempt. The study posits that this is a deliberate move to discredit, isolate, and undercut women. These views are supported by a study by Gans (1979) which found that it is mainly the “knowns” who find a place in the news and those who have the power to interpret reality, whereas such “unknowns” as protesters, victims, voters, and many other categories of people get to the media only when they are involved in unusual activities or in natural disorders and calamities. Women, who are mostly portrayed as victims by the print media, then fall into this category of “unknowns.”

A report of a joint research study conducted by Women and Law in East Africa (WLEA), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) with support from the government of Kenya and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) found that the social, economic, and political policies and structures which are biased against women in essence exclude over 50% of the Kenyan population (women) from decision making and policy formulation. This to a large extent inhibits women’s ability to participate in development and leadership activities at the various levels in society resulting in the breakdown of the societal justice system, further promoting crimes and violations against women. This unravelling of the social fabric, according to the research, has given rise to the failure to recognize, appreciate, and reward women for their significant contribution to national development (Mbugua, Mubuu, Karuru, & Owiti, 2001).

A recent study in Kenya (Higiro, 2002) found that despite the current catchwords of affirmative action and gender equality, media houses have continued to publish images whose main agenda is that women are not equal to men and that women only make it to the front pages of the print media in stories relating to beauty or when they are being reported negatively.

A report by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (United Nations, 1982) states that in all its efforts to promote advancement of women, it had encountered serious obstacles in the deep-rooted attitudes of men and women which tended to perpetuate the status quo. The Commission also observed that those attitudes were due to cultural patterns which to a great extent determined thoughts and feelings about women and men. These, in turn, were being disseminated on a vast scale as a result of technical advances in the mass communication media.

Waring (1988) corroborates these views by stating that women's unpaid work is not valued, hence not recognized in the national accounts of nations. According to the study, a large amount of women's productive work is not paid for. If such services were obtained commercially—water and fuel from utility companies, food from the market, meals from a restaurant, and child care from child care centers—these activities would be included in national accounts. When a woman provides these services herself, she as a housewife is economically inactive. Lewenhak (1992) provided detailed proposals about how women's work could be valued and accounted for in national statistics, but as yet, no country has adopted such an approach as recommended in the Beijing Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995).

A study by Were (1985) states that if women are portrayed in traditional roles in the media, society's attitudes and women's expectations for themselves will necessarily be confined to these roles. These attitudes and expectations will impede or foster women's integration in the development process. On the other hand, the study proposes that if the media reflects the full range of contributions women are capable of making to society, societal attitudes towards women will be correspondingly broadened.

From the foregoing, it is clear that for several reasons, some yet to be understood, the media in Kenya and in many other parts of the world, though to varying degrees, portrays men and women in an unbalanced and stereotyped manner. Women are often portrayed in narrow and largely negative perspectives as helpless victims or even as petty 'tools'. This is despite the media's power to create and change opinions, attitudes, and relationships besides educating people. Not even national, nongovernmental, and international efforts on women's issues and recognition of women's contribution to development have helped much. There is need for a systematic study of not only the portrayal but also the underlying explanations through critical examination of sampled media content with the intent to suggest possible strategies to level the playing field in the public eye for both men's and women's contributions in and to development. A critical analysis of the media content stands out as the most appropriate tool in such research. This is the end toward which the current study strives.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This is a qualitative cum-quasi-quantitative study design that attempts to furnish a largely descriptive portrayal of women in the print media in Kenya. At the same time the study capitalizes on the power of simple summarized and charted quantities to give more meaning to and make explicit the description. To achieve this, the study relied on content analysis of a sample of three of the four major dailies in Kenya: *Daily Nation*, *East African Standard*, and *Kenya Times*. The fourth daily, the *People Daily*, was not considered because it is fairly new in the market, not widely read, and, therefore, not available on the shelves of most libraries. The three dailies were selected due to their wide readership that represents virtually the whole spectrum of the various categories of the Kenyan population.

The Art and Methodology of Content Analysis

Content analysis is a search tool used to determine the presence of certain words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. Quantification and analysis of the presence, meanings, and relationships of such words and concepts then make inferences about the messages within the texts, the writer(s), the audience, and even the culture and time of which these are part. Texts can be defined broadly as books, book chapters, essays,

newspaper headlines and articles, speeches, conversations, advertising, informal conversation, theatre, or any occurrence of communication language.

To conduct a content analysis of any such text, the text is coded or broken down into manageable categories on a variety of levels—word, word sense, phrase, sentence, or theme. It is then examined using one of content analysis' basic methods: conceptual analysis or relational analysis. Qualitatively, content analysis can also involve any kind of analysis where communication content (speech, written text, interviews, images) is categorized and classified.

In its beginnings, using the first newspapers at the end of 19th century, analysis was done manually by measuring the numbers of lines and space given a subject. However, with the rise of common computing facilities like PCs, computer-based methods of analysis are growing in popularity. Content analysis enables the researcher to examine large amounts of textual information and systematically identify its properties, for example, the frequency of used keywords by determining the more important structures of its communication content.

Use of content analysis in the world of journalism and communication research started in the 1980s. However, today content analysis has evolved into a repertoire of methods of research that promises to yield inferences from all kinds of verbal, pictorial, symbolic, and communication data. It is widely used in the fields of public opinion research, tracking markets, and political leanings largely due to the widespread use of computers for all kinds of text processing.

According to Klaus Krippendorff (2004), six questions must be addressed in every content analysis. They include: Which data are analyzed? How are they defined?

What is the population from which they are drawn? What is the context relative to which the data are analyzed? What are the boundaries of the analysis and what is the target of inferences?

Content analysis is potentially one of the most important research techniques in social sciences. Content analysis views data as a representation not of physical events but of texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings and must therefore be analyzed with such uses in mind. Analyzing texts in the context of these uses distinguishes content analysis from other methods of inquiry.

Specific advantages of content analysis as a tool and a method include: allowing both qualitative and quantitative analysis; providing valuable historical and cultural insights on issues; facilitating interpretation of texts for purposes of possible development of expert/predictive systems of the issues at hand; and provision of insight into complex models of human thought and language use.

A Brief History of the Three Dailies

The Daily Nation

The *Daily Nation* newspaper is Kenya's most widely circulated newspaper. It was registered by two British businessmen, Michael Curtis and Charles Hayes, in 1959. In 1960 it was sold to His Highness, the Aga Khan, and took its place on the newsstands on October 3, 1960. It is published by the Nation Media Group which also owns Nation Television (NTV). With a circulation of 300,000 copies daily, it is the largest independent and most widely read newspaper in East Africa.

The Standard

The *East African Standard* is Kenya's oldest newspaper owned by the Standard Group which also owns Kenya Television Network (KTN). It began as a weekly named *African Standard* by Alibhai Mulla Jevanjee in 1902 and was later sold to two British businessmen in 1905 who changed its name to *East African Standard*. In 1910 it became a daily to serve colonial interests. It was once again sold to the Lonrho Group in 1967. In 1977 its name changed to *The Standard*, a name it holds to the present. *The Standard* rivals the *Daily Nation* closely with a circulation of 100,000 copies daily. It is mainly an elitist newspaper.

Kenya Times

The *Kenya Times* newspaper was started in 1983 as a mouthpiece of the then KANU government after it claimed its interests were not adequately catered to by the then independent media, namely the *Daily Nation* and *The Standard* newspapers. This is the position it held until 2002 when KANU was defeated in the general elections. After this event *Kenya Times* began to champion the views of the opposition.

Sampling

A simple random sampling operation was performed to pick a sample of one copy per week per daily between June 2002 and June 2003. This yielded a total of 3 copies per week, 12 copies per month (4 of each daily), and 144 copies (48 of each daily) for 1 year. I started by coding the 12 months on a coding sheet starting from June 2002 to June 2003. I then drew three columns and four rows representing the name of the newspaper and the corresponding month on the coding sheet. I then wrote numbers 1-7 on small equal pieces of paper and tossed them to randomly pick one copy per daily per week per newspaper

for the 12 months studied and coded them on the coding sheet. This identified a total of 144 copies from the three dailies, which translates to 48 copies per daily. I then performed a content analysis of each of the sampled copies to find the manner of portrayal of women by what has been reported on them (i.e., type of stories on them vis-à-vis the space allocated them). The study then grouped articles under different thematic headings showing what print media reports on women.

The selection of the time frame for the article analysis was based on the fact that this was a period of heightened political and related activity due to the impending 2002 general elections in the country and a few months after the elections. This period therefore presented a good and equal opportunity for both men and women to make news. Moreover it was a period of transition from former President Moi's regime that supported gender equity only in rhetoric and the start of President Kibaki's regime that came in promising not only equity but an institutionalized one.

The fact that the newspapers were randomly selected means that even if a study was done using the same method, similar results will accrue. The findings and conclusions based on the findings shall be objective.

Data Collection Instruments

The newspaper copies analyzed served as an instrument by which data, that is to say, the thematic articles on women's portrayal, were obtained.

Data Collection

I visited and arranged with the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton Library, for the retrieval and sorting of the relevant copies of the dailies. Where a copy was missing, recourse was sought in the Internet archives of the relevant media house. The a priori

sampled copies were then selected and sorted by dailies. A cover-to-cover perusal was then done on each copy to select articles on various issues touching on women, in readiness for analysis. A total of 9,236 articles accrued.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data were largely analyzed qualitatively for their content on the manner of portrayal of women. Limited arithmetic manipulations of means, totals, and percentages were done. Presentation of the findings is done by use of tables and diagrams, specifically pie charts. Pie charts are one of the most commonly used graphs. They have one advantage in that they are simple to visually conceptualize. Their disadvantage is the difficulty in discerning the difference in slice sizes when their values are similar. This, however, is readily remedied by clear labeling of individual slices.

The article analysis focused on finding the total number of articles in the three dailies on and by women and how they have depicted female subjects. The analysis was also aimed at finding whether the gender of the reporter affected the portrayal of women in the print media.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

General View

Of the coded and analyzed 9,236 articles in the three dailies, only 258 (2.8%) were on women, whereas 7,717 (97.2%) were on men. The study found that women journalists were 825 (11.6%) compared to 6,292 (88.4%) men. Women wrote 216 (76%) of all these stories on women, whereas men contributed only 69 (24%) of the articles, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Total Number of Articles on and by Women Analyzed in Each Newspaper Sampled

Newspaper article	<i>East African</i>			Total
	<i>Daily Nation</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Kenya Times</i>	
Total	3,101	3,882	2,253	9,236
On women	153	54	78	285
On men	2,451	3,587	1,679	7,717
By women	160	307	358	825
By men	1,765	3,218	1,309	6,292
On women by women	118	38	60	216
On women by men	35	16	18	69
No by-line	497	241	496	1,234

Nature of the Coverage on Women's Issues

The study identified and analyzed articles on women under a number of various themes, namely: politics, education, health, stereotype, entertainment, victims, sports, crime, business, religion, beauty, and development. The study found that those articles that describe women negatively were more numerous when compared with those that describe them positively as illustrated in Table 2 and Figure 3.

Table 2

Thematic Representation of Women in the Three Dailies

Portrayal as	Number of articles	% of total
Victim of circumstances	70	24.6
Crime	42	14.7
Stereotype roles	33	11.6
Politics	30	10.5
Entertainment	23	8.0
Beauty	19	6.6
Professionals	18	6.3
Education	16	5.6
Health	12	4.2
Sports	10	3.5
Religion	5	1.8
Development activities	5	1.8
Business	2	0.7

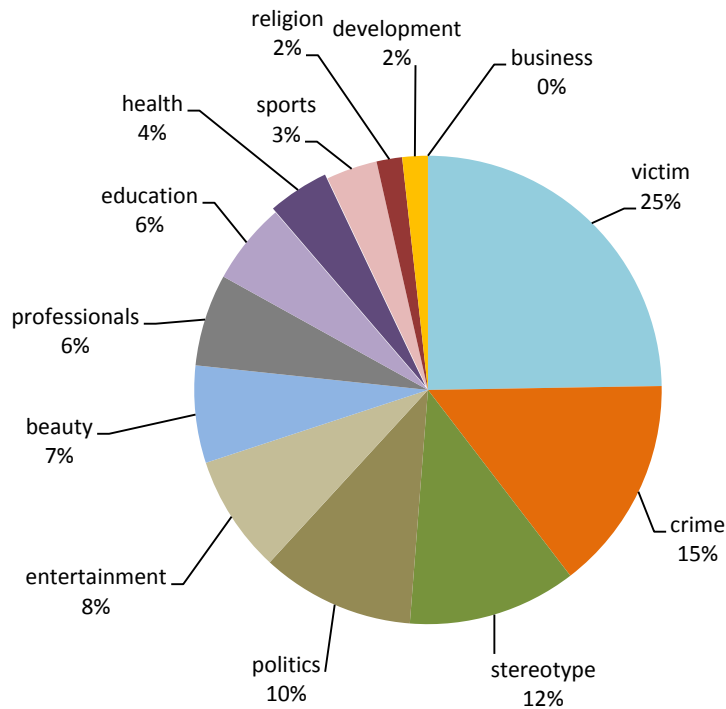


Figure 3. Thematic representation of women in the three dailies.

The articles were also categorized to indicate whether women were covered under news, commentaries, editorials, captions, or columns, or whether they hit the headlines. The study found that news stories formed a major percentage (99.5%) of the articles analyzed. Commentaries, editorials, captions, and columns comprised only 0.5% of the articles. Stories on women took 9% of headline news. A news story within the context of this study is a story that reports the events factually and objectively and is mainly event-oriented. An event is a discrete happening that is limited to time and space (Tuchman, 1978). A series of events may lead to an issue. For example, in the study there were

several cases of rape of women. These together constituted the issue of violence against women. The study found that most issues facing women do not exist on the media agenda. Those issues covered are mainly event-oriented, which easily fit into the media's routine, hence require less effort. In event-oriented coverage, the structures that produce oppressive conditions for women are left unquestioned, and issues appear simply as accidents or incidents.

The study found that in the commentaries, editorials, captions, and columns where women would be reported at the exclusion of any event, their male counterparts appeared to eliminate them. The study also showed that the *Daily Nation* appears to have captured women's issues more than the other two dailies. This could perhaps be explained by the relatively wider circulation compared to the *Standard* and *Kenya Times*. Therefore, its catchment of news and other features is wider so that the propensity of publishing a women's issue is higher than the other two dailies. Table 3 summarizes these findings.

Table 3

Women's Coverage Under News, Captions, Front Page, Commentaries, Columns, Editorials, and Headlines

Item	<i>Daily Nation</i>	<i>East African Standard</i>	<i>Kenya Times</i>	Total
News	153	54	78	285
Captions only on front page	7	3	5	15
Commentaries	1	4	2	7
Columns	5	0	0	5
Editorials	1	0	2	3
Front page	14	3	2	24

Coverage of Women Relative to Men

The data analyzed suggested that women's issues were mainly event-oriented. Although there is regular coverage of women and women's issues in the country's print media, the number of articles about women is much lower than that of men (Figure 4). For example, articles on women in the *Daily Nation* with a daily circulation of about 300,000 copies, the highest circulation of the three dailies, constituted only 5% of the 3,101 articles analyzed while articles on women in the *Kenya Times* made up 3.5% of the 2,253 articles analyzed. The *East African Standard*, which published the highest number of stories analyzed (3,982), allocated only 1.4% of its articles to women and women's issues. Entire editions of some dailies analyzed (e.g., the *Daily Nation* of November 26, 2002) contained no article on women or women's issues despite the fact that women constitute 52% of the country's population and produce 80% of the country's food (Kenya Government, 2001).

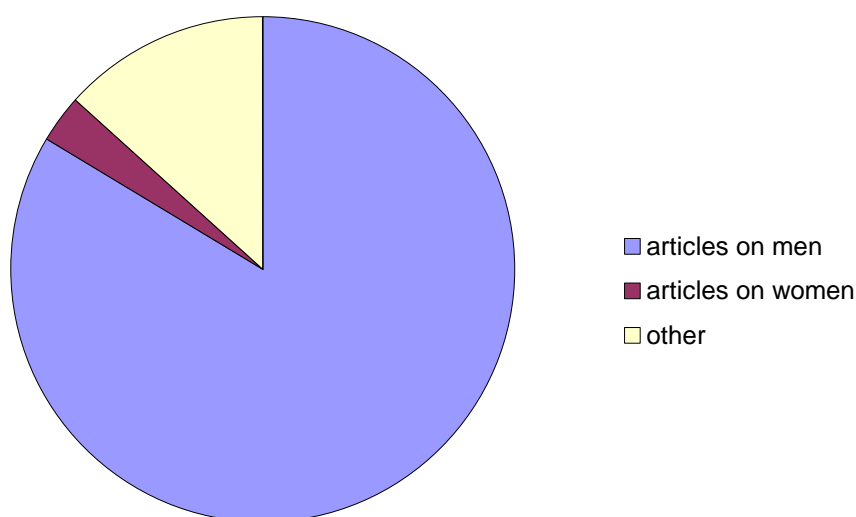


Figure 4. Coverage of women relative to men and other stories.

Given equitable reporting, one would expect women and women's issues to account for about 50% of the media coverage, even if it is in the food production news or features unless such contribution is taken for granted for whatever reason! In the *Daily Nation* issue of November 29, 2002, the then president of Kenya, Daniel arap Moi, acknowledged at a public function that women are top achievers in the country. He, however, did little during his reign to raise the status of women. During his rule, he appointed no women cabinet ministers (law makers), neither was there a significant representation of women in policy-influencing positions in the country.

Interestingly, the situation of women's representation in the cabinet did not change much even after Moi's exit from power since his successor, President Kibaki, appointed only three women (9% of the cabinet) into full ministerial positions. While this was a step in the right direction, this number was insignificant compared to the women's population in the country. Ironically, this number was reduced to two and later further decimated. By the end of Kibaki's first term in office, only one woman cabinet minister remained, illustrating the tragedy that has befallen the cause of women. Such trends imply women will continue to be portrayed negatively in the print media with no one in positions of power to protest this biased portrayal.

The *East African Standard* of September 26, 2002, reported an international women's peace conference. However, the event was deigned only a caption at the back of the newspaper without a corresponding detailed story on the role women played in the conference or the peace initiatives in their respective countries.

The study also found that not only are women given limited coverage in the country's print media but that the coverage tends to focus on the few urban and elite

women who occupy such influential positions as ministers, members of parliament, judges, and managers of various business concerns. Very little coverage is given to rural women—who happen to be the majority of the women of Kenya’s adult population. Indeed, 94% of all articles on women in the three dailies featured urban women as opposed to rural women. See Table 4. A typical case is the *Daily Nation* of May 27, 2003, showing a woman minister and two women professors launching a book regarding women’s response to conflict.

Table 4

Articles on Urban vs. Rural Women

Name of newspaper	Articles on urban women	Articles on rural women	Total
<i>Daily Nation</i>	141	12	153
<i>East African Standard</i>	44	10	54
<i>Kenya Times</i>	71	7	78

A further examination of the sample showed that most articles on women portray them as capable of tasks which fall within traditionally accepted gender stereotype roles, as shown in Table 5.

As shown in Table 5, the genesis of women’s subordination starts at home because of the roles and responsibilities they are assigned by society (Lowe-Morna, 2001). These stereotypes trickle into the workplace where women are assigned duties corresponding to their role as mothers, wives, or daughters. This finally affects the perceptions women have about themselves—that they are not as smart as men.

Table 5

Gender Stereotypes

	Women	Comment	Men	Comment
Reproductive role	Give birth to children	Biologically determined	Father children	Biologically determined
Role in the home	Care for and nurture children	Socially determined; limits women's role to home; unremunerated	Protect, provide	Socially determined; limits men's caring and nurturing role
Role in the work-place	Care work, domestic workers, secretaries, nurses, primary school teachers	Extension of role in the home; limits women's management and leadership roles	Leadership and management roles in politics, business, security	Extension of social construction; leads to gender imbalance in economics
Assumed personality traits	Humble, submissive, emotional, caring	Limits ability to be assertive and break into new roles	Aggressive, ambitious	Limits ability to be humane and caring, to express emotions

The roles as identified in this study were categorized into two themes: “soft (woman-friendly) news” where the majority of the articles on women belonged and “hard (man-friendly) news” which comprised only a small percentage. The latter theme included politics, business, and other leadership positions as shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Hard vs. Soft News in Relation to Women

Portrayal as	Number	Percentage	Nature of issue
Victim of circumstances	70	24.6	Soft news
Women in crime	42	14.7	Soft news
Stereotype roles	33	11.6	Soft news
Politics	30	10.5	Hard news
Entertainment	23	8.0	Soft news
Beauty	19	6.6	Soft news
Professionals	18	6.3	Hard news
Education	16	5.6	Hard news
Health	12	4.2	Soft news
Sports	10	3.5	Hard news
Religion	5	1.8	Soft news
Development activities	5	1.8	Hard news
Business	2	0.7	Hard news

The back page of the *East African Standard* of February 22, 2003, illustrates this fact well. A wife of a cabinet minister apologized that her husband wore a torn sock during a public function. The woman took the blame because of the stereotype images of women as caretakers of their husbands so that any shortfall on the husband’s side was

blamed on the “caretaker”-woman! On the same note, in an article about the annual general meeting of one of the leading success-story companies in Kenya, the *Daily Nation* of December 3, 2002, focused on the negativity of some women shareholders who did not understand the proceedings because they were illiterate and could not read the reports provided. The study found that 71.5% of articles on women were soft news compared to only 28.4% that is generally considered hard news, as illustrated in Figure 5.

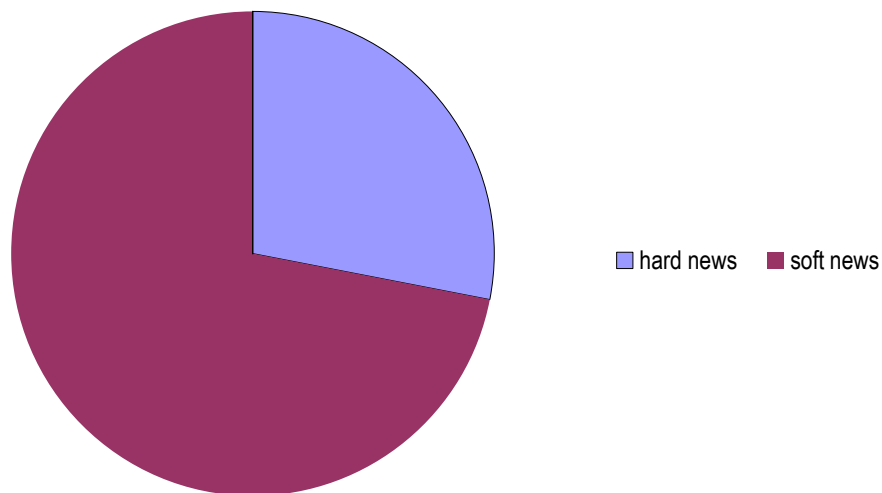


Figure 5. Coverage of women under soft or hard news.

Generally, coverage of women’s issues is restricted to “women’s pages” which deal with what is deemed women’s issues such as health, beauty, fashion, family, cooking, and entertainment. The *East African Standard* of August 10, 2002, had a pullout section called “style magazine” with 12 of its 14 articles stereotypically portraying women as homemakers and as objects of beauty. On the other hand, the *Daily Nation* of April 2, 2003, had a pullout section on lifestyle with four of its seven articles portraying women in their stereotyped roles of care, nurturing, and homemaker.

The study found that women, more often than not, appear in pictorial news where there is little emphasis on news issues. In advertising they are persistently presented as sex objects. The *East African Standard* of September 26, 2002, on the back page had a prominent caption of an international women's peace initiative, discussing various ways of ending conflict in most war-torn countries in the world. However, it was not treated with the importance it deserved since no article accompanied it. The *Kenya Times* of April 4, 2003, had a caption on the front page regarding two women cabinet ministers opening a women's global conference. But again, no article graced this front-page event. The *Daily Nation* of December 3, 2002, presented a Subaru car advertisement, using an image of a naked woman. The same newspaper of May 27, 2003, had a caption of a woman minister with two women professors launching a book on conflict on its page 5. No article explained the circumstances leading to the writing and launching of the book. From the foregoing, women were the domain of soft, trivial, and negative news.

Women and Violence

The analysis showed that most of the articles on women focused on violence meted against them. Of the 285 articles on women that were analyzed in the three dailies, 70 were on gender-related violence. Fifty-six percent of these were rape related, 20% on murder by spouse or intimate partner, 13% on physical violence, and 10% on female genital mutilation (FGM) as illustrated in Table 7. Worth noting, however, is that the articles on violence involving women were reported as events because such stories are mainly gathered from police records or courts and published with a by-line of a reporter without any analysis or personal opinion. Thus, these stories easily fit into the media's

routine and require little effort and expertise. Were it not so, stories of a more positive portrayal of women would have a higher percentage than violence stories.

Table 7

Violence Related Articles

Theme	<i>East African</i>			Total	%
	<i>Daily Nation</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Kenya Times</i>		
Rape/defilement	21	13	13	47	56
Physical violence	6	3	2	11	13
Murder by spouse/ intimate partner	3	8	6	17	20
FGM	2	4	3	9	10

Women and Crime

Another major theme that emerged from the study is the reporting of women in relation to crime. Of the 24 headlines by the three newspapers, 9 (37.5%) were on crime-related stories (Figure 6). The *Daily Nation* had nine headlines of women, six of which were on crime (Figure 7). The other headlines included a woman athlete who won a gold medal in the London marathon, a woman who won a beauty contest, and a woman minister who officiated at a public function. The *East African Standard* had three headlines on women, two involving the same woman who was arrested with hard drugs worth 50 million shillings (over USD 0.4 million), which again are both crime related (Figure 8). The *Kenya Times* had two headline stories on women, one of which covered a

protest by the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) against the sacking of a woman permanent secretary from the government, while the other was on crime (Figure 9).

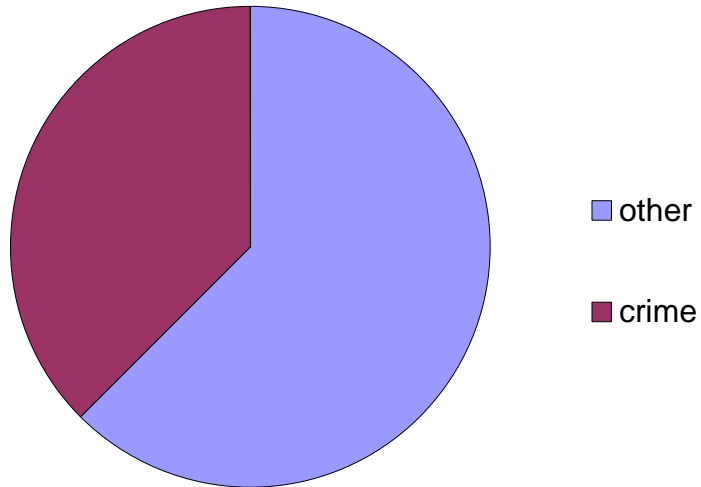


Figure 6. Women in headline news on crime.

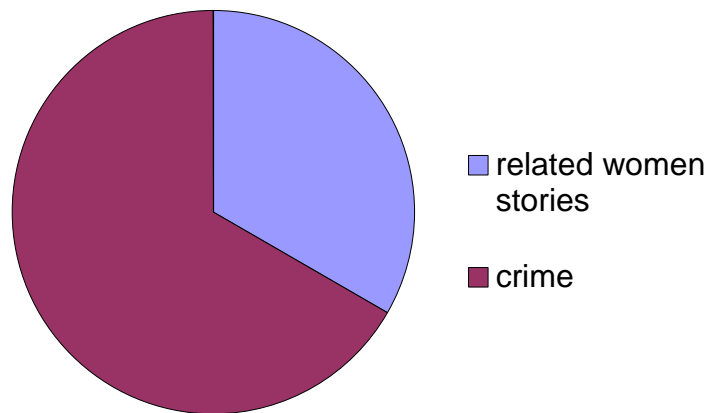


Figure 7. Women in headline news on crime—Daily Nation.

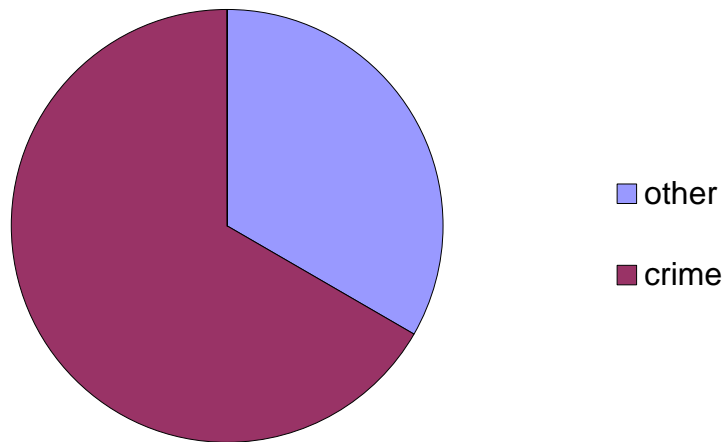


Figure 8. Women in headline news on crime—*The Standard*.

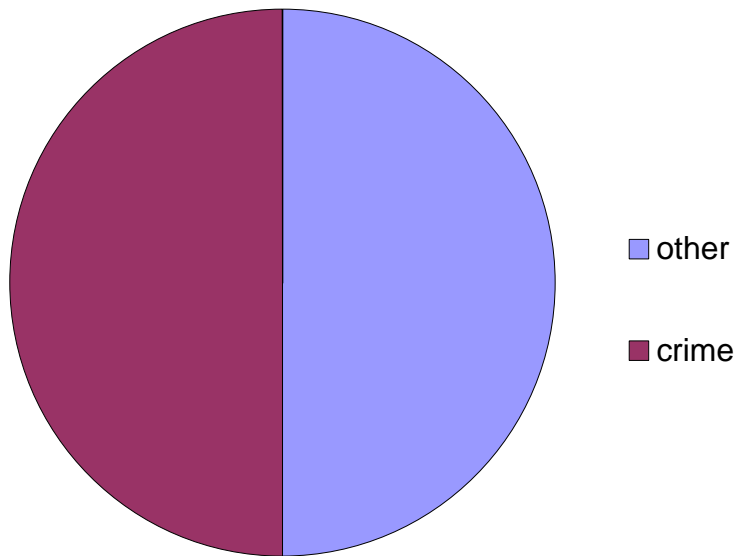


Figure 9. Women in headline news on crime—*Kenya Times*.

Location of Stories on Women in the Print Media

The placement of a story in a newspaper issue indicates the importance and significance attached to the story. Stories that are considered important and significant are usually placed on the front page or the back page where they easily catch the eye of

the reader while those news stories that are considered important but not significant are placed on the inside pages. The study found that women's stories rarely make front-page news. When they do, it is mostly in relation to crime, beauty, or as victims of circumstances. Of the 144 headlines of the three dailies analyzed, women made headlines only 24 times (16.4%). Eighteen of these (75%) portrayed women negatively (Figures 10 & 11). Of the 144 back-page stories, only 14 were on women, 6 of which were on crime. An apology by a minister's wife to the public for letting her husband wear a torn sock was one of these, while five were on beauty-related issues. The rest of the women's stories were positioned on the inside pages of the newspapers with the majority of them used as fillers.

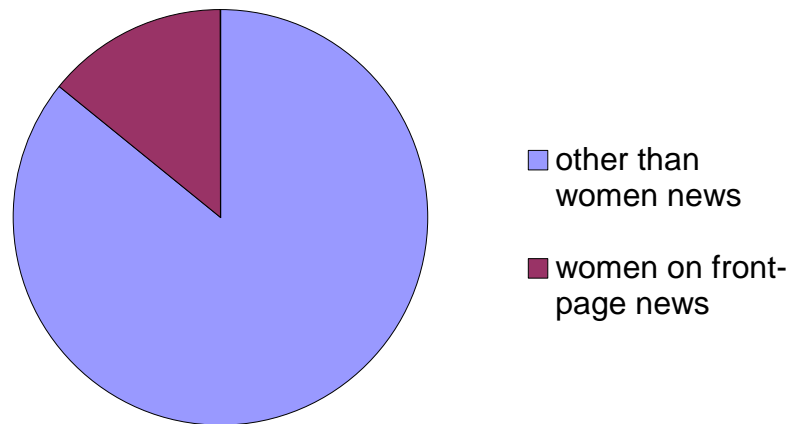


Figure 10. Women and front page news.

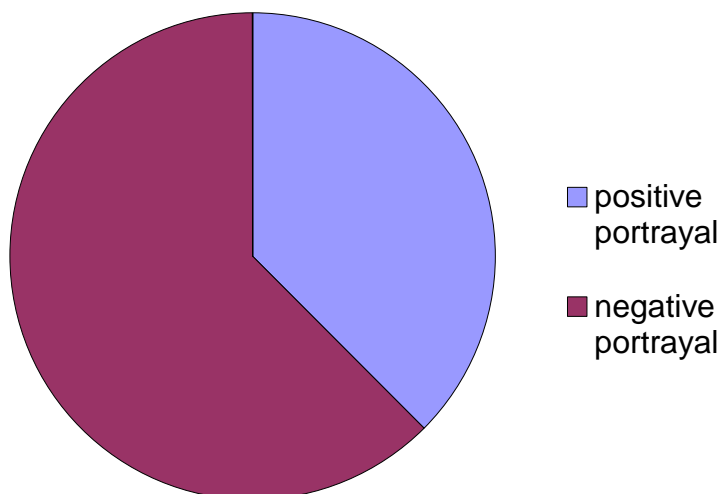


Figure 11. Portrayal of women in front-page news.

The *Daily Nation* of March 27, 2002, had in its front-page headlines a woman who was arrested at the Jomo Kenyatta International airport with heroin worth 50 million Kenya shillings (USD 0.4 million). The same story appears on the front page of the *East African Standard* on the same date with the headline “Air Hostess Drug Trafficker.” The previous day, the *East African Standard* carried the same story on its front page with the headline, “Woman Arrested with 50 Million Shillings [USD 0.4 million] Worth of Heroin.” *Kenya Times* of February 4, 2003, headlined the protest of the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) in Kenya regarding the sacking of a woman permanent secretary immediately after swearing in new government leaders. The *Daily Nation* of January 20, 2003, and June 5 of the same year had the beauty pageants in their headlines, while the *Daily Nation* of June 5, 2003, also featured a woman who appeared in court in relation to murder. Table 8 summarizes the frequency of women’s stories on the front pages of the three dailies studied.

Reporting on Women

Important or exclusive stories are usually covered by specific and specialized reporters as is the case in political and business stories. This is not the case with women's stories. The study found that women's stories have no specific and specialized reporters covering them. This means any reporter could cover women's stories demonstrating how trivialized the stories are. This would be properly attributed to either a lack of general interest in women's issues or the preferences of individual media houses and/or that of journalists. A general lack of premium value attributed to women's issues in mass media policy may account for the disparity of coverage of women's issues in the print media.

Table 8

Portrayal of Women on Front Pages of the Three Dailies

Item	<i>Daily Nation</i>	<i>East African Standard</i>	<i>Kenya Times</i>	Total	Comment
Women's stories	15	4	5	24	Both positive and negative
Crime related	7	2	1	10	Negative portrayal
Beauty related	3	0	0	3	Negative portrayal
Victim	2	1	2	5	Negative portrayal
Positive portrayal	3	1	2	6	Positive portrayal

Women and Editorials

Editorials are the most important section of any newspaper. They convey the importance of an issue by highlighting, detailing, and bringing it to the attention of the

public and policy makers. The current study found that of the 144 editorials analyzed, only 3 editorials addressed women and women's issues: 1 in the *Daily Nation* and 2 in the *Kenya Times*. The others related to men and men's issues, by default, since they head a majority of the country's public offices and other enterprises. This, therefore, clearly implies that important women and women's issues are scarcely part of the print media agenda for the public. Otherwise such topics would surface in editorials. By highlighting important women's issues, it is envisaged, debate and suggestions may be elicited on how to tackle the tilted portrayal of women in the print media in favor of men (Figure 12).

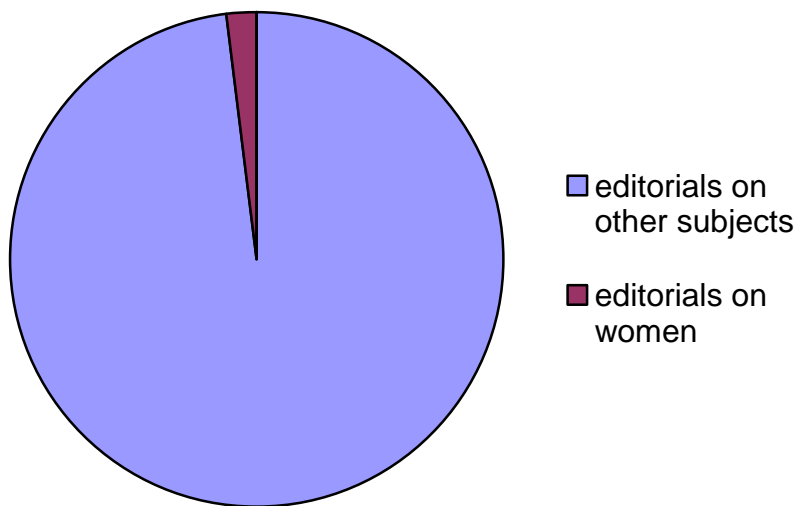


Figure 12. Editorials on women relative to the total number of editorials analyzed.

Women Reporters and Women's Issues

The analysis indicates that 76% of all articles written about women in the three dailies were written by women journalists, while the remaining 24% were written by men (Figure 13). Of the articles written by men, most of them were on women either as victims of rape, calamities, or involvement in crime. In contrast, most articles that tend to

portray women more positively were written by women reporters. Women journalists tended to portray women as strong, competent, and productive—making important contributions not only to their families but also to society and national development in general.

The study further found that some women journalists may become insensitive to issues of dehumanizing acts against women such as rape, domestic violence, FGM, and early marriage. Women journalists, therefore, also sometimes portrayed women from a man’s point of view. This may be attributed to both professional socialization and internalization of patriarchal precepts within the Kenyan society’s social order. Nonetheless, it was mainly the women journalists who made conscious efforts to project an unbiased image of women by maintaining links with women’s organizations, attending women’s conferences, or covering women. This is illustrated in Figure 13 and Table 9.

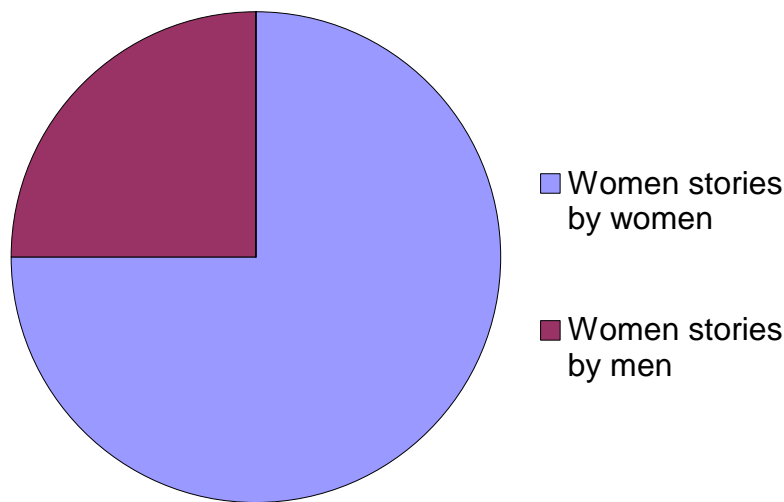


Figure 13. Coverage of women issues by women and men reporters.

Table 9

Coverage of Women Issues by Women and Men Reporters

Item	<i>East African</i>			Total
	<i>Daily Nation</i>	<i>Standard</i>	<i>Kenya Times</i>	
Total articles	3,101	3,882	2,253	9,236
Articles on women	153	54	78	285
Women reporters	160	307	358	825
Male reporters	1,765	3,218	1,309	6,292
Women articles by women reporters	118	38	60	216
Women articles by male reporters	35	16	18	69
Positive stories on women by women reporters	63	43	60	166
Positive stories on women by men reporters	10	7	11	28
Negative stories on women by women reporters	18	24	8	50
Negative stories on women by men reporters	18	13	10	41

It could be argued that men journalists lack interest in women's issues as part of the patriarchal value system in the Kenyan society and women journalists avoid them due to reasons of upward job mobility in establishments dominated by stereotypical men or even of imparted effects of this patriarchal system or to safeguard individual aspirations. Although women journalists were articulate and provided deep insight into women's subjects, many who are established in the profession have moved to other areas of media focus such as politics, economics, development, and education in order to survive in the industry where management and ownership have been perceived to be dominated by men.

This study found further that women prominently remain part and parcel of a society whose cultural, political, and economic foundations retain oppressive elements. In areas where women attempt to assert themselves, they are ridiculed or treated with contempt with the apparent aim of discrediting, isolating, or undermining them. The *Daily Nation* of March 27, 2002, presents a classical illustration of this when it quotes a male assistant minister who states that women should not be appointed judges or ministers because most of them are divorcees. Statements such as this are calculated to intimidate women and induce them to shun publicity or the media. The women thus prefer to keep low profiles instead, especially when single.

Further, the media is perpetually inclined to portray the ideal woman in stereotype images of mothers or wives who are submissive and dependent while portraying single adult women as unable to manage and maintain a marriage by being the antithesis of the ideal woman, therefore, social failures. This again reflects the cultural and social belief system that judges the value of women by their marital status. A married woman is

accorded more respect and has high social status in Kenya, compared to a single women who is viewed as morally loose and, hence, should not hold a public office or position of power!

The Overall Picture of the Portrayal of Women in the Print Media

From the above discussions, it is clear the media has played its role as prescribed by McCombs and Shaw (1972) in their Agenda-Setting Theory and by Kurt Lewin's (1951) Gatekeeping Theory. In Kenya, the media has effectively played its agenda-setting role by highlighting various themes but paradoxically, not so much on women and women's issues. A lack of women and women's stories about issues in the media agenda may perhaps best be explained by the Gatekeeping Theory in which gatekeepers' (editor's/reporter's) decisions are highly subjective based on these gatekeepers' (editor/reporters) own set of experiences, attitudes, and expectations as to what constitutes the news. In other words, by Kenya's print media standards, women and women's issues are not important subjects worth either informing the public about or engaging the public domain's discussion and so should be filtered out of view. The study can, therefore, be said to have answered the research questions.

1. There is a difference between men's and women's portrayal in the Kenyan print media.
2. Women and women's issues are not allocated equal space to that of men and men's issues.
3. The gender of the reporter affects the way women are portrayed in the Kenyan media.

Therefore, gender bias exists in the print media coverage in Kenya and the portrayal of women in print is less than appropriate.

This study may be said to have achieved its purpose of providing some statistics on the portrayal and extent of coverage of women and women's issues in the Kenyan print media. Recommendations on ways to remedy the situation by the government, the media, and other interested parties are suggested in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

On the basis of the current study, a number of conclusions can be reached:

1. The general public, media professionals, and media houses are oblivious to the genesis and evolution of the subtle mechanisms that produce patterns of gender stereotyping in the portrayal of women in the media.
2. Abstract discussions about gender stereotyping are unlikely to promote understanding or lead to real change in the negative portrayal of women in the country's print media.

The media can enhance or impede gender equality and equity depending on how they portray women and women's issues vis-à-vis men. However, scanty specific research to reveal the actual space allocated to women and women's issues and the actual number of women working in the print media was among the most critical barriers to ongoing and effective analysis of such roles.

Patriarchal societies are the biggest obstacles to women's access to participation and control of the media since men continue to see women as subordinate to them. Patriarchal attitudes of government officials and the media are manifest in their being predominantly male institutions which tend to view women as an undifferentiated mass of low status in society. Therefore, such biases and discrimination result in stereotyped attitudes, sexual harassment, pay inequalities, discriminatory treatment in assignments,

and lack of support mechanisms for working women coupled with inadequate training, all of which deter women from joining the media or assuming decision-making positions.

Continued negative portrayal and misrepresentation of women may be linked to the lack of the implementation of national media codes and in some cases even the lack of existence of the code itself. Further, women continue to have limited access to and participation in decision making in the media industry and governing authorities and bodies that oversee formulation and implementation of media policies. Women media practitioners continue to face gender-based discrimination including sexual harassment at the workplace. Therefore, the power to shape and influence media still eludes women. The absence of effective media policies has led to a situation where sexist and stereotyped coverage of women abound. This has been accepted as the norm not only by the government but even by most women who lack the will and the power to change the status quo.

The number of women working in the media industry is much lower than that of men. There is evidence that when they constitute a reasonable numerical force, women can and often do make a difference to media content although of course this is by no means automatic, nor can it be taken for granted.

The print media in Kenya is not playing its role of agenda setting effectively to facilitate bringing women's issues to the attention of the general public and policy makers so that they can be debated and consequently laws enacted to improve their status.

Various factors may contribute towards the marginalization of women's issues. For example, most women do not occupy positions of power. Since making news is

related to power, be it political, administrative, or economic, then women remain outside the news-net. It is also true that a smaller number of women professionals in the media industry and male dominance in the media industry reflects social reality. Since news is made by prominent urban-based personalities, the majority of the women, who happen to be rural dwellers “enjoying” low socio-economic status, are seldom featured in the media.

From this study, it can authoritatively be concluded that as long as adequate women’s voices are absent in positions of authority to fight for balanced and equal coverage of women and women’s issues in the media, the media will continue portraying women negatively. For instance, in the current parliament, out of the 222 members, only 18 (8%) are women and out of the 32 cabinet ministers only 2 (6%) are women. This picture is no better in other sectors.

Recommendations

For Government

Since there are fewer women than men in most leadership positions in the country, the study recommends that the government and the private sector make concerted efforts to implement affirmative action which will see more women appointed, employed, or promoted to leadership positions where they can be identified by journalists as sources of news. The development of national and regional banks of examples and materials illustrating the many ways in which gender stereotyping occurs is an essential first step towards this direction.

Effective and practical governmental policies and programs should be mainstreamed in all sectors of the economy in the country through workshops and

training sessions on gender issues and how these issues should be reported to give a true picture of both men and women and their contributions to society and the country. The government and the media council of Kenya should work closely to ensure that media organizations are not propelled by profit making only, but they should also be encouraged to act as agents of social change by allocating some of their space to educating the public on gender issues and the need for gender equality if the country is to gain any meaningful development. By doing this, the media would effectively fulfill its role of setting the agenda for the masses to emulate.

This study calls on the government to create gender policies aimed at improving women's lives. This should start in the home and progress through the school system, training institutions, and finally include the workplace. This would lead to gender equality which in turn will trickle up to a more positive portrayal of women in the print media. A legislation framework should be put in place to ensure that the media industry is not led by profit at the expense of the social responsibility to the majority (52%) of its citizenry who are women.

The government should put in place a constitutional and legal framework which is more supportive of women. This may include special action that allows more women's representation in parliament and prompts open leadership positions in other sectors where they can influence policies in favor of women. To date, the Gender Policy of 2000 which aimed to create gender-equality policies in all sectors of the economy in the country is yet to be debated in parliament and enacted into law. Each time the issue is presented for discussion in parliament, it has not been given priority since only a handful (8%) of women legislators are in a position to support and promote the adoption of the policy.

For Media Training Institutions

Women are newsmakers in their own right and journalists should go out of their own way to seek their opinion on substantive issues. The study, therefore, recommends gender training so both men and women journalists know how to write stories on women without portraying them negatively. As trainee journalists are taught news writing, libel laws, and ethics in journalism among their other courses, media training institutions in the country should include gender training in their curriculum. For those already at work, media houses should organize short-term courses and seminars on gender-sensitive reporting for reporters, editors, and those working in the marketing and advertising departments. Such training should focus on language use, advertising, photography, cartoons, and news content that portray women in a more positive way. Moreover, an editorial policy in media organizations to guide against the negative portrayal of women by ensuring objectivity and gender sensitivity in language and picture use should be in place.

For Media Houses

Media houses should employ more women at all levels and in all types of work in the media and within media regulatory bodies, so that they can challenge long-established media practices that work against women. Media managers, editors, and reporters should be gender sensitized to re-define news with women in mind to ensure gender-balanced news coverage. This study calls for the urgent need to sensitize media practitioners on women's needs and concerns so that women's issues feature in their media agenda. This will ensure more positive coverage and enhance the development of self-confidence in women, which in turn will propel them to make more use of the media.

Gender balance at all levels of decision-making levels within the media industry and government structures is needed and may be achieved through affirmative action.

The media need to refrain from presenting women as weak and inferior to men. On the contrary, the media should be foremost in promoting a positive and realistic image of women. The study, therefore, recommends that the media be held accountable and be taken to task for the images they portray of women.

For Private Sector

As the media council and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) set aside resources to monitor hate speech during the electioneering period in the country during the 2007 general elections, the two organizations should work jointly to monitor the media houses' portrayal of women so that those that portray them negatively are censured as they do in the hate campaigns.

For Stakeholders

The government and other stakeholders should make concerted efforts to improve women's literacy rates so that they can be in positions of power, which will in turn facilitate their access to media. According to the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2003), 23% of women in Kenya are illiterate, compared to only 11% of men who are illiterate.

The government and other stakeholders should commit resources and implement programs to increase women's knowledge and access to communication facilities, taking into consideration national, regional, and local needs and priorities.

Further studies should be performed to discover whether gender-equality policies will lead to fair images of women in the print media.

For Women's Organizations

Women's organizations should establish alternative media; for example, rural newspapers, community radio, and folk media at the grassroots to cater to women and women's issues. Women should especially be trained to run and own such ventures with a view to help portray their gender more positively and as a way of encouraging more women to access media and regularly make use of media.

Women's organizations should encourage media houses to adopt guidelines and codes of conduct on the fair portrayal of women including specific issues of portrayals of violence. Given the development of trans-border and global communication, there is also an urgent need for regional and international codes of practice to ensure positive portrayal of women. This may not be welcome to owners of such businesses, but even the debate that is generated by such objections may raise awareness. To begin work towards what may finally be an imperfect text is important, rather than to decide in advance that it is impossible.

A broad-scoped study on the portrayal of women should be performed to embrace not only the full range of print but also the electronic media to determine whether the findings could be replicated.

The Sum of It All

In Kenya, media reporting on gender issues is far from balanced. While every stakeholder, including the media, may share in the blame, the imbalance has a strong bearing on the socio-cultural circumstances that buttress the reporting and differential manner of gender portrayal. The circumstances have had ramifications into the economic and political aspects of society so that a status in one layer forms a surrogate for the

other. Women and women's issues have, therefore, unconsciously taken a back seat in a circular manner, in the media, in political and power circles, in the economy, and in the stereotyped minds of many.

In view of these developments, conscious and intentional integrative efforts by all are needed in order to eliminate this inordinate and biased media portrayal of women and their contribution to societal welfare. Women need to stand up to be counted, to be seen in competitive spheres like politics. Even against odds, it will take advocacy by women and men alike for gender equity. The government may be required not only to affirm affirmative action but also to integrate gender equity into such critical areas as educational curricula.

APPENDIX A: LETTERS

APPENDIX B: SAMPLE NEWSPAPERS

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